

BETTER BUILDINGS WORKFORCE ACCELERATOR

From 2020 to 2023, the American Society for Health Care Engineering participated as a partner in the [Better Buildings Workforce Accelerator](#) (BBWA). The BBWA is a Department of Energy initiative seeking to raise the level of building science and energy efficiency knowledge in the nation's building-related workforce. Through the BBWA, DOE engaged industry partners in activities that build interest and awareness, streamline pathways, and improve skills for people pursuing green building careers.

The American Society for Health Care Engineering expanded its Energy to Care Treasure Hunt into the HealQuest program, which aims to identify sustainability opportunities, encourage behavior change, and promote accountability among healthcare staff members at their facilities.

About the Partner

The American Society for Health Care Engineering (ASHE) is a professional membership group of the American Hospital Association. With over 12,500 members, ASHE is the largest association devoted to professionals who design, build, maintain, and operate hospitals and other health care facilities. Members include health care facility managers, engineers, architects, designers, constructors, infection control specialists, and more.

ASHE members can gain access to educational training programs and conferences, receive credentials in health care management and construction, access compliance tools and publications, and network with other members.

About the Project

ASHE recently created the HealQuest program as an expansion of its Energy to Care Treasure Hunt program. The Energy to Care Treasure Hunt program is a healthcare-specific version of ENERGY STAR[®] Treasure Hunts in which operations, maintenance, and facilities teams walk around their properties identifying energy efficiency opportunities. Building upon this model, ASHE crafted HealQuest to provide facilities and direct care staff members with a better understanding of sustainability at their facilities. This includes exploring water efficiency by identifying water leaks, understanding the recycling program, and much more. It is designed to foster accountability amongst the team members and trains participants about the importance of sustainability culture. The HealQuest program is divided into four steps over a two-day period.

- ▶ Operation Decarbonization is a seven-module asynchronous e-Learning course that introduces healthcare staff to a baseline of information and inspiration. The modules utilize a gamified training program with "hero" language that is designed for those entering the sustainability realm.
- ▶ On-site staff-led team building training where staff discuss specific sustainability-related topics relevant to the health care field.

AT A GLANCE

- ▶ **Partner:** American Society for Health Care Engineering (ASHE)
- ▶ **Project:** HealQuest
- ▶ **Program Location:** Nationally
- ▶ **Audience Served:** Incumbent Workforce
- ▶ **Better Buildings Workforce Accelerator Focus Area:** Improve Skills

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- ▶ On-site exploration of healthcare facilities to identify opportunities for sustainability, calculate savings, and present to the senior leadership.
 - ▶ ASHE works with the hospital staff to create solutions based on the findings, create action plans, draft change management framework, and begin implementation.

Challenges

ASHE designed the HealQuest program to meet the following challenges in the healthcare field:

- ▶ Younger workforce members prioritize sustainability more than past generations and seek organizations that value sustainability and climate.¹
- ▶ ASHE wants consistent and equitable team building opportunities, benefits, and culture change across all facilities and hospitals, beyond just chapter and conference meetings.
- ▶ Capital expenditures require buy-in from organization decision-makers and need to be supported by fiscal savings.

Solutions

The HealQuest program approaches these challenges with specific attention to the unique needs of the healthcare industry.

- ▶ ASHE administers a behavior and culture quiz to help determine which aspects of training and sustainability motivate participants.

- ▶ HealQuest goes beyond standard energy efficiency identification and touches many elements of sustainability. The program utilizes new calculators and checklists developed by ASHE specific to healthcare facilities.
- ▶ To build consensus among the healthcare staff, cross-functional teams use the skills and knowledge they learned to encourage behavior change.
- ▶ HealQuest brings attention to low-cost or no-cost sustainability opportunities that passionate team members can implement themselves without approval for capital expenditures.

Lessons Learned

Throughout the development of HealQuest, ASHE observed:

- ▶ The importance of executive leadership buy-in to champion sustainability initiatives and build consensus among all departments.
- ▶ Emphasizing the fiscal benefits of energy efficiency and sustainability can encourage interest and commitment.
- ▶ Coordination of a facility-wide event can take seven to eight weeks and requires the involvement of all departments to ensure staff members can leave their day-to-day responsibilities for on-site training. It is especially important for the facilities department to be included in the HealQuest event and share learnings with their team members.

This case study was developed with content from [ASHE's HealQuest overview](#).

¹ Heath, Rebekah and Yarick, Gail L. "Using Sustainability Initiatives to Engage Young Professionals" The CPA Journal. October 2021. <https://www.cpajournal.com/2021/10/22/using-sustainability-initiatives-to-engage-young-professionals/>.