

LEADERSHIP: ROLES



Leadership within the space of sustainability innovations is a multi-pronged effort with diverse voices, roles, and perspectives existing in iterative and collaborative ways. Ed Rubinstein and Karen Langstaff have held sustainability leadership roles in Toronto and Hamilton, respectively, for a number of years now. They have been part of actionable changes that have brought quantifiable gains and successes to their facilities--including being celebrated with International awards. Ed, who is the Director of Compliance, Sustainability and Energy, overseeing seven employees (six energy managers and a manager of Energy and Environment), says *"you need a person who has the accountability... and ideally someone who is not distracted by other things. You need someone who holds the responsibility for the sustainability role. A lead person. A champion or co-lead. Most hospitals do not have a sustainability lead."* Jim McArthur, Director of Properties, Abright Manor Longterm Care in Beamsville, Ontario who is also the current Chair of the Canadian Healthcare Engineering Society (Ontario Chapter) has been bringing communities of engineers together to amplify partnerships, learnings, and solutions. And, clinicians like Dr. Abbass, who being an anesthesiologist working in a busy community hospital, saw the generation of too much waste. He knew he had to do something about it. And he did. These roles--although different--are aligned in the sense that they are part of the same vehicle pushing the wheels in the right direction.

SUCCESSES

Fostering Partnerships: *"I had the chance to go to CleanMed for the first time in 2019, the annual sustainability in healthcare conference run by Practice Greenhealth, and was blown away by the number of physicians in this space. I learnt about Health Care without Harm and joined their physician group. Collaboration is useful and important and helps us all achieve what we are hoping to, together and hopefully faster, by joining our voices." -AA*



- Diversifying expertise by hiring for specific roles within sustainability leadership (e.g., IESO-funded energy manager) which can help guarantee quantifiable actions and financial return (*"We pulled out over 2 million KW hours per year. These roles pays for themselves many times over"* -KL)
- Waste diversion projects (e.g., eliminating single-use plastics)
- Program management and communication expertise to help different groups with project roll-out
- Knowledge mobilization efforts (e.g., Talking Trash)

PRACTICAL ADVICE



- Worry about the things you can control (choose your battles carefully and meaningfully)
- Recycling and waste diversion can catalyze bigger and downstream changes (its a great place to start). For example, getting involved in recycling gets a group thinking about more ideas, which then opens up more ideas
- You need a hospital champion at the senior table to talk about the benefits of investing in these kind of endeavours

"I found it hard to get things done ... What I lacked in know-how, I made up for with persistence. Where there was a dead-end, elsewhere an opportunity opened up... I found partners willing to try and recycle material waste.... I went ahead and made an appointment to see my CEO.. I was very lucky to have that CEO... In 2016, the CEO and Chief of Staff determined it was time to formally create a leadership role, the first physician sustainability leadership position in Ontario' -AA
[Click here to read the full narrative written by AA for the PEACH Byte Initiative](#)

FUTURE GOALS



- The momentum in this space needs to continue to reach all institutions across the province.
- This commitment can drive change and although we have a long way to go, there is optimism that the wheels are turning in the right direction and starting to roll faster and faster

Interviewees:

Ed Rubinstein (ER), Director, Environmental Compliance, Energy & Sustainability, University Health Network (Toronto)
 Karen Langstaff (KL), Chief of Facilities & Patient Support Services, St. Joseph's Healthcare (Hamilton)
 Dr. Ali Abbass (AA), Department of Anesthesia, University of Toronto
 Jim McArthur (JA), Chair, Canadian Healthcare Engineering Society (Ontario Chapter)