

# Going From Blue To Green

**By converting blue wrap to sterilization containers, how one sterile processing manager achieved cost-savings and green initiatives for her facility.**

**W**hen Kathleen Winfield became sterile processing manager at Lexington Medical Center in June of 2008, she felt inspired by several factors to ‘go green’ in her department. The hospital, which has received local and national recognition for its environmental efforts, continuously works to reduce its carbon footprint, so Winfield set out to make a difference, not only within the hospital, but also within the global community.

“Our hospital is very big about green initiatives,” Winfield says, “so I was trying to figure out something that would be significant to my department and to the hospital, achieve green initiatives and cost-savings. What could I do to find a really big cost-savings for the department?”

She began implementing several initiatives within her department, such as paperless documentation, recycling, and installing ice and water machines to decrease the amount of Styrofoam cups used. She also identified the largest waste contributor in the department — blue sterilization wrap.

**After identifying blue wrap as the largest waste contributor in the sterile processing department, Winfield replaced the wrap with sterilization containers.**

When Winfield first started in sterile processing, the department used some wrapped sets and others were placed in Genesis™ sterilization containers from Carefusion. She noticed that many of the wrapped sets had to be reprocessed because of tears in the sterilization wrap. The reprocessing caused an increase in departmental expense, disposal costs and staff hours required to accomplish this task. It also posed a problem for OR staff who would spend time and energy checking wrappers for holes or tears.

“I have a background as an OR nurse,” Winfield explains. “By converting wraps to containers, I predicted it would eliminate the issue we have with potential holes in the blue wrap when it’s handled.”

So, Winfield decided to convert the remaining wrapped sets to sterilization containers because of their durability and serviceability. She began by sizing devices that were normally placed in blue wrap and converted them to sterilization containers.

“From the day I started this position, I told my manager what I wanted to do and he said ‘go for it,’” Winfield says. “So I started service-by-service and looked at the things that we had the biggest ‘hole’ issues with and did those first, and then finished one service at a time.”

As she documented the process, she realized the savings to the hospital and planet were impressive. First, she calculated what she had spent on blue wrap. Then, she considered waste disposal costs, the time to reprocess sets and storage space in the decision to switch to sterilization containers.

Once the one-time capital purchase for the sterilization containers was made, the hospital began to see an accumulated return on investment from not having to buy as much blue sterilization wrap. In the first year, the facility saw a savings of \$21,069.08 and a reduction of 7,424.12 pounds of wrap. By the second year, the facility saved over \$48,000 and decreased 11,876.6 pounds of wrap.

Winfield says she never experienced any pushback from management or hospital administrators largely because she did not go over budget to accomplish her green goals.

Aside from the one capital purchase the first year, the rest of the containers and equipment were purchased within her monthly budget, and departmental costs went down.

“Dollar-wise, we’ve seen a huge decrease in cost. It’s significant,” Winfield says. “We’re not spending the money on blue wrap, so we are not spending the money on disposing it. We also don’t use as much tape anymore, which is a large cost-savings.”

As for the environmental impact of her efforts, the hospital’s environmental services representative calculated an overall decrease in blue sterilization wrap of 11.42 tons since the start of the project. Other significant



## Total Savings of Blue Wrap Reduction Program

Cubic yards of Landfill	342.6
Gallons of Oil	7,822.7
KWH Energy	65,939.08
Millions of BTU's of energy	1,119.16
Gallons of Water	54,816
CO2 Pounds	68,520



environmental savings were also detected (see table).

Beside the cost and environmental savings, Winfield says the response from the OR staff has been extremely positive.


“The response I’m getting from the OR staff has been great,” Winfield says. “They don’t have to worry about holes. We don’t have any issues with wet loads. I think it’s just made staff members’ lives a lot easier as well.”

Winfield’s efforts have not gone unnoticed throughout the rest of the facility, either. In April 2010, Winfield was recognized as a “Green Giant” at Lexington Medical Center. She also worked with the facility’s two outpatient surgery centers to implement similar systems in their SPDs. Still, she insists, her success is all about contributing to the facility’s overall mission to be sustainable.

“I am just one of many people working toward green initiatives,” Winfield says. “We are a green facility. We are constantly looking at cost-saving opportunities and ways to be environmentally-conscious. We are now looking at solutions to cut down our use of paper gowns and towels, and potentially go to reusable. We are just very conscious of it all the time.”

Winfield advises other facilities looking to achieve similar success to start with a plan, and then work to execute it.

“I just did a lot of planning,” she says. “Every month, I would stay within budget and knew what I needed and how much I needed to spend. You just have to have a plan. It’s been so much fun.”

For more information, visit [www.carefusion.com/genesis](http://www.carefusion.com/genesis). 

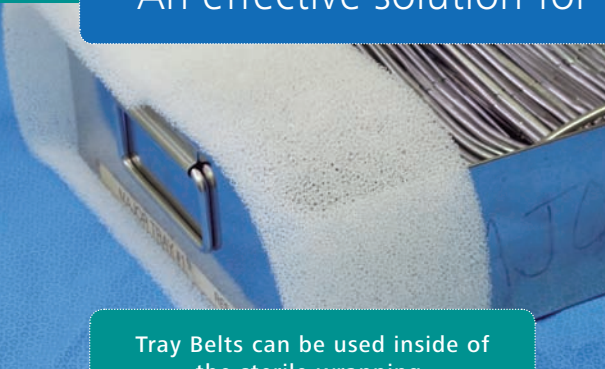
**By using sterilization containers instead of blue wrap, Winfield and her staff were able to reduce costs and environmental impact.**

## Traybelt Sterility Wrap Protection



CYGNUS  
MEDICAL

An effective solution for protecting the integrity of CSR wraps.



Tray Belts can be used inside of the sterile wrapping.



Tray Belts can be used outside of the sterile wrapping.



Tray Belts can be used to protect stacked trays from rips and tears.

**Cygnus Medical Tray Belts** – Tray Belts can be used inside and/or outside the wrapping. Unlike corner guards or liners that only focus on tears caused by the tray, Tray Belts also prevent abrasion marks and damage caused by dragging and sliding the tray as well as the many sharp objects a tray may come in contact with.

Contact Cygnus Medical today to learn more about our innovative sterile processing products.

1.800.990.7489 ext.110 | [www.cygnusmedical.com](http://www.cygnusmedical.com) | [sales@cygnusmedical.com](mailto:sales@cygnusmedical.com)

Write in 536