WOEMA's Environmental Responsibility Policy

Approved by the WOEMA Board of Directors on June 13, 2010

Statement of Policy

In an effort to improve public health, WOEMA is committed to making our conferences, meetings, and daily behaviors more environmentally responsible. To achieve this goal, WOEMA will promote actions that take into account our environmental impact and encourage members and staff to do the same. Such actions will include the following:

WOEMA staff

- Educate staff members on environmentally responsible activities
- Apply environmental principles (e.g., "reduce, reuse and recycle") to office supplies, activities, and conduct when possible
- Promote use of mass transit when commuting and on travel

Members

- Provide a forum for members and the interested public to share environmental knowledge and practices with other members
- Collect and share information on environmental health to serve as a resource for members and their facilities.
- Expand member's knowledge on issues related to environmental health
- Promote and conduct environmentally responsible meetings/conferences

Background

As the non-profit organization representing occupational and environmental medicine for our five state region, and due to our vested interest in protecting human health and the environment upon which it depends, WOEMA is committed to understanding and addressing the potential implications of environmental degradation and climate change, both at an organizational level and beyond.

Beginning at the organizational level and with this Policy, WOEMA will explore ways to be more environmentally responsible in our conferences, meetings, and behaviors. WOEMA will also support its members and join forces with local community efforts in addressing the potential impacts of environmental degradation and climate change. (NOTE: This policy may foster the creation of a new "Environmental Committee" within our organization.)

Research demonstrates that ample opportunities exist for rapid improvements in environmentally responsible behaviors. For example:

- Artificial lighting accounts for 44% of the electricity used in office buildings
- Each remanufactured toner cartridge keeps 2½ pounds of metal and plastic out of landfills and conserves ½ gallon of oil
- One third of harvested wood goes to making paper, which accounts for 38% of municipal solid waste; the pulp & paper industry rates as the second largest consumer of energy and uses more water to produce a ton of product than any other industry in the US.
- Business computer users unnecessarily waste $1 billion in electricity each year; setting a computer to go to sleep automatically during short breaks reduces energy use by 70 percent.

WOEMA will strive to meet the following commitments to advance human health and environmental quality.

- Recognize the inevitable impacts of our operations
- Develop pro-active approaches to minimize environmental impacts
- Conserve natural resources and reduce waste;
- Become a leader in developing and implementing good practices, as well as promoting and implementing environmentally responsible technologies
- Support its members in meeting these commitments

Implementation

WOEMA staff:

1. As an organization, take action to promote environmental activities, such as ordering more environmentally-friendly office supplies, providing recycling receptacles at desks and throughout our office spaces, using digital communication when possible, and encouraging double-sided printing on documents greater than one page long.
2. While WOEMA does not own any facilities, we will meet with building owners, landlords and other tenants to discuss potential collaborations to promote environmentally-friendly practices such as choosing safer cleaners and methods of pest control in buildings.
3. Introduce and implement the concept of "reduce, reuse and recycle" in the office environment.
4. Participate in local community initiatives such as Bike-To-Work Day or Car-Free Day.
5. Further explore possibilities of becoming a paperless organization and order/use fewer paper-based publications.
6. Increase the environmental awareness of staff through discussion forums, outreach activities and other appropriate communication mediums.

Members:

1. Make organization-wide meetings as environmentally friendly as possible through such activities as encouraging paperless methods and promoting conference venues that follow practices consistent with WOEMA's Environmental Responsibility Policy.
2. Explore initiatives to help members evaluate and adopt environmentally responsible activities.
3. Increase member and partner awareness of environmental issues including, but not limited to, climate change, through educational sessions, discussion forums, outreach activities and other appropriate communication mediums.
4. Explore the possibility of using electronic publications instead of print.

<u>Examples of Environmentally Responsible Choices</u>

- Recycling
  - Paper
  - Plastic
  - Metal
  - Glass
- Food, Drink, Etc.
  - Use pitchers and glasses for water (vs. bottles).
  - Opt for china and silverware or, at a minimum, biodegradable products.
  - Donate uneaten food to local food banks or shelters.
  - Use bulk dispensers for sugar, salt, pepper, cream and other condiments.
  - Include vegetarian meal options.
  - Opt for locally grown and organic foods.
- Paper, Materials, Etc.
  - Reduce paper consumption by:
    - Printing double sided.
    - Using the computer to read and write documents and notes.
    - Using recycled paper.
    - Reusing scrap paper.
  - Print materials with vegetable or soy-based inks.
  - Eliminate bags and binders at meetings or use greener versions.
- Energy Consumption
  - Use mass transit when traveling and at least once a month to commute.
  - Turn off lights.
  - Take the stairs.
  - Set computers to go to sleep after a period of inactivity.
  - Turn off appliances when not in use.