

Project CURE: Finding a Cure For Supply Waste

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Problem

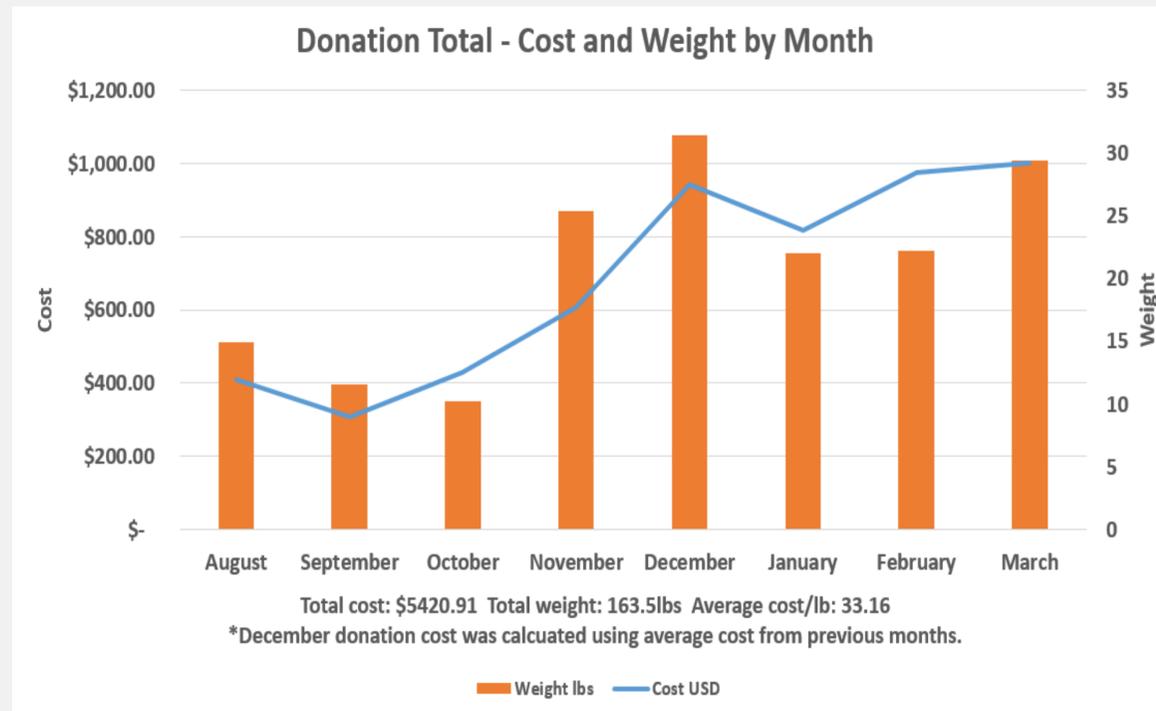
The U.S. healthcare industry generates 3.5 million tons of medical waste annually, and the average is rising every year. The healthcare industry handles supplies according to infection control best practice to help prevent hospital acquired infections. Consequently clean, unopened, single use supplies from the patients bedside are thrown away when the patient leaves. The long term health implications of climate change demand the same industry be an exemplary environmental steward. By donating supplies to Project CURE we can help reduce supply waste, reduce cost, support healthcare institutions around the world, all while respecting infection control best practice.

Goal

The goal of this QI project is to collect qualitative data from the donations 9 West makes every month to Project CURE. This data can be used to reduce supply waste on general medicine units by guiding green supply chain interventions.

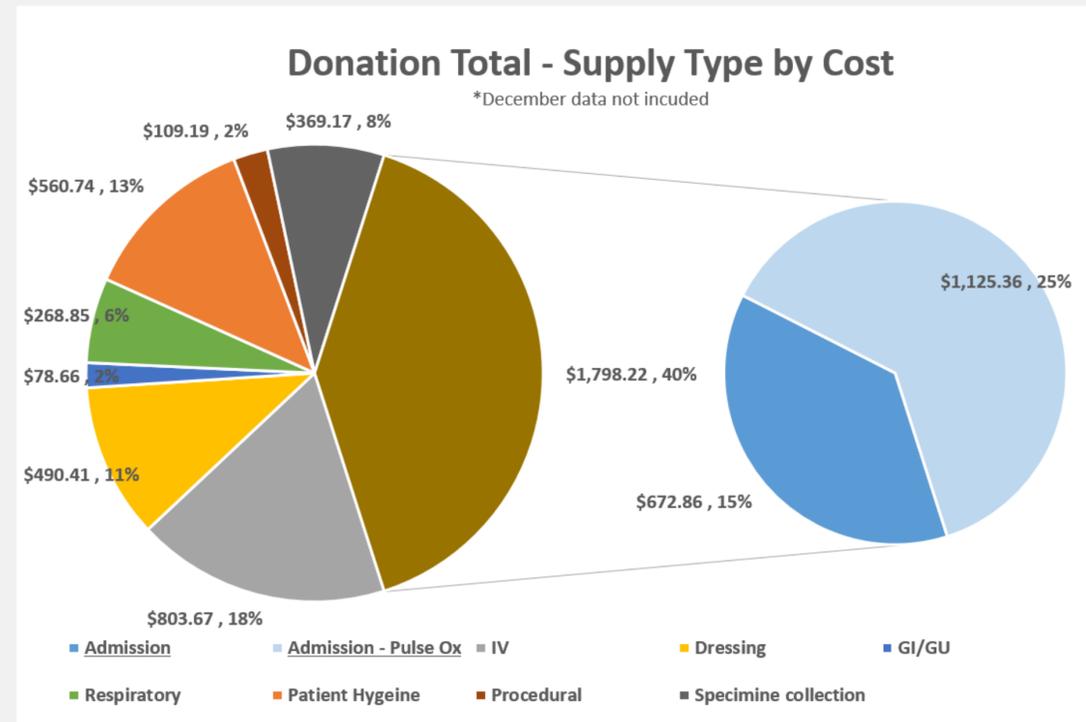
Strategy

- A literature review revealed that the majority of supply waste reduction and green supply chain research is conducted in the OR, ICU, and ED.
- Staff were educated about Project CURE's mission and the type of supplies they accept via email, posters, and brochures.
- Space was provided on the unit to collect and inventory supplies before donation.
- Success was measured by increased supply donations each month.
- Two volunteering opportunities were completed. Staff volunteered at the local Project CURE distribution center helping to sort supplies.
- Project CURE collects and stores supplies for two months to prevent pathological contamination. Then they fulfill orders from organizations around the world, which now includes Ukraine.



Results

- Nursing workflow was changed by asking staff to voluntarily collect unused clean supplies after patient discharges and transfers.
- We logged each supply item's weight and cost. Barcode scanning was used to inventory each donated item. Barcodes were created for items that did not have one.



- Barcode data was collected in an excel workbook that projected monthly supply count, cost, and weight.
- 9 West donated 163.5 lbs of supplies valued at \$5,420.91 – an average of \$33.16/lb.
- The data identified opportunities for green supply chain interventions.
- The disposable pulse ox represents the largest value loss by far: \$819.27, or 23% of the total value of supplies donated.

Conclusions

This project was a success. We consistently donated to Project CURE while collecting quantitative data that can be applied to other general medicine units at UCM, and the data is specific enough to demonstrate the potential value of green supply chain interventions. Next steps would be setting up a courier service to transport donations to Project CURE and starting a larger donation effort that tracks what percent of a unit's supply budget is being donated. This project was limited by COVID; all the staff education had to be contactless, and patient acuity and staffing issues contributed to the dip in supply donation totals seen in January and February.

Acknowledgements

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