HEALTHY BUILDING NETWORK

[Template for] Guiding Principles for Sourcing Building Products, Finishes and Furnishings[†]

2-2-09

In support of patient and occupational health and safety and to further efforts to protect the environment, we [*insert health organization or firm name*] are committed to sourcing building products that reduce human and environmental exposure to chemicals and materials linked to cancer, reproductive problems, learning disabilities, hormone interference, and asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

To further our efforts, [*insert health organization or firm name*] prefers to purchase building products that avoid materials that contain or create persistent bioaccumulative toxicants, and/or are carcinogens, mutagens, and reproductive toxicants (for more detailed information about these issues, please see, "Toxic Chemicals in Building Materials: An Overview for Health Care Organizations at http://www.healthybuilding.net/healthcare/Toxic%20Chemicals%20in%20Building%20Materials.pdf), which include:

- **PVC (or "vinyl") and other chlorinated plastics** (plastics made from chlorine/chloride, which is a leading source of dioxin formation), which are found throughout the building material industry in resilient flooring, wall covering, pipes and conduit, roofing, wiring and cable sheathing, non-woven fabric, carpet backing, siding, wall and corner guards, and coating or film for ceiling tiles;

- **Formaldehyde and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs),** which are found in carpet, resilient flooring, fabrics, furniture, wall covering, ceiling tiles, composite wood products (built-in and modular casework), insulation, paints and coatings, adhesives, stains, sealants and varnishes, and polyurethane products;

- **Halogenated flame retardants (HFRs),** which are used to inhibit ignition or flame spread are found in fabric and furniture, electronic equipment, plastics, and foam cushions;

- **Perfluorinated compounds (PFCs),** which are used to create non-stick and water or stain repellant treatments for carpets, upholstery, fabric and furniture, and other places where stain resistance or water repellency is preferred;

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- **Metals, including heavy metals,** which have a variety of attributes and are used in flashing terne, copper and other roof products, solder, batteries, wire insulation, jacketing and exterior siding, thermostats, thermometers, switches, fluorescent lamps, chrome or stainless steel components of furniture, paint, dyes and pigments, fabric, and some plastic products; and

- **Bisphenol A and epichlorohydrin**, which together are used to make epoxy resins, found in adhesives and paints/coatings.

We prefer products that promote or use renewable materials.

We prefer products that minimize waste and contain at least ___% of post-consumer recycled content [could also say generically "recycled content," which can include post-consumer and post-industrial recycled content]

We prefer wood products that are FSC-certified.

We recognize at the outset that it can be challenging to find alternatives for some applications. We also recognize that we may pay a premium when specifying green building materials in the interest of economic, educational, environmental, or health benefits for our patients, staff, and community.*

The more [*insert health organization or firm name*], its partners, and other health care organizations utilize green building products that eliminate hazardous chemicals and materials, the more abundant and affordable products will come to market to meet the demands of the health care industry.

For more information about chemicals and materials of concern, or to explore alternatives, please see the Healthy Building Network's health care website at: http://www.healthybuilding.net/healthcare/index.html and the website of the Global Health and Safety Initiative at http://www.globalhealthsafety.org/.

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* For more detailed information about toxic chemicals used in building products, finishes and furnishings, please see "Toxic Chemicals in Building Materials: An Overview for Health Care Organizations" from the Global Health and Safety Initiative and the Healthy Building Network.