

# Guiding principles for the next generation of health care sustainability metrics

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There is a growing movement to promote greener policies to achieve greater environmental sustainability in hospitals and other health care facilities. Yet without accurate, meaningful metrics to measure progress,

advocates warn, such policies and practices are likely to be less effective.

In a new article [published](#) in the journal *The Lancet Planetary Health*, Yale researcher Jodi Sherman and colleagues from Northeastern University and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany suggest four guiding principles for the next generation of health care [sustainability](#) metrics:

- Metrics should reflect the full scope of emissions caused by health care, both directly and indirectly.
- Metrics should reflect not just [greenhouse gas emissions](#) but also other environmental pressures and their potential health impact.
- Metrics should be linked to the core mission of health systems, from clinical outcomes of treatments reflecting quality performance of a health care organization, to overall population health.
- Metrics should recognize the wide diversity of health care, from large, well-resourced hospitals to "a mobile clinician with a medical bag."

Sherman is an associate professor of anesthesiology at Yale School of Medicine and of epidemiology in environmental health sciences at Yale School of Public Health. She is co-leader of The Lancet Commission on Sustainable Healthcare and director of the Yale Program on Healthcare Environmental Sustainability.

The first author of the new article is Matthew Eckelman, associate professor at Northeastern who is also an adjunct associate professor at the Yale School of Public Health.

**More information:** Matthew J Eckelman et al, Guiding principles for the next generation of health-care sustainability metrics, *The Lancet*

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