



Zeroing In: A Hospital's Bold Crusade Against Single-Use Plastics

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INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically increased medical waste, particularly single-use plastics, putting immense pressure on healthcare waste management systems. In response, our hospital has launched an initiative to reduce its single-use plastic footprint. This program aims to enhance environmental sustainability while optimizing operational costs, demonstrating a commitment to a more responsible and sustainable healthcare future.

AIM

The aim of this initiative is to significantly reduce the hospital's reliance on single-use plastics by introducing sustainable, cost-effective alternatives, thereby minimizing environmental impact and optimizing operational expenses.

METHOD

We implemented a strategy to replace single-use plastic items, such as water service ware, with reusable acrylic alternatives. This involved phasing out disposable plastic cups, straws, cutlery, and bowls, which are commonly made from polystyrene—a material with severe environmental impacts. By substituting these with durable, reusable options, we aimed to reduce waste generation, lower disposal costs, and minimize the hospital's environmental footprint. The effectiveness of this approach was measured by tracking the reduction in single-use plastic usage and the associated cost savings.

CONCLUSIONS

Our initiative successfully demonstrated that reducing single-use plastics in a hospital setting not only yields significant cost savings but also substantially mitigates environmental impact. By transitioning to reusable alternatives, we achieved a measurable reduction in plastic waste, underscoring the potential for healthcare institutions to adopt more sustainable practices without compromising operational efficiency. This project serves as a model for integrating environmental stewardship with financial responsibility in healthcare.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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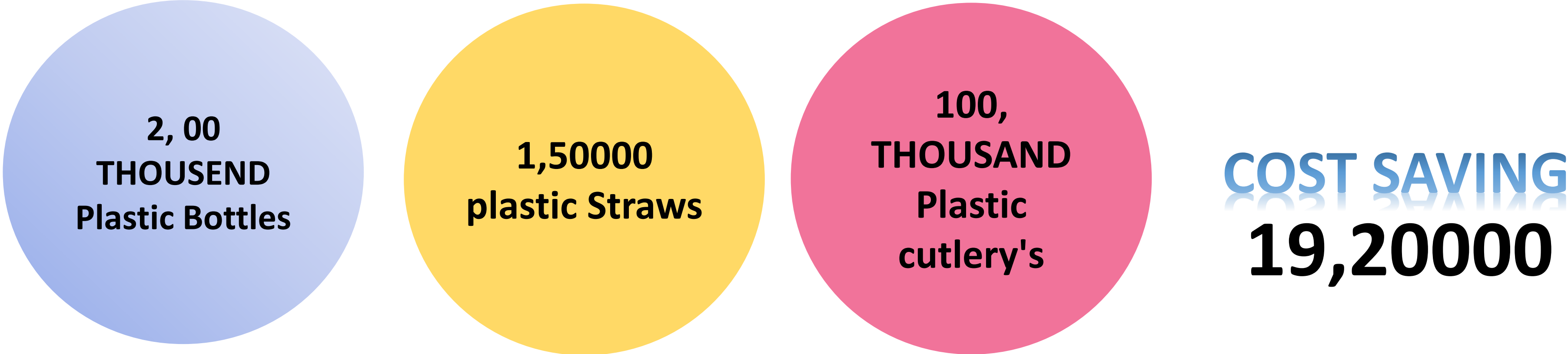
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RESULTS

Our hospital's initiative led to a significant reduction in the use of single-use plastics. Specifically, we reduced the annual consumption of plastic bottles from 2,000,000 to zero, plastic cups from 150,000 to zero, plastic straws from 100,000 to zero, plastic cutlery from 50,000 to zero, and plastic bowls from 25,000 to zero. This reduction translated into annual cost savings of ₹1,920,000. Additionally, the environmental impact was significantly diminished, as the switch to reusable alternatives prevented large quantities of non-biodegradable waste from entering landfills. This success illustrates the tangible benefits of adopting sustainable practices in healthcare.



Other Initiatives

Radiology film replacement –

Key initiatives to reduce plastic use:

- No single-use plastic at hospitals.
- Paper pouches for supplying medicines at pharmacies.The biomedical waste bags used at Apollo Hospitals are made from 100% recycled plastic

