

Increase Share of Reusable Health Care Textiles

Currently, reusable health care textiles (HCTs) comprise only 10% of the U.S. market share, despite their significant advantages over disposable HCTs. Healthcare facilities should increase the operating threshold of reusable personal protective equipment (PPE) to a minimum of 50% to promote environmental sustainability, cost savings, supply chain protection and enhanced safety for healthcare workers and patients.

ADVANTAGES OF REUSABLES

Supply Chain Security

As evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, reliance on disposable products has caused dangerous shortages that threaten the safe operation of healthcare facilities. Reusable PPE enhances emergency preparedness by supporting a more secure, sustainable and resilient supply chain. The vast network of laundry operators and suppliers across the nation has the capacity and expertise to supply and process an increased share of reusable PPE.

Environmental Sustainability

Increasing the share of reusable textiles in healthcare settings can mitigate the harmful environmental impacts of disposables. The healthcare sector is the fifth-largest greenhouse gas emitter globally. Hospital waste accounts for 2% of national municipal waste, and gowns and drapes constitute 2% of all hospital waste.¹ Several studies have proved that reusable HCTs demonstrate substantial environmental benefits over their single-use counterparts. In a life-cycle study on isolation gowns, reusables reduced solid waste generation by 93-99%, water consumption by 41%, greenhouse gas emissions by 30%, and total energy consumption by 28%.² One reusable gown replaces 75 single-use disposables. As climate change impacts intensify, increasing the share of reusable PPE is an essential sustainability initiative.

Cost Savings

Multiple studies demonstrate that reusables are more cost-effective than disposables. For example, in a case study of 195 hospitals, the transition from disposable to reusable isolation gowns yielded 50% savings.³

Safety

Reusable PPE provides equivalent, if not superior protection for healthcare workers and patients compared to disposables. Hygienically Clean Certified commercial laundries use specialized processes to ensure the safety and integrity of reusable PPE.

ABOUT TRSA

Textile Rental Services Association (TRSA) represents the linen, uniform and facility services industry. TRSA members are commercial laundry/facility services companies and their partners that supply the operations. TRSA members process 90% of the HCTs used by healthcare facilities across the U.S.

¹ Gottenborg, E. W., & Barron, M. A. (2016). Isolation Precautions in the Inpatient Setting. *Hospital medicine clinics*, 5(1), 30–42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ehmc.2015.08.004>

² Baker, N., Bromley-Dulfano, R., Chan, J., Gupta, A., Herman, L., Jain, N., Lowe Taylor, A., Lu, J., Pannu, J., Patel, L., & Prunicki, M. (2020). Covid-19 solutions are climate solutions: Lessons from reusable gowns. *Frontiers in Public Health*. doi:10.3389/fpubh.2020.590275

³ Baker, N., Bromley-Dulfano, R., Chan, J., Gupta, A., Herman, L., Jain, N., Taylor, A. L., Lu, J., Pannu, J., Patel, L., & Prunicki, M. (2020). COVID-19 Solutions Are Climate Solutions: Lessons From Reusable Gowns. *Frontiers in public health*, 8, 590275. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2020.590275>