

Barriers

Potential Solutions

Hospitals & Suppliers

Multi-Materials

Healthcare products and packaging that are made up of multiple material types make it difficult for hospital staff to properly sort for recycling.

Identification of Plastic Type

It is difficult for hospital staff to correctly identify different plastic material types and which waste stream they go in – resulting in inconsistent collection.

Lack of Space

Most hospitals were not designed to include adequate space needs for collection bins and the storage of plastic materials.



Mono-Materials

Ask suppliers to use mono-materials or compatible plastic types whenever possible in the design of products and packaging.

Product and Packaging Labeling

Ask suppliers to provide additional guidance or labeling of products and packaging that would make sorting of materials easier to do at the source.

Education

Invest in education programs where hospital staff are informed and trained on the different kind of plastics and the importance of separation for recycling.

Procurement

Work with procurement to prioritize products that are recyclable or have low disposal costs.

Engage with Recyclers Early

Ask how recyclers might be able to support the sorting process at their facility.

Legislation

Extended Producer Responsibility and Compliance Complexity

There is a lack of understanding across EU countries how to treat healthcare plastics by local waste-stream specific directives. This complexity then leads to lack of clarity around regulatory compliance.

Contaminated Products

Current environmental policy prohibits many healthcare plastic waste materials from being recycled, regardless of whether they can be safely recycled.



Research and Evaluate Healthcare Waste Compared to Other Industries

Working with hospitals and medical device suppliers, regulatory bodies should evaluate the actual differences between hospital waste and waste from other industries.

Waste Processors

Lack of Waste Acceptance

It is often difficult for hospitals to find a waste processor who will accept their plastic waste given the relatively small quantities and perceived safety risks.



Invest in Improved Sorting Technology and Capability

Waste processors should continue to invest in improved sorting techniques that are compatible for healthcare plastic waste.