

UZA has found in Indaver an innovative and sustainable partner



The UZA project team for waste management, from L to R: Linda Picqueur, Ben De Rydt, Sylvie Vercammen and Jeannine Stesmans ensures efficient and safe waste management on a daily basis.

Thanks to clear yellow lines delineating the waste zone, the waste is safely and neatly stacked in the designated waste areas.

Hazardous medical waste (HMW) may contain bacteria and viruses and should be collected, transported and processed safely to protect people and the environment against risks.

Antwerp University Hospital (UZA) in Edegem is a leading institution for patients with serious illnesses, a knowledge centre where top specialists conduct scientific research and the most advanced treatments are applied. In this environment of emergency departments, operating rooms, nursing units and laboratories a great deal of waste is produced, a significant portion of which is hazardous medical waste (HMW). Indaver manages the entire waste package, equivalent to about 1 300 tonnes annually. The company understands the importance of safe waste management in a medical environment and is introducing continuous improvements to make it even safer.

The University Hospital of Antwerp (UZA) has for some years outsourced its waste management to a specialist with a total solution. Waste management is a specialised sector, involving complex legislation and not without risks. For UZA, this is not a core business. For years, UZA had been entrusting the transport and processing of major waste streams to Indaver, which is why it opted for Indaver's Total Waste Management (TWM) package in 2011. Sylvie Vercammen, Director of Facility Services, Jeannine Stesmans, head of Cleaning and Waste Management, Linda Picqueur, Waste Management, and Ben Rydt, Waste Yard foreman along with the UZA waste management project team, recount their experience with Indaver in this article.

Under the TWM Partnership not only does Indaver take care of the transport and processing of the hospital waste; it also guarantees its safe and efficient collection and disposal, while also dealing with administrative aspects. In addition, Indaver offers an innovative digital Internet portal, the Customer Zone, where UZA can schedule its waste removal around the clock, consult data and create reports. Nicolas Coppens, project manager at Indaver, is UZA's contact. His expertise and the fact that he always responds to questions or problems in a quick and efficient manner is a key component of Indaver's service to UZA.

Smarter waste collection

Indaver really goes the extra mile in its professional waste management. It always seeks to optimize. In close consultation with UZA, Indaver developed number of improvement projects. Thorough sorting at source, new collection containers, education of staff and the redesign and reorganisation of the container park have resulted in a more ergonomic and hygienic waste collection system. This is not insignificant, as the members of the cleaning and waste team perform physically demanding work and have to cover great distances in the hospital building.

Without these teams, the daily operation of many services would be difficult. With the help of an electric train system, waste operators are able to swiftly take containers filled with hospital waste to the sealed container park. Collection is made safer and more accurate through clear labelling on the appropriate waste containers. Compared with previous years, there are now 80 % fewer work accidents, such as needle puncture accidents, and significantly fewer neck and back problems. Patients expect a hygienic environment and are aware of risks such as the hospital bug. Indaver understands how important safe waste management is in a medical environment for both staff and patients and offers solutions by supporting UZA and providing the hospital with advice on safety, the environment, legislation and cost control.

Sustainability at the lowest total cost

UZA's decision to entrust its waste to a single partner capable of expertly managing the various waste streams is a good move, according to the UZA project team for waste management. By predicting the total cost of ownership, a financial estimate of all the costs required by UZA to make the best choice, combined with continuous improvements, Indaver offers a competitive and total service provision. In addition, Indaver has proven to be a stable player in the European market by continuing to invest in processing capacity (Medipower®) and in its expertise. All this guarantees the continuity required by UZA.

In addition, environmentally friendly and sustainable waste management is a priority for UZA. In practice, Indaver ensures this sustainability by implementing waste prevention projects and converting as much of UZA's waste as possible into energy and raw materials. For instance, annually UZA generates electricity for 170 households;

98 % of its waste is turned into raw materials or energy. Indaver ensures that UZA's 'green waste' has the smallest possible ecological footprint and thus promotes healthy care as well.

Future-oriented and innovative waste policy

At present, the TWM project at UZA is running smoothly and there are still a lot of projects in the pipeline. Continuous improvement and keeping each other sharp are a must for both parties. UZA expects Indaver, as a waste expert, to obtain accreditation by the Joint Commission International (JCI). JCI is an organisation that sets international standards in terms of quality of care and patient safety. Through audits and inspections JCI determines whether the quality of the healthcare institution meets these standards and identifies areas for improvement. All aspects of the treatment and care, from pre-admission to the follow-up after discharge, are examined: prevention and control of infections, medication policy, HR policy, safety of buildings and infrastructure, etc. The organisation of waste management plays an important role here and all possible innovations and optimizations are taken into account. In addition, Indaver is closely involved in several research projects on PMD, kitchen waste and the expansion of the container park. The current achievements and forthcoming improvements prove to UZA that Indaver is a leading partner for a future-oriented and innovative waste policy.

i More information ?
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Total waste costs have been greatly reduced in recent years
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UZA provides 170 households with electricity annually
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