

# Catholic Courier

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### Boston offers largest U.S. abuse settlement

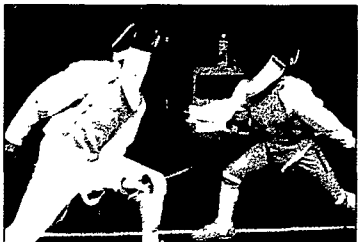
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## Agencies seek solutions to environmental concerns

WASHINGTON — All around the country, Catholic hospitals are asking themselves the same questions:

- What's the best way to cut down on or eliminate the use of mercury in thermometers, blood-pressure instruments, feeding tubes, batteries and other equipment, now that mercury has been shown to harm children and pregnant women?

- How can institutions pledged to serve the poor avoid causing ecological harm to the very neighborhoods they want to help, while still disposing of their medical waste in a responsible manner?

- And that age-old question, as articulated at a recent Catholic Health Association workshop by Bernita McTernan, senior vice president for sponsorship and mission integration at Catholic Healthcare West in San Francisco: "Where do old computers go to die?"

Calls from Catholic leaders as current as Pope John Paul II and as ancient as St. Francis of Assisi are bringing together Catholic health-care officials — as well as a variety of people-representing other Catholic institutions — to address the environmental impact of their daily practices.

"Ecology is a deeply spiritual issue," said Dominican Sister Mary Ellen Leciejewski, ecology program coordinator for Catholic Healthcare West, considered one of the leaders in environmental stewardship among Catholic health-care institutions.

"It invites us to an exquisite awareness of the interconnection of all things," she added. "We cannot have a health-care system that takes care of its people but does not take care of the environment."

The environmental cause — especially as it affects children — has brought major Catholic organizations together in the Catholic Coalition for Children and a Safe Environment, which meets about every six weeks to discuss and implement new initiatives.

The coalition's members include Catholic Charities USA, Catholic Health

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Environmental stewardship — especially finding safe methods for disposing of medical and other wastes — is the focus for organizations coming together under the banner of the Catholic Coalition for Children and a Safe Environment.

Story and photos by Catholic News Service

