



DIAGNOSIS DECARB PART 1: Unveiling Healthcare's Carbon Footprint

1-2 MINUTE READ

Written by Zachery Wills

Embarking on a mission to address healthcare decarbonization, I'm excited to share insights at the intersection of healthcare and sustainability. Dubbed #DiagnosisDecarb for easy future reference, our journey begins with a vital question: **What is the healthcare sector's impact on carbon emissions and why is it a tough sector to decarbonize?**

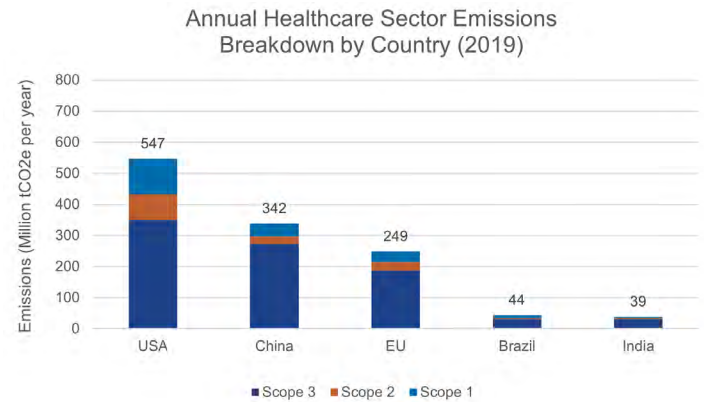
Globally, healthcare is responsible for 4.4% of total carbon emissions, making it the fifth-largest worldwide emitter (if all healthcare buildings were their own country). Notably, the United States, China, and the European Union combine to account for 56% of the world's healthcare-related emissions¹. In the United States, the healthcare sector was responsible for 8.5% of national greenhouse gas emissions (in 2018), exceeding the total emissions from passenger cars (in 2021) by 20%². Closer to home, New York City Health and Hospitals manages 11 of the city's 74 hospitals (and numerous health service buildings) and generated 0.4% of NYC's emissions in 2019³, implying that the healthcare sector in NYC contributes 2.7% of the city's total emissions.

So, if the emissions from healthcare are such a big problem, what stops us from decarbonizing? There are a few key challenges:

- Renovating existing facilities is complex and costly due to the need to work around active healthcare operations.
- Medically sensitive spaces, such as operating rooms, demand high ventilation rates, increasing energy consumption.

- Unique healthcare equipment types, such as steam sterilizers (which require high-grade heat) and MRI machines (which have particularly high electrical loads) complicate decarbonization plans.

Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions are most directly under our control, and approximately 1.5% of all emissions in the United States come from these categories in the healthcare sector. Let's do something about it! #DiagnosisDecarb.



Data Source: "Health Care's Climate Footprint" Health Care Without Harm (2019)

For more information, please contact:



Zachery J. Wills
Senior Project Engineer
willsz@jbb.com

www.DeepCarbonReduction.com

1 Health Care Climate Action - HealthCare's Climate Footprint Paper
 2 EPA GHG Emissions Inventory, USA Health Sector Emissions Fact Sheet, Health Affairs Article Providing National Analysis Methodology
 3 MOCEJ NYC Greenhouse Gas Inventory, NYC DCAS LL45 Climate Report 2021