Exclusive: Oil Drums Offer Insight To Hospital Purchasing

by Jeff Reinke, editorial director

Oil prices briefly rose above $80 a barrel early today, the first time it has hit this mark in 2009. Crude demand has remained sluggish this year as the global economy recovers from recession, but driving the spike is the economic fact that commodities like oil and gold are bought and sold in dollars, making them cheaper and more attractive to investors when U.S. currency falters.

Additionally, heating oil was down 53 cents to $2.0469 a gallon. Gasoline for November delivery lost $1.01 to $1.9771 a gallon. Natural gas for November delivery jumped 6.8 cents to $4.903 per 1,000 cubic feet.

So what is this post doing in a source relative to surgical technology, news and products? Simple – oil prices play a huge role in the purchasing objectives of healthcare providers due to the number of medical supplies that are oil-based.

Think of how many products are used in a typical day which depend, in some way, shape or form, on the use of oil in their construction. Anything that is plastic or of some plastic-like composite falls in this category. So while we typically think about oil and the personal impact it has at the pump, or indirectly in the economic strain higher fuel prices have during leaner economic times as patients try to juggle medical bills, these price spikes impact medical operations just as significantly.

Although this increase should be short-lived, as OPEC has pledged to open up some reserves in order to quell the rising price, long-term oil price increases could impact hospitals and other medical facilities in the form of higher supplier prices on everything from tubing to syringes to latex gloves. This makes smarter purchasing as a whole that much more important, and continues to place emphasis on surgical practices and recycling protocols that are as cost-efficient as possible.

Source URL (retrieved on *11/25/2014 - 8:48pm*):
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