Food and Beverage Pledges for Hospitals and Healthcare Systems

This fact sheet provides information about various national and regional hospital and healthcare pledge programs aimed at promoting healthy food and beverage environments. For each program, the following information is provided in the table below:

- an explanation of the commitments—with a focus on the beverage-related commitments;
- contacts and useful links; and
- a list of participating hospitals or states where there are participating hospitals.

Some pledge programs are specifically designed for hospital participation while others are more general. Hospitals that have made commitments that go beyond minimum standards in the pledge programs are also identified. A national pledge for individual healthcare practitioners is included as well. There are also many varieties of “Rethink Your Drink” and other types of individual pledge programs or media campaigns; however, the table below focuses on voluntary pledge programs specifically aimed at promoting systemic change in and across healthcare and worksite environments.

The Public Health Law Center has created a series of resources designed to inform and support efforts to promote healthy beverage choices within Minnesota workplace settings, with a special focus on healthcare. This fact sheet provides a summary of national and regional voluntary pledge programs that focus on improving the food and beverage environments within organizational settings.
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| **Healthier Hospitals Initiative (HHI)—**Healthier Food Challenge¹ | **Beverage Commitments:** ²  
- Increase healthy beverage* purchases by 20% over a baseline year, OR  
- Increase healthy beverages to 80% of total beverage purchases for use throughout the hospital (patient, retail, vending, and catering)  

*Healthy beverages = water (seltzers and flavored waters), 100% fruit juice (4 ounces), 100% vegetable juice (<140 mg sodium), milk (unflavored AND Certified Organic or rBGH-free), non-dairy milk alternatives (unsweetened), teas and coffee (unsweetened with only naturally occurring caffeine).  

**Food/Other Commitments:**  
In addition to the Healthy Beverage commitment, the HHI Healthier Food Challenge program offers two other levels of food-related commitments:³ Balanced Meals (decrease purchases of meat by 20% from baseline within three years); and Local/Sustainable Food (increase purchases of local and/or sustainable food by 20% annually OR increase local and/or sustainable food purchases to 15% of total food purchases within three years).  

HHI also offers other pledge categories designed to promote healthier healthcare systems, including: Engaged Leadership, Leaner Energy, Less Waste, Safer Chemicals, and Smarter Purchasing. | Health Care Without Harm  
Stacia Clinton  
Healthy Beverage Program Lead  
Healthy Food in Health Care Program  
sclinton@hcwh.org  
(978) 660-2537 | HHI Healthier Food Challenge Participants:  

**Supporting Organizations:**  
Include 5 state hospital associations (CA, MI, NH, OH, VT)  

*MN Hospitals:  
Ridgview Medical Center (Waconia) |
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| **Hospital Healthy Food Initiative**<sup>4</sup>  | **Beverage Commitments**:<sup>5</sup>  
- Limiting unhealthy beverages to a maximum of 20% of drinks available in the hospital  
- Increase the percentage of “better-for-you beverages” to 80% of overall beverage purchases by Dec. 31, 2015  
  - Water (includes fruit-flavored seltzers)  
  - 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice (4 ounce serving or less AND less than 140 mg sodium)  
  - Milk (unflavored) and dairy alternatives (unsweetened)  
  - Teas and coffee (unsweetened with naturally occurring caffeine)  
  - Non-caloric beverages (fewer than five calories per serving)  
- Make tap water or access to water stations available where possible  
**Food Commitments**:<sup>6</sup>  
- provide labeling with calorie counts for all food and beverages in cafeterias and on patient menus;  
- create “wellness meals” for cafeteria and patient menus that meet defined nutritional profiles and price those meals equal to or less than the cost of other meal options;  
- remove all deep-fat fryers and deep-fried products from hospital cafeterias and patient menus;  
- market only healthy food and beverage items in cafeterias;  
- meet defined nutritional standards for 60% of entrees and side dishes; and  
- increase fruit and vegetables to 10% of total food spending, or increase spending on fruits and vegetables by 20% per year. | Partnership for a Healthier America  
Susan Roberts  
sroberts@ahealthieramerica.org  
(202) 842-9001 ext. 202 | At least 17 hospital systems, including over 500 hospitals in more than 23 states:  
Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota<sup>*</sup>, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Washington, Wisconsin<sup>7</sup>  
*MN Hospitals:  
- Albany Area Hospital and Medical Center (Albany)  
- Lakewood Health Center (Baudette)  
- St. Francis Medical Center (Breckenridge)  
- St. Gabriel's Hospital (Little Falls)  
- St. Joseph's Area Health Services (Park Rapids)  
- Gunderson Clinics (Harmony, Houston, La Crescent, Spring Grove, Winona) |
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| **Commons Health Hospital Challenge**<sup>8</sup> (Minnesota) | **Beverage Commitments:**
Phase out sales of sugary drinks within one year. Applies to:
• dining rooms
• cafeterias
• vending
• patient meals
• onsite food court vendors
*Healthy beverages = Water, seltzers, sugar-free or diet drinks, unsweetened coffee and teas, all milks, soymilk beverages, 100% fruit and vegetable juices
**Food/Other Commitments:**
Challenge participants can also pledge to expand local and sustainable food purchases to 20% of food and beverage purchasing dollars by 2020 and to adopt the World Health Organization’s Baby-Friendly Hospital Guidelines.<sup>9</sup> Participants can make a single commitment, or any combination they choose. | **Institute for a Sustainable Future**
Commons Health Hospital Challenge
Jamie Harvie
info@isfusa.org
(218) 525-7806 | At least 5 Minnesota hospitals:
• St. Luke’s Hospital and Clinic (Duluth)
• Grand Itasca Clinics and Hospital (Grand Rapids)
• Essentia Health (Duluth)
• Cook County North Shore Hospital (Grand Marais)
• Lake View Memorial (Two Harbors) |
| **Karat Gold Partnership**<sup>10</sup> (Kansas City, MO) | **Beverage Commitments:**
■ Eliminate beverages with added sugar from vending machines
■ Install water coolers in large meeting rooms rather than offering bottled water
■ Purchase bottled water primarily for disaster preparedness and emergency situations
■ Purchase only tea approved by the Ethical Tea Partnership as environmentally sustainable and socially just
**Food Commitments:**<sup>11</sup>
The Karat Gold Partnership includes a collection of voluntary commitments designed to increase purchasing of foods grown or raised within 250 miles of Kansas City. The commitments include adopting local food purchasing best practices and sustainable food service best practices, as designated by the program. | **Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition**
Beth Low, Director
bethlow@kcfoodpolicy.org | At least 9 participants, including two hospitals in Kansas and Missouri |
## Regional Healthy Beverage Programs for Organizations

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| **Healthy Beverages in Hospitals Campaign**      | **Beverage Commitments:** Participating hospitals are using a variety of healthy beverage strategies, including:  
• Labeling*  
• Pricing  
• Product arrangement  
• Education  
• Elimination/replacement strategies  
*Most follow a Red, Yellow, Green schematic per City of Boston Healthy Options Beverage Standards:**  
• Red=soda, energy, and fruit drinks  
• Yellow=diet soda, low-calorie, low-sugar, 100% juice  
• Green=water, seltzer, skim or 1% milk | **Boston Public Health Commission**  
Anne McHugh, Director  
Chronic Disease Prevention and Control  
chronicdisease@bphc.org  
(617) 534-5690 | At least 9 hospitals and 3 health centers in Boston, MA |
| **Howard County Unsweetened**                    | **Beverage Commitments:**  
■ Generally replace sugary drinks with water, low-calorie, or no-calorie drinks  
■ Supply better beverage choices at:  
• meeting and events  
• vending machines  
• cafeterias  
• break rooms  
■ Encourage healthier options by making them more numerous and/or less expensive than sugary drinks  
■ Include signage to direct people to the healthiest choices available  
■ Educate members/employees/visitors  
■ Support public policies to reduce sugary drink consumption | **Better Choices Coalition**  
Online e-mail submission form:  
www.hocunsweetened.org/contact-us  
(443) 766-1217  
Online pledge:  
www.hocunsweetened.org/contact-us | List of participating organizations is not available. This program appears to be designed for a variety of workplace settings, and not specifically just hospitals |
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| **Healthy Hospital Food Initiative**<sup>16</sup> (New York City) | **Beverage Standards**<sup>17</sup>  
Vending:  
■ In vending machines, all but two slots must contain beverages with 25 calories or less per 8 ounces  
■ Two slots must contain unflavored, unsweetened water (or seltzer water if a drinking fountain is nearby)  
■ Water and seltzer must be placed at eye-level  
■ Promotional materials should advertise only water or beverages with 25 calories or less per 8 ounces  
■ High-calorie (more than 25 calories per 8 ounces) drinks must be placed farthest from eye level  
■ High-calorie drinks must be in serving sizes of 12 ounces or smaller  
■ All calorie information must be posted  
Café/Cafeteria:  
■ Water must be made available at no charge  
■ At least 75% of all beverage options must be low calorie beverages (beverages that contain 25 calories or less per 8 ounces)  
■ All high calorie beverages must be 16 ounces or less  
Patient Meals:  
■ All beverages, except 100% fruit juice or milk, must be ≤ 25 calories per 8 ounces  
■ Juices must be 100% fruit juice  
■ Milk must be 1% or non-fat, and unsweetened  
■ Fluid milk substitutes (e.g. soymilk) must be unflavored  
**Food Commitments:**  
The program also provides standards for food in cafeterias, vending machines, and on patient trays. | **New York City Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene**  
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| **Healthy Beverage Environment**<sup>18</sup> (Washington) | **Beverage Commitments:**  
- Check and repair all on-site water fountains  
- Distribute and post information about facility water fountain locations, the benefits of water, and the dangers of sugary beverages  
- Adopt a healthy beverage* policy that includes the King County Board of Health’s Healthy Vending Guidelines<sup>19</sup> and connect it to the organization’s mission statement  
- Prominently place healthy beverages in vending machines, cafeterias, and places where food is sold  
- Eliminate super-size options and limit serving sizes of sugary drinks to 12 ounces or less  
- Make healthy beverages the default option served with any children’s menu items  
- Provide only healthy beverages at all organizational meetings, functions, conferences, and parties  
- Phase-out corporate sponsorships, advertisements, endorsements, and free giveaways from unhealthy food and beverage companies  
*Healthy beverages = water, low and non-fat milk, diet drinks, unsweetened coffee or tea, and small portions (6 ounces) of 100% juice | Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition (Seattle, WA)  
info@copewa.org  
(206) 859-2500  
Downloadable pledge: http://copcwa.org/healthier-beverage-environments/ | Seattle Children’s Hospitals |
| **Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition** (Seattle, WA) | **Individual Healthy Beverage Pledge for Healthcare Professionals** | Health Care Without Harm (National)  
Online petition: http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/5140/p/di/a/action/public/?action_KEY=8358 | Over 500 signatures as of July 9, 2013 |
| **Health Care Professionals say “No” to Sugar Sweetened Beverages** (National) | Online petition to show support for healthy beverages campaigns. Names are confidential. All data is aggregate. |  |  |
### Program Name

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#### Individual Hospitals

Several hospital systems have designed their own voluntary healthy food and beverage strategies. Many of these hospitals also participate in one of the national pledge programs described above, and have decided to go beyond the pledge commitments. The strategies vary, but the practices of eliminating sugary drinks at some or all service points, providing nutritional information at vending machines, and increasing the availability of “healthy” beverages (such as low or nonfat milk, unsweetened coffees and teas, waters and seltzers, and 100% juice) are typical across programs.

- Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital (Palo Alto, CA)\(^{20}\)
- San Mateo Medical Center (San Mateo, CA)\(^{21}\)
- Baptist Health South Florida (Miami and Southern FL)\(^{22}\) — six hospitals
- Vanguard Health (Chicago, IL)\(^{23}\) - four hospitals\(^*\)
- Indiana University Health (Indianapolis, IN)\(^{24}\) — two hospitals in system, extended to 12 other hospitals in the state\(^*\)
- Carney Hospital (Boston, MA)\(^{25}\)
- Fairview Hospital (Great Barrington, MA)\(^{26}\)
- University of Michigan Health System (MI)\(^{27}\) - all hospitals, health centers, administrative buildings, and the Medical School\(^*\)
- ProMedica (Northwest OH and Southeast MI)\(^{28}\) - All 11 hospitals in the ProMedica system\(^*\)
- Mercy Children's Hospital (Kansas City, MO)\(^{29}\)
- Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (Lebanon, NH)\(^{30}\)
- Cleveland Clinic (Cleveland, OH)\(^{31}\)
- Nationwide Children's Hospital (Columbus, OH)\(^{32}\)
- Dayton Children's Hospital (Dayton, OH)\(^{33}\)
- University of Pennsylvania Health System (Philadelphia, PA)\(^{34}\)
- Baylor Health Care System (Dallas/Fort Worth, TX)\(^{35}\) — over a dozen hospitals\(^*\)
- Gifford Medical Center (Randolph, VT)\(^{36}\)
- Seattle Children's Hospital (Seattle, WA)\(^{37}\)

\(^*\)Indicates hospitals that have eliminated sugary beverages, whether at some or all service points. See endnotes for full details.

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### Additional Resources

This resource is part of the Public Health Law Center’s Healthy Beverages in Healthcare Toolkit. The full toolkit and individual factsheets are available for download at [http://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/resources/healthy-healthcare](http://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/resources/healthy-healthcare).
This publication was prepared by the Public Health Law Center at William Mitchell College of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota. The Public Health Law Center thanks Stacia Clinton, with Health Care Without Harm, and Katherine Bishop, with the Center for Science in the Public Interest, for their review and comments on a draft of this fact sheet.

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The Public Health Law Center provides information and legal technical assistance on issues related to public health. The Public Health Law Center does not provide legal representation or advice.

Endnotes


2 The beverage commitment is supported by Health Care Without Harm’s Healthy Beverage Project. More information is available at http://www.healthyfoodin-healthcare.org/healthybeverage.php (last visited Oct. 25, 2013).

3 These levels of food-related commitments include one or more of the following policy pledges: Balanced Meals (within three years from baseline decrease meat purchases in pounds by 20% where meat includes beef, pork, poultry, and lunch meat, Healthy Beverages (as described in table), and Local/Sustainable Food (increase by 20% annually over baseline year the percentage of local and/or sustainable food OR increase within three years local and/or sustainable food purchases to 15% of total food dollar purchases as measured in dollars). The completion of one policy pledge is a Level 1 commitment, two policy pledges is a Level 2 commitment, and so on.


5 Becoming a partner hospital facility or system with the Partnership for a Healthier America’s Hospital Healthy Food Initiative requires a three-year commitment to all of the beverage and food pledges listed above. Partnership for a Healthier America, Hospital Healthy Food Initiative, Hospital Overview Memo (copy on file with the Public Health Law Center).

6 Partnership for a Healthier America, Hospital Healthy Food Initiative, Healthy Food Commitment template (copy on file with the Public Health Law Center).

7 Partnership for a Healthier America, Hospital Healthy Food Initiative Details (Oct. 16, 2012) (copy on file with the Public Health Law Center).


The Karat Gold Partnership offers three levels of commitment (14 Karat Gold, 18 Karat Gold, 24 Karat Gold). The minimum commitment (14 Karat Gold level) is to increase purchasing of foods grown or raised within 250 miles of Kansas City by 2%, or by five items, or to maintain at least 50% purchasing from local producers; and to incorporate three new local food purchasing best practices and at least 1 new sustainable food service best practice. Id.


For activity summaries that include helpful information about the variety of strategies used by the hospitals to implement the goals, see Boston Pub. Health Comm’n, Healthy Beverages in Hospitals Campaign, id.


The NYC Healthy Food Initiative provides standards tailored to each of four types of outlets (cafeterias/cafes, beverage vending, food vending, and patient meals) that hospitals can implement in a step-wise fashion. The full sets of standards for each outlet are available at id.


The Seattle/King County Public Health Department’s Healthy Vending Toolkit is available at http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/nutrition.aspx.

Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Food and Beverage Policy includes restrictions on beverages available in cafes, cafes, and vending machines. The policy is available at http://www.banpac.org/toolkit_HFBPE/section7/lcp_h_food_pol_2012.pdf.

San Mateo Medical Center’s elimination of sugary drinks is part of a larger food service makeover. Sugary drinks were eliminated from vending machines only. Vending machine sales remained stable after the phase-out; cafeteria sales experienced a $350 per day increase. Get Healthy San Mateo County, Healthier Hospital Cafeteria Food at SMMC Boosts Profits, Pleases Patrons, http://gethealthysmc.org/sites/default/files/docs/WorkplaceWellness/San%20Mateo%20Medical%20Center%20Case%20Study.pdf (case study).

Baptist Health South Florida instituted “Wellness Advantage Meals,” which include spring water as part of their patient meal service. CTRS For Disease Control And Prevention, Healthy Hospital Practice To Practice Series (P2P) 2, available at http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/downloads/p2p/P2P_Food_Issue2.pdf.

Vanguard Medical Group of Chicago has pledged to “refine its choices, eventually phasing out diet drinks and sweetened juices until it offers only unsweetened drinks or those that contain less than about a teaspoon of sugar per 12-ounce serving” over a 12-month period. Monica Eng, [Chicago Hospital Group to Drop Sugar–Sweetened Drinks], Chicago Tribune (April 24, 2012), available at http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-biz-0425-hospital-sugar-ban-20120424,0,4379382.story.

Indiana University Health system will no longer offer sugary drinks in cafes, vending machines, and gift shops. However, on-site vendors, such as McDonald’s, can still sell them. Shari Rudavsky, Ind. Hospitals’ RX: No Sugary Drinks, USA Today (May 16, 2013), http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/05/16/hospitals-no-sugary-drinks/2192673/.

Fairview Hospital eliminated sugary drinks through a step-wise process beginning with price increases for sugary drinks, which eventually led to a soda sales phase-out in the cafeteria, catering, vending machines, and patient menus. The next step will be reducing portion sizes of the 100% juices offered. Sugary drinks are still offered upon physician’s recommendation in patient meals. Inst. For a Sustainable Future, *Fairview Hospital—SSB Elimination Case Study* (Aug. 22, 2010), [http://www.powerprism.org/Alliance-FairviewHospitalSSB.pdf](http://www.powerprism.org/Alliance-FairviewHospitalSSB.pdf).

As of mid-November 2013, the UMHS no longer sells regular soda and other sugary drinks in vending, cafeteria and patient care areas, both on and off the medical campus. The UMHS is part of the Healthier Hospitals Initiative. *New Healthy Beverage Initiative For All UMHS Locations* (Oct. 1, 2013), [http://medicine.umich.edu/medschool/about/news/new-healthy-beverage-initiative-all-umhs-locations](http://medicine.umich.edu/medschool/about/news/new-healthy-beverage-initiative-all-umhs-locations).


Seattle Children’s Hospital sugary drink restriction is part of a larger “Mission: Nutrition” initiative encompassing both food and beverages. Sugary drinks containing more than 10 calories per 8 ounces serving are not offered in the cafeteria, gift shop, and vending machines. On-campus vending machines not owned by Seattle Children’s are not covered by the policy. Seattle Children’s Hospital, Mission: Nutrition, *Frequently Asked Questions About the Cafeteria, Vending and Gift Shop Food and Drink Changes* (Sept. 2012), [http://www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/mission-nutrition-FAQ.pdf](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/mission-nutrition-FAQ.pdf).