

FOOD & BEVERAGE PLEDGES & POLICIES

for Hospitals & Healthcare Systems



This fact sheet provides information about various national, regional, and state hospital and healthcare pledge programs aimed at promoting healthy food and beverage environments that include (currently or in earlier phases) a focus on beverages. 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
- the number of participating hospitals or systems.

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. There are also many varieties of “Rethink Your Drink” and other types of individual pledge programs or media campaigns; however, the table focuses on voluntary pledge programs specifically aimed at promoting policy or systems change in and across healthcare and worksite environments.



The Public Health Law Center and the American Cancer Society have partnered to develop resources to help organizations create healthier food environments, with a special focus on hospital and healthcare settings. This publication, which is part of a larger toolkit, provides information about hospitals and health systems that have adopted policies or implemented initiatives to improve their food and beverage environments, including those made through national, regional, and state pledge programs or through individual action.

National Healthy Hospital Food and Beverage Programs

Program Details

Healthier Hospitals Initiative (HHI) Healthier Food Challenge

HHI is a program of Practice Greenhealth (formerly a joint project of Health Care Without Harm, the Center for Health Design, and Practice Greenhealth)

Contact information

Practice Greenhealth

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Key Points and Commitments

Beverage commitments¹

- 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 oz), 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).²

Food and other commitments

The HHI Healthier Food Challenge program offers two other levels of food-related commitments:

- Balanced Meals (decrease purchases of meat by 20% from baseline within three years); and
- Local and Sustainable Food (increase purchases of local or sustainable food by 20% annually or increase local 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.³

Participating hospitals

At least 37 healthcare systems, comprising nearly 500 hospitals in 37 states and the District of Columbia.⁴

National Healthy Hospital Food and Beverage Programs

Program Details

Hospital Healthier Food Initiative

*A Partnership for a
Healthier America
program*

Contact information

Partnership for a
Healthier America

Info@healthieramerica.org

202-842-9001

Key Points and Commitments

Beverage commitments⁵

- Limit 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.
- Make tap water or access to water stations available where possible.

* Better-for-you beverages include: water (including fruit-flavored seltzers), 100% fruit and vegetable juices ($\leq 4\text{oz}$ and <140 mg of sodium), milk (unflavored), dairy alternatives (unsweetened), tea and coffee (unsweetened with naturally occurring caffeine), non-caloric beverages (≤ 5 calories).

Food commitments⁶

- 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.
- Increase fruit and vegetables to 10% of total food spending or increase spending on fruits and vegetables by 20% per year.

Participating hospitals

Launched in 2012 with 17 hospital systems; more than 700 hospitals, or 10% of all hospitals nationwide, have made commitments.⁷

State and Regional Healthy Beverage Programs

Program	Key Points and Commitments
<p>Colorado Healthy Hospital Compact</p> <p><i>Colorado</i></p> <p>Contact information</p> <p>Colorado Healthy Hospital Compact</p> <p>Cdphe_chhc-admin@state.co.us</p> <p>303-692-2000</p>	<p>Beverage standards⁸</p> <p>The Healthier Beverage Program is one of four healthy hospital programs, and hospitals are recognized based on accumulation of points (whether in one single program or across multiple programs), which are awarded based on adoption of program standards. There are four standards for offering healthy beverages:[*]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% of all beverages offered in the hospital meet Healthier Beverages standards. • 60% of all beverages offered in the hospital meet Healthier Beverages standards. • 80% or greater of all beverages offered in the hospital meet Healthier Beverages standards. • Hospital neither sells nor offers any sugary drinks. <p>[*] Healthy beverages include: water (includes carbonated water, water infused with 100% natural fruit flavor infused and water with no added caloric sweeteners), juice (100% fruit or vegetable juice in ≤10 oz servings with <175 mg of sodium), milk (unflavored nonfat or low-fat milk and soy beverages in ≤12 oz servings), other beverages that are fewer than 40 calories per 8 ounce serving. (Standards apply to the entire hospital environment including patient meals, vending, cafeterias, and catering.)⁹</p> <p>Food commitments</p> <p>The Compact also includes standards for serving and marketing healthier foods, and promoting and supporting breastfeeding.</p> <p>Participating hospitals</p> <p>At least 31 Colorado hospitals have joined the Compact.¹⁰</p>

State and Regional Healthy Beverage Programs

Program	Key Points and Commitments
<p><u>Healthy Kansas Hospitals</u></p> <p><i>Kansas</i></p> <p>Contact information</p> <p>Kansas Hospital Association</p> <p>Hayley Finch-Genschorck, Director of Education, Kansas Hospital Association</p> <p>hfinch@kha-net.org</p> <p>785-233-7436</p>	<p>This initiative calls on hospitals in general to pledge to provide greater access to healthy food and beverage options for hospital employees, patients, and visitors in cafeterias, vending machines, snack carts, and gift shops. Hospitals are also encouraged to implement a healthy food and beverage policy that ensures its workforce, visitors, and guests have accessibility to healthy options in their facility.¹¹</p> <p>Participating hospitals</p> <p>82 hospitals have signed the Healthy Kansas Hospitals pledge,¹² and at least 60 have made formal policy changes.¹³</p>
<p><u>Commons Health Hospital Challenge</u></p> <p><i>Minnesota</i></p> <p>Contact information</p> <p>Institute for a Sustainable Future</p> <p>info@isfusa.org</p> <p>218-525-7806</p>	<p>Beverage commitments¹⁴</p> <p>Phase out sales of sugary drinks within one year. Applies to: dining rooms, cafeterias, vending, patient meals, and onsite food court vendors.</p> <p>* Healthy beverages = Water, seltzers, sugar-free or diet drinks, unsweetened coffee and teas, all milks, soymilk beverages, 100% fruit and vegetable juices</p> <p>Food and other commitments¹⁵</p> <p>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. Participants can make a single commitment, or any combination they choose.</p> <p>Participating hospitals</p> <p>At least 13 Minnesota and Wisconsin health systems and hospitals, including St. Luke’s Hospital, Riverwood Healthcare Center, Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital, Cook County North Shore Hospital, Lake View Hospital, and Baldwin Area Medical Center.¹⁶</p>

State and Regional Healthy Beverage Programs

Program	Key Points and Commitments
<p>Healthier Beverage Environments</p>	<p>Beverage commitments¹⁷</p>
<p><i>Washington</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Guidelines¹⁸ 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, and free giveaways from unhealthy food and beverages companies. <p>* Healthy beverages = water, low and non-fat milk, diet drinks, unsweetened coffee or tea, and small portions (6 ounces) of 100% fruit juice.</p>
<p>Contact information</p>	<p>Participating hospitals</p>
<p>Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition Seattle, WA info@copcwa.org 360-878-2543</p>	<p>At least five health systems and hospitals in the Seattle area¹⁹</p>

State and Regional Healthy Beverage Programs

Program	Key Points and Commitments
<p>Healthy Beverages in Hospitals Campaign</p>	<p>Beverage commitments</p> <p>Participating hospitals are using a variety of healthy beverage strategies, including:²⁰</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labeling* • Pricing • Product arrangement • Education • Elimination/replacement strategies <p>* Most follow a Red, Yellow, Green schematic per City of Boston Healthy Options Beverage Standards:</p> <p>Red = soda, energy, and fruit drinks Yellow = diet soda, low-calorie, low-sugar, 100% juice Green = water, seltzer, skim or 1% milk</p>
<p><i>Boston, MA</i></p> <p>Contact information</p> <p>Boston Public Health Commission</p> <p>info@bphc.org</p> <p>617-534-5690</p>	<p>Participating hospitals</p> <p>All 10 of Boston's hospitals engaged in efforts to reduce sugary drink consumption.²¹</p>



State and Regional Healthy Beverage Programs

Program	Key Points and Commitments
<p>Healthy Hospital Food Initiative</p> <p><i>New York City, NY</i></p> <p>Contact information</p> <p>New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene</p> <p>nycfoodstandards@health.nyc.gov</p>	<p>Beverage standards</p> <p><i>Vending</i>²²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p><i>Cafeteria/Café</i>²³</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p><i>Patient Meals</i>²⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Food and other commitments²⁵</p> <p>The program also provides standards for food in cafeterias, vending machines, and on patient trays.</p> <p>Participating hospitals</p> <p>At least 30 New York City hospitals participating.²⁶</p>

State and Regional Healthy Beverage Programs

Program	Key Points and Commitments
<p>Good Food, Healthy Hospitals</p> <p><i>Philadelphia, PA</i></p> <p><i>(A partnership between the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, The Common Market, and the American Heart Association)</i></p> <p>Contact information</p> <p>Philadelphia Department of Public Health</p> <p>Catherine Bartoli, Healthy Food Procurement Coordinator</p> <p>catherine.bartoli@phila.gov</p> <p>215-685-5281</p> <p>downloadable pledge</p>	<p>Beverage standards²⁷</p> <p><i>Cafeteria, Café, and On-Site Restaurants</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tap water is freely available at all meals (includes infused water). • Limit serving size of sugary drinks to maximum of 16oz (applies to bottles and fountain drinks). • Use “Green,” “Yellow,” “Red” beverage “traffic light” labeling or similar system to indicate healthier beverages.* • Offer minimum of 65% Green and/or Yellow beverages. • Offer minimum of three Green and/or Yellow beverage options at fountain machines. • Provide nutrition information for beverages at the point of choice including but not limited to name of beverage, container size and calories per container. <p><i>Vending</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 65%t of beverages offered per machine are Green and Yellow. • Sugary drinks should not be larger than 12oz each. • Green and Yellow beverages are placed in positions with the highest selling potential. • Sugary drinks are placed in positions with the lowest selling potential. • Other than beverage display or placement that conforms with the definition of Green or Yellow Light beverages, no beverage shall be specially advertised, promoted or featured on, in, or immediately surrounding any machine unless that beverage is a Green beverage. • Calorie information for beverages must be clearly and conspicuously labeled. • The price of water must not exceed the lowest price of any sugary drink. • Pricing models that promote healthy choices by establishing lower prices for the Green and Yellow beverages relative to sugary drinks are strongly encouraged.

(continued)

State and Regional Healthy Beverage Programs

Program	Key Points and Commitments
<p>Good Food, Healthy Hospitals <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p><i>Catering</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sugary drinks are not offered on catering guide. If served upon request, sugary drinks are limited to 12oz servings. <p><i>Patient Meals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only Green and Yellow beverages are offered on the patient menu. <p>* Green Light beverages: may contain 0-5g sugar/12oz, water (includes tap, infused, unsweetened, seltzer), milk (skim or 1%; whole milk for children < 2 years, unsweetened and USDA Certified Organic or rBGH-free, unsweetened non-dairy), unsweetened tea and coffee (naturally occurring caffeine).</p> <p>Yellow Light beverages: 100% vegetable juice (optimal sodium 230 mg or less), 100% fruit juice (4oz servings for patient meals), diet sodas, diet iced tea, non-fat/1% chocolate/flavored milk, low-calorie/sugar drinks (energy drinks excluded), flavored waters, low-calorie sports drinks, non-dairy sweetened milks (8oz or less container).</p> <p>Red Light beverages: contains >12g sugar/12oz), regular sodas, sports drinks, sweetened coffee drinks, energy drinks, sweetened tea and lemonade, fruit and juice drinks with added sugar, whole or 2% milk.</p> <p>Participating hospitals</p> <p>At least 38 hospitals have achieved one or more standard or pledged to do so.²⁸</p>

Individual Hospitals and Healthcare Systems

Many hospital and healthcare systems have designed their own healthy food and beverage initiatives or policies. Many of these hospitals also participate in one of the national or regional pledge programs described above and have decided to go beyond the program 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.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of hospitals or health systems that have publicly stated that they have adopted policies or pledged to eliminate sugary beverages. There likely are other hospitals that have adopted similar policies but have not chosen to publicize their efforts.

Allina Health, Minnesota, 12 hospitals ²⁹	Fairview Health Services, Minnesota, 13 hospitals ³⁸	Nationwide Children's Hospital, Ohio ⁴⁸	St. Luke's Hospital, Minnesota, main hospital campus and all clinics ⁵⁶
Baylor Health Care System, Texas ³⁰	Fairview Hospital, Massachusetts ³⁹	Park Nicollet, Minnesota, Methodist Hospital and all clinics ⁴⁹	University of California, San Francisco Hospitals and Clinics, California ⁵⁷
Carney Hospital, Massachusetts ³¹	Geisinger Health System, Pennsylvania & New Jersey, 13 hospital campuses ⁴⁰	Prisma Health, formerly Greenville Health System, North Carolina, 8 hospitals ⁵⁰	University of Michigan Health System, Michigan, all hospitals, health centers, administrative buildings, and the Medical School ⁵⁸
Children's Mercy Hospital, Missouri ³²	Gifford Medical Center, Vermont ⁴¹	ProMedica Health System, Ohio & Michigan, 13 hospitals ⁵¹	University of Pennsylvania Health System, Pennsylvania, 13 hospitals and facilities ⁵⁹
Children's Minnesota Health System, Minnesota, 2 hospitals, 12 clinics and 6 rehabilitation sites ³³	Grand Itasca Clinics & Hospital, Minnesota ⁴²	Providence Health & Services, Alaska, California, Montana, Oregon, Washington ⁵²	University of Wisconsin Health Systems, Wisconsin, 6 hospitals ⁶⁰
Cleveland Clinic, Ohio ³⁴	Hudson Hospital, Wisconsin ⁴³	San Francisco General Hospital, California ⁵³	West Suburban Medical Center, Illinois ⁶¹
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, New Hampshire ³⁵	Indiana University Health System, Indiana ⁴⁴	San Mateo Medical Center, California ⁵⁴	Westlake Hospital, Illinois ⁶²
Dayton Children's Hospital, Ohio ³⁶	Jefferson Medical Center, West Virginia ⁴⁵	Seattle Children's Hospital, Washington ⁵⁵	
Essentia Health, Fosston - Minnesota ³⁷	Louis A. Weiss Memorial Hospital, Illinois ⁴⁶		
	Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, California ⁴⁷		

Individual Hospitals and Healthcare Systems

Below is a non-exclusive list of hospitals and health systems that have publicly adopted policies or pledged to decrease the availability of sugary drinks and/or increase healthier beverage offerings. There likely are other hospitals that have adopted similar policies but have not chosen to publicize their efforts.

Advocate Health Hospitals, Illinois ⁶³	HealthPartners, Minnesota & Wisconsin, 5 hospitals and all clinics ⁶⁶	Oregon Health and Science University ⁶⁹	Southern Maine Medical Center, Maine ⁷²
Baptist Health South Florida, Florida, 10 hospitals ⁶⁴	John Hopkins Medicine, Maryland ⁶⁷	Overlake Medical Center, Washington ⁷⁰	St. Elizabeth's Medical Center, Massachusetts ⁷³
Connecticut Mental Health Center, Connecticut ⁶⁵	Norton Healthcare, Kentucky ⁶⁸	Rady Children's Hospital, California ⁷¹	Watertown Regional Medical Center, Wisconsin ⁷⁴

Additional Resources

The other resources in this series can be found on the Public Health Law Center's website at publichealthlawcenter.org. The [Healthy Healthcare Toolkit](#) includes:

- *Beverage Policies & Drinks with Artificial Sweeteners*
- *Building Blocks for Success: Developing Healthy Beverage Policies & Initiatives*
- *Food & Beverage Pledges & Policies for Hospitals & Healthcare Systems*
- *Frequently Asked Questions about Healthy Beverage Initiatives*
- *Healthcare Can Lead the Way: Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice*
- *Healthy Beverage Hot Spots: Identifying & Utilizing the Institutional Access Points*
- *Healthy Beverage Policies, Healthy Bottom Lines*
- *Healthy Beverage Policies: Key Definitions & Sample Standards*
- *Sickly Sweet: Why Focus on Sugary Drinks?*
- *Thirsty for Health — Tap Water & Healthcare*

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

Endnotes

- 1 The Beverage Commitments were part of an earlier phase of HHI's Healthier Food Challenge. Once these commitments were met, HHI moved forward with new commitments for its participants to achieve. See PUB. HEALTH LAW CTR., FOOD AND BEVERAGE PLEDGES FOR HOSPITALS AND HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS 2 (2014).
- 2 PUB. HEALTH LAW CTR., FOOD AND BEVERAGE PLEDGES FOR HOSPITALS AND HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS 2 (2014), https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/PHLC-fs-%20Healthy%20Bevs_%20Hospital%20Pledges%20Summary%204%2028%2014_0.pdf.
- 3 Healthier Hosps., HH Challenges, <http://www.healthierhospitals.org/hhi-challenges> (last visited Jan. 14, 2020).
- 4 Healthier Hosps., Participating Hospitals, <http://www.healthierhospitals.org/about-hhi/participating-hospitals> (Jan. 14, 2020).
- 5 Becoming a partner hospital facility or system with the Partnership for a Healthier America's Hospital Healthy Food Initiative required a three-year commitment to all the beverage and food pledges listed above. P'ship for a Healthier Am., Hospital Healthy Food Initiative, Hospital Overview Memo (Jan. 2014) (copy on file with the Public Health Law Center).
- 6 P'ship for a Healthier Am., Hospital Healthy Food Initiative, Healthy Food Commitment Template (Jan. 2014) (copy on file with the Public Health Law Center).
- 7 P'ship for a Healthier Am., Hospital Healthier Food Initiative, <https://www.ahealthieramerica.org/articles/hospital-healthier-food-initiative-4> (last visited Jan. 31, 2020); Caitlin Simon et al., *Partnership for a Healthier America: Creating Change Through Private Sector Partnerships*, 6 CURRENT OBESITY REPORTS 110, 108-115 (2017).
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- 13 Healthy Kan. Hosp., <https://www.kha-net.org/CriticalIssues/OptimalHealth/HealthyKansasHospitals/HealthyWorkplaces/HKHToolkit2/d151799.aspx> (last visited Jan 14, 2020).

- 14 Jamie Harvie et al, *The Challenge of the Challenge: How Health Systems Can Move from Healthy Pledge to Healthy Practice*, Minnesota Rural Health Conference, Duluth, MN (June 23, 2014), <https://minnesotaruralhealthconference.org/sites/default/files/presentations/2014/1B%2C%20The%20Commons%20Health%20Hospital%20Challenge.pdf>.
- 15 PUB. HEALTH LAW CTR., FOOD AND BEVERAGE PLEDGES FOR HOSPITALS AND HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS 4 (2014), https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/PHLC-fs-%20Healthy%20Bevs_%20Hospital%20Pledges%20Summary%204%2028%2014_0.pdf.
- 16 CTR. FOR SCI. IN THE PUB. INTEREST, EXAMPLES OF HOSPITALS WITH HEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGE POLICIES, <https://cspinet.org/sites/default/files/attachment/health-hospitals-examples.pdf>.
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- 28 GOOD FOOD, HEALTHY HOSPS., SEPTEMBER 2019 REPORT (2019), <http://foodfitphilly.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/GFHH-Achievement-Report-2019-printapproval3.pdf>.
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