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, explains why reducing sugary drink consumption is a crucial part of organizational food service policies.
This publication was prepared by the Public Health Law Center at Mitchell Hamline School of Law, in St. Paul, Minnesota. This version was made possible with funding from the American Cancer Society and builds from a previous version that was developed in partnership with Health Care Without Harm and supported by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and the Minnesota Cancer Alliance, with funding support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It was informed by the Boston Public Health Commission’s Healthy Beverage Toolkit, which was used with permission. The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC or those of any other person. The Center also acknowledges the valuable contributions of its Research Assistants, including Nicole Daily, who provided research and writing support for this publication, and thanks Kristen Sullivan, Director, Nutrition and Physical Activity at the American Cancer Society, for her review and comments on drafts of this publication.

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.

Copyright © 2020 Public Health Law Center

@PHealthLawCtr

publichealthlawcenter

youtube.com/PublicHealthLawCenterSaintPaul
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HEALTHY HEALTHCARE TOOLKIT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW TO USE THE HEALTHY HEALTHCARE TOOLKIT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREATE YOUR TEAM OR WORKGROUP</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workgroup Members</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workgroup Functions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS BEVERAGE AVAILABILITY AND STAFF PERSPECTIVES</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOP ELEMENTS FOR THE HEALTHY BEVERAGE POLICY OR INITIATIVE</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1: 100% Healthy vs. Other Benchmark Approaches</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2: Using MAPPS to Frame a Healthy Beverage Policy or Initiative</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOCUMENT THE POLICY</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGAGE SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATE STAFF, VISITORS, AND LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENT THE POLICY</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3: Suggested Vendor Talking Points</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS AND OVERCOME CHALLENGES</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRACK AND EVALUATE PROGRESS</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELEBRATE SUCCESSES</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENDNOTES</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Healthy Healthcare Toolkit

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 guide is part of the Healthy Healthcare Toolkit. The toolkit includes the following fact sheets and resources:

- 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

How to Use the Healthy Healthcare Toolkit

The other resources in this toolkit are designed to support activities to implement these components. They also could be used to educate stakeholders about why and how healthy beverage initiatives are good for community health and healthcare organizations.
How to Use this Guide

There is no “one size fits all” approach to building a healthy beverage initiative. This guide describes the key components, or building blocks, for developing a successful healthy beverage policy or initiative. The components described in this guide are the typical components for effective initiatives, and should be tailored to fit the culture and goals of the organization. For each component, links to other tools and resources are include in the boxes with a tool icon.

The Components of a Healthy Beverage Initiative

- Convene a team or workgroup
- Assess beverage availability and staff perspectives
- Develop and document a healthy beverage policy or initiative
- Engage senior management and leadership
- Educate staff, visitors, and stakeholders
- Implement the policy or initiative
- Track progress
- Address and overcome challenges
- Celebrate success

Create Your Team or Workgroup

Beverage selections and procurement by healthcare facilities typically can involve administrative, legal, logistical and even emotional factors related to current beverage vendors and the selections they offer. This is why it is important to form an internal workgroup of individuals representing a broad range of departments within the facility who can advise on crafting a workable healthy beverage policy or initiative, and who could serve as advocates for the work as it evolves.
Workgroup Members

These may include representatives from:

- Food service
- Nursing
- Nutrition
- Human resources
- Facilities
- Purchasing
- Union representatives
- Communications/marketing or other external relations
- Patient relations
- Development
- Finance
- Upper management
- Pediatrics
- Cardiology
- Other key staff members

Workgroup Functions

The workgroup can establish a workplan with key actions for designing and implementing a healthy beverage policy or initiative. These actions include:

- Assess the beverage environment
- Collect other information to inform the objectives, scope, and other aspects of the policy or initiative
- Build support for the policy or initiative
- Document the policy or initiative
- Develop an implementation plan with key deliverables, timelines, and staff leads
- Coordinate employee education, policy/initiative promotion and other communications functions
- Develop a plan to track progress or evaluate the policy or initiative

Tools

Creating a Worksite Wellness Committee, Healthy Kansas Hospitals Toolkit, Kansas Hospital Association

How to Create a Clinician Wellness Committee, American College of Physicians
Assess Beverage Availability and Staff Perspectives

Assess the beverage environment: A critical early step in creating a healthy beverage policy or initiative for a facility or organization is to carry out an assessment of the beverage environment. This assessment will provide baseline information to inform the development of a policy or initiative and implementation plan, and can be used to track changes after the policy or initiative is in place. The assessment could be carried out by members of the workgroup and could be formal or informal.
The assessment should document:

- Types of beverages available, how they are made available (i.e., the access points, such as vending machines, caterers, cafés, cafeteria, etc.), and how frequently they are purchased (e.g., total sales per month) at each location and department.

- Availability of both unhealthy and healthy options, including their prices and placement throughout the facility.

- Analysis of any contracts or agreements the organization has with food and beverage providers, including vending machine operators, cafeteria or retail contractors, concessions, caterers, etc. This includes information about when contracts may be due to renew or expire.

**Survey staff:** The workgroup could also survey staff to gather information about their awareness and knowledge of beverage choices. One Boston facility sent a Hospital Staff Survey via email to all employees to collect information about their perspectives on how to approach implementing a healthy beverage initiative. The survey could also be a tool for sharing key findings from the assessment of the beverage environment. It may not be necessary to create a new survey — for example, many hospitals conduct annual staff surveys, and a few questions about staff’s perceptions of the beverage environment, the importance of adhering to the hospital’s health mission, and similar questions could be incorporated into an existing survey.

**Apply the data:** Use the assessment and survey data to inform the development of the healthy beverage initiative. Also, when communicating with staff and other stakeholders about the need for a healthy beverage policy or initiative, being able to frame messages with documentation showing where and the extent to which sugary drinks are available and about staff support for the organization adhering to a health mission will help to make a compelling case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Healthy Beverage Hot Spots: Identifying &amp; Utilizing the Institutional Access Points</strong>, Public Health Law Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children’s Hospital Boston Beverage Survey</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Healthy Beverage Baseline Audit Tool,” Practice Greenhealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Healthy Hospital Food and Beverage Environment Scan</strong>, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Step-by-Step Guide: Using the Healthy Hospital Food, Beverage, and Physical Activity Environment Scans</strong>, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Develop Elements for the Healthy Beverage Policy or Initiative

After the workgroup has assessed the beverage environment in the facility or organization, another step is to create the healthy beverage policy or initiative, including making recommendations about or deciding on specific elements.

Key elements for the policy or initiative include:

- Statement summarizing why the organization developed the policy or initiative (for example, a statement of the policy’s purpose)
- Clear definitions
- Nutritional standards and other product specifications (portion sizes, sodium limits, etc.)
- Provisions addressing pricing, placement, and promotion, as applicable
- Provisions addressing the key, if not all, access points
- Provisions identifying the personnel responsible for implementing the policy
- Information relevant to including the standards in requests for bids and contracts
- Provisions addressing monitoring and enforcement, as necessary

Developing standards: One consideration for the new policy or initiative is its comprehensiveness. In other words, will the policy or initiative require:

- 100% healthy: all products must adhere to specific healthy standards; or
- Partial or phased in standards — either a specified percentage of products must adhere to the standards (e.g. 75% healthy), or standards are phased in over time (e.g., starting with vending and then moving cafeterias; or starting at 50% and moving to 75% healthy).

Many hospitals have chosen to stop selling or providing sugary drinks on their campuses (except, of course, when ordered by a clinician) and apply their policies to 100% of beverages sold in their cafeterias, vending machines, and provided at meetings or events. Others have adopted a mixed approach, reducing but not necessarily eliminating sugary drinks, or applying a standard to cover 50% or 75% of beverages they serve and sell to visitors and employees. There are advantages and disadvantages to either approach, which are summarized in Table 1.
### Table 1: 100% Healthy vs. Other Benchmark Approaches

#### 100% Healthy Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offers a clear and straightforward policy that is easy to understand and monitor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes a bold statement underscoring the importance of a healthy food and beverage environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less complicated to maintain over time — does not require constant monitoring and tracking each month to ensure adherence to the policy. For example, it does not require a continual calculation of the percentage of sugary drinks being stocked in the vending machines or frequent checking to make sure the distributor stocked the machine properly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotes social norm change around what is a healthy food and beverage environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides more beverage choices for staff and visitors who want healthy choices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some staff or visitors may be initially resistant and complain.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May be difficult to implement initially if contract changes are required. May incur costs if equipment changes are needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limits choices for patients who request a sugary drink for non-medical reasons.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Partial or Phased-In Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supports a gradual transition to healthier beverages, encouraging staff and visitors to change their habits and taste preferences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces the level of initial resistance and complaints.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserves the opportunity for customers to choose products that may not be healthy but are appealing for other reasons.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes a positive statement about promoting a healthy beverage environment but does not impose an absolute.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides additional flexibility to allow time to modify contracts, renegotiate provisions, issue new contract bids and change other financial agreements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requires regular monitoring to ensure proper product mix is being offered, that products are placed in appropriate positions, that labeling and educational signage is properly placed and maintained, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires more complicated tracking — 75% healthy beverage offerings may not result in 75% of beverages sold being healthy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could limit the health impact because sugary drinks are still available for purchase.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undermines clinical messages about importance of healthy eating and what constitutes a healthy choice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slower norm change around healthy beverage environments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A 100% healthy standard may require considerable up-front promotion, education, and engagement to build buy in; however, these activities would likely become more infrequent and less rigorous over time. In contrast, a less than 100% standard typically requires sustained effort over longer time periods. For example, regular monitoring is required to ensure available products adhere to the established benchmarks and that the right products are stocked in the slots or in the correct amounts. Because the healthy options will be competing with unhealthy options, sustained, consistent marketing strategies also will be required to promote the healthier options, such as through product placement, price promotions, or point-of-sale marketing like countertop displays or nutrition labeling.

A middle-ground approach that can be used to reach a 100% healthy standard or something close to it is to phase in changes. This can be done by either gradually increasing the percentage of healthy options over time to reach 100% (or whatever the end goal is), or starting with a sub-set of venues and expanding to others (e.g., starting with vending machines, then moving to cafeterias).

For more information on this topic, see the Kansas Hospital Association’s fact sheet on Healthy Foods and Beverages, What Approach is Right for Your Hospital?
Connecting a healthy beverage policy with the hospital’s mission promotes sustainability.
“MAPP” the Initiative: One way to plan and organize a policy or initiative is to use the MAPPS strategies developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). MAPPS represents five evidence-based strategies that, when combined, can have a profound influence on improving health behaviors by changing community environments. These include: Media, Access, Point-of-decision (or point-of-purchase) information, Price, and Social Support and Services. Table 2 provides examples of activities in each of these strategy areas. The MAPPS strategies should be applied in the places where beverages are sold or provided, including vending machines, cafeterias, concessions, meeting places, patient floors and trays, and lounges. Some strategies may be useful whether the organization uses a 100% healthy standard or a different benchmark, while the applicability of others will depend on the organization’s approach.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Media        | • Promote tap water and healthy beverage choices through cafeteria and vending machine signage and a hospital-wide education campaign.  
• Counter advertise health effects of sugary drink choices.  
• Promote the beverage policy or initiative through internal newsletters and special events.  
• Share the financial, ecological, and potential health impacts of bottled beverage usage to promote a reusable mug or pourable beverage program.  
• Notify external media outlets about the initiative and how it aligns with the organization’s mission of improving the human and environmental health of the community. |
| Access       | • Provide only drinks that meet healthy beverage standards as determined by the internal workgroup.  
• Reduce access to unhealthy beverage choices by limiting the number and portion sizes of offerings.  
• Increase access to filtered water stations.  
• Provide or sell fruit- and herb-infused tap water in retail, catering or other areas throughout the facility.  
• Provide or sell reusable mugs/bottles with organization logos for healthy non-bottled beverage promotion. |
| Point-of-Purchase | • Add and/or increase education/signage for healthy beverages with an emphasis on water.  
• Adjust beverage cooler plan-a-grams to favor healthy beverage product placement.  
• Remove advertisements for unhealthy beverages on vending machine facades, fountain machines, and coolers, or only allow advertisements for beverages that meet the healthy beverage policy.  
• Place healthy beverages in convenient, grab-and-go places, such as by the checkout and eye-level shelves. |
| Price        | • Change the relative price of healthy vs. unhealthy beverages to make a healthy choice more affordable and desirable.  
• Offer discounts and promotions for customers using reusable mugs. |
| Social Support and Services | • Create an environment of support for healthy habits by engaging senior management and clinician advocates.  
• Connect the healthy beverage policy or initiative to a broader effort within the organization to create a healthier workplace and support a healthy community. |

Healthcare facilities throughout the country have found innovative and creative ways to utilize the MAPPS strategy to implement their beverage policies or initiatives. Connecting with other organizations working on similar efforts can help a workgroup learn from others’ efforts, share resources, and leverage positive peer pressure to build momentum.
**Document the Policy**

To be meaningful and sustainable, a policy must be written down. Otherwise, there is little guarantee that a policy will be maintained through organizational leadership shifts, or that it will be implemented consistently. Creating a written policy also makes it easier to incorporate the policy into future requests-for-bid and contracts.

A healthy beverage policy could be a stand-alone policy, or it could be incorporated into other organizational policies, such as a wellness policy or sustainable food service policy.

### Tools

- **Food & Beverage Pledges & Policies for Hospitals & Healthcare Systems**, Public Health Law Center
- **Showcase of Healthy Beverage Programs in Health Care**, Health Care Without Harm
- **Improving the Food and Beverage Environment Case Studies**, CDC’s Healthy Hospital Practice to Practice Series
- **List of hospitals that have implemented healthy food and beverage policies**, Center for Science in the Public Interest

### Sample hospital healthy beverage policies:

- Sample policy and case study, St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center
- Sample policy and case study, Fairview Hospital
- “Healthy Beverage Program,” University of Michigan Health System
- **Model Policy Template**, Healthy Kansas Hospitals, Kansas Hospital Association
- Additional policy examples are available from the Public Health Law Center
Promote tap water where safe tap water is available

Promoting water as an essential, healthy choice is a vital part of any healthy beverage initiative and is consistent with the goal of creating a healthy workplace. If the organization is in an area with access to safe tap water, it can advocate for tap water based on its low cost and how it benefits the environment by reducing plastic bottle use and other waste.

A first step in championing tap water is to ensure ready access to clean, attractive water fountains, coolers, or filtered water units. Educating about government or independent testing of water can help build confidence in its safety. Tap water promotion can also be achieved by distributing reusable water bottles through on-site stores or giveaways. For more information about promoting water and tap water in particular, see *Thirsty for Health*, another fact sheet in this toolkit.

Engage Senior Management and Leadership

The proposed healthy beverage policy or initiative should be presented to senior management for discussion and approval. Senior management and leadership is a key stakeholder group within any organization because these leaders will be responsible for implementing and enforcing the policy. Thus, buy-in from senior management is critical.

Clinical staff members within the organization who recognize the link between sugary drink consumption and poor public and environmental health can be compelling advocates in meetings with senior management.

Educate Staff, Visitors, and Leadership

A robust and proactive educational and outreach plan stressing the importance of serving healthy beverages and their connection to the organization’s mission can facilitate implementation and promote sustainability for the policy or initiative. With administration support, inform staff about the negative health impacts of sugary drinks, associated health costs, and about the benefits of healthy alternatives, such as water.

Start educating early: Education should be done early to promote better awareness and understanding of the reasoning behind the policy. Early education also provides opportunities for staff to share their concerns and for strategies to address these concerns to be developed.
If staff perceives that the process is participatory, transparent and straightforward, they are more likely to support it, or at least not oppose it.

Early education also provides the opportunity to frame the policy favorably — emphasizing that it promotes healthier choices; creates a healthier work environment; and demonstrates the organization's commitment to its mission and to promoting community health.

Multiple educational and outreach strategies may be used including internal newsletters, electronic communications, company website, staff meetings, informational sessions, tastetastings, games and educational events, and signage and flyers posted in the facility.

An effective means of educating staff, clients and visitors is posting point-of-purchase signage that provides information about which beverages are healthy and which are not, and why. If the organization plans to remove sugary drinks from its premises, point-of-purchase signage can be used during the transition period, before beverages are removed. The Boston Public Health Commission has developed traffic light education signage, including posters and brochures about healthy beverage choices that could be used as templates. These educational efforts can transition into the “official launch” of the healthy beverage policy or initiative.

**Tools**

- “Healthy Food and Beverages” video and infographic, Allina Health
- [Healthy Beverage Toolkit](#), Boston Public Health Commission
- “Hydrate for Health” presentation, Health Care Without Harm
- “Hydrate for Health” presentation talking points, Health Care Without Harm
- Healthy Kansas Hospitals Toolkit, Kansas Hospital Association:
  - PowerPoint presentation
  - [Communicating Food/Beverage Policy Changes](#)
  - PowerPoint presentation template

Other communications examples are available from the Public Health Law Center.
Implement the policy

Location matters: Consistent and comprehensive implementation of the policy is key to success. Each location or venue where beverages are sold or provided will present different challenges and opportunities for implementation. For more information about how locations and venues factor into implementation, see the fact sheet Healthy Beverage Hot Spots.

Incorporate into contracts and RFPs: An important part of the implementation plan should be taking steps to make sure the healthy beverage policy is incorporated into requests-for-bid and contracts going forward. Policies must be incorporated into requests-for-bid and contracts to be enforceable with vendors. The policy document can also be given to current and potential contractors, as part of efforts to educate contractors about the organization’s goals and policies, and to encourage compliance.

Talking with vendors: During the transition to a healthier beverage environment, open and ongoing communication with beverage vendors is key to maintaining positive working relationships with them. Begin by reviewing the terms and conditions of current contracts with beverage vendors and on-site food venue operators. Encourage compliance among vendors within the terms of a current contract by forwarding a written copy of the new beverage policy specifications, along with a statement presenting the organization’s goals to model healthy behaviors and promote public and environmental health through the provision of healthy beverages. Government-owned facilities may also be subject to laws that give contracting preferences to eligible legally blind vendors. This means that these vendors can be a particularly important group to engage with, although these laws do not limit the organization’s authority to adopt a healthy beverage policy.

Existing beverage contracts can present both challenges and opportunities in transitioning to a healthy beverage policy immediately. The contract terms may dictate the timeframe for implementing a new policy, depending on product specifications already included in the contract and when the contract expires. An organization could choose to negotiate with current vendors to phase in healthier options before the contract ends. If the contracts are short-term or ending soon, an organization might decide to wait until the contracts are up for renewal to negotiate new contracts incorporating the policy language or requesting bids that incorporate the new policy. Contracts trump internal policies unless those policies are incorporated into the contract.

Waiting until the contracts expire may minimize conflict with vendors. This waiting period provides an opportunity to implement an education campaign before changes are visible. If contracts are of varying duration, an organization may want to consider building in a
grace period for the contracts that end sooner, so that changes are implemented across the organization at the same time.

It is critical that the organization’s healthy beverage policy or initiative is created with a mission and vision based on health as the foundation for its development. This is why the development of the beverage specifications and product profile for beverages to be sold or available in the facility should be handled by a healthy beverage workgroup made up of members of facility staff.

Many beverage vendors have viable non-sugary alternatives to offer and can accommodate institutional policies focused on healthy choices without a problem. Some vendors, however, may express concerns and offer to engage in the development and roll-out of the policy or initiative. It is not recommended that such offers be accepted. Pragmatically, vendors are in the business of selling products, not promoting health or providing healthcare. However, after the organization’s healthy beverage policy has been established, it makes sense to engage beverage vendors, communicate the product specifications to them, and seek their support.

Beverage vendors also should not assume the role of providing verbal or written health information or advertisements about their products to staff in the facility. All messages sent
to staff during the transition period should be developed by the workgroup. The key role of vendors is to provide beverages that meet the facility’s specifications and to meet the deadlines established by the internal workgroup for the policy or initiative roll-out. Vendor activities in the roll-out may include replacing current vending machines that have advertising with clear-faced machines with no advertising, re-stocking beverages according to new shelving or placement strategies, and removing other forms of ads for beverages defined as unhealthy or that do not meet the standards of the organization’s new beverage policy.

Table 3 includes common concerns and offers from beverage vendors when talking to them about the beverage policy or initiative and suggested responses.

### Table 3: Suggested Vendor Talking Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beverage Vendor Concern</th>
<th>Healthcare Facility’s Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“You are taking away individual choice.”</td>
<td>“We, as an organization are providing plenty of choices for healthier beverages that align with our mission of supporting the health of the community we serve. If someone would like a beverage that is not being offered here, they continue to have the choice to bring it from home.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We can advertise collaboratively on this initiative.”</td>
<td>“This is the hospital’s initiative. Our internal marketing department will help us to promote healthier beverages. We would appreciate your partnership and support in meeting the timeline established in this healthy beverage initiative.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We have a list of beverages that have a ‘healthy’ profile.”</td>
<td>“Our hospital’s internal healthy beverage workgroup is establishing clearly defined beverage specifications. When they are fully established, we will provide these to you. At this time, we would appreciate receiving your list of healthy beverages that meet these specifications.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample contract and RFP language is available from the Public Health Law Center.  

**Healthy Vending Toolkit, St. Mary’s Health Care System**  
**Implementation guides, New York City Food Standards**  
**“Important Principles for Contracts,” EXCEED Tool for Using Healthy Food Service Guidelines, ChangeLab Solutions**
Address and Overcome Challenges

As with any change, challenges may occur. While many staff, clients and visitors will respond positively to changes towards a healthy beverage environment, there may be some negative responses as well. Many people feel attached to certain food and beverage choices and may express strong feelings about the removal of a selection. Many facilities have found that providing advance notice about the initiative reduces negative reactions to the transition to healthier beverages. Share with all stakeholders that, as a healthcare organization, the facility will not offer certain beverage selections — or will make them less readily available — because promotion of unhealthy choices is inconsistent with its mission. Consistent messaging in the facility newsletter and in the cafeteria, coupled with informational and encouraging emails from upper level administration, can help address concerns about implementation of the new beverage policy.

Healthier beverages also can be healthy for the bottom line: A common misperception with healthy beverage initiatives is that they will lose money. Beverage sales generate income, and many people assume that moving to healthier options means fewer people will buy beverages. However, the experiences of many organizations that have implemented similar measures suggests that after an initial adjustment period, beverage revenue remains fairly constant and customers embrace the sale of healthier options — particularly water and 100% juices. Hospitals implementing healthy beverage initiatives show similar results.

Innovative initiatives that encourage consumption of healthier beverages can also provide additional revenue, such as:

- Selling BPA-free reusable mugs for water refill
- Instituting promotional programs for new and healthy beverage alternatives
- Providing fruit- and herb-infused water for free or a low cost
- Adding fresh fruit and vegetable smoothies to retail offerings

It is also important to keep in mind that measures to reduce availability of sugary drinks improve the health of employees, decreasing costs to the organization in the form of healthcare expenditures and lost productivity.

---

**Tools**

*Healthy Beverage Policies, Healthy Bottom Lines*, Public Health Law Center

*Financial Implications of Healthy Vending*, Center for Science in the Public Interest
Monitoring is required to ensure available products adhere to the established benchmarks and the right products are stocked.
Track and Evaluate Progress

Tracking is an important component of healthy beverage initiatives. It helps with monitoring progress towards goals; understanding the financial impact of the strategy being used; reporting on successes to upper management and the community; and recognizing the impact of the policy or initiative.

Health Care Without Harm developed two Microsoft Excel tracking spreadsheets that can be modified according to an organization's specific needs and objectives. It is important to note that definitions of healthy beverages and sugary drinks should be clearly established before implementation and tracking begins.

Two ways to track: Two major tracking pathways include measuring sugary drink purchases, and measuring healthy beverage purchases (i.e., increases in healthy beverage purchases vs. tracking decreases in sugary drink sales, as applicable). An organization could choose to track one, or both, if feasible, and depending on the type of policy or initiative it has decided to implement.

- **Healthy Beverage Tracking Tool:** This tracking tool monitors dollars spent by the organization on healthy beverages. The spreadsheet allows users to enter monthly totals in four categories of food service. It will calculate annual spending on healthy beverages and compare it to baseline numbers and the annual beverage budget. There are also columns to designate locally/sustainably-produced beverages, if desired.

- **Sugar Sweetened Beverages Tracking Tool:** This tracking tool monitors dollars spent by the organization on sugary drinks. The spreadsheet allows users to enter monthly totals in four categories of food service. It will calculate annual spending on sugary drinks and compare it to baseline numbers and the annual beverage budget.

In either case progress should be measured against baseline numbers (e.g., the organization’s purchasing of sugary drinks prior to or at the onset of the policy or initiative) and the overall annual numbers (total beverage budget, total beverage sales, etc.). Be sure that all areas affected by the beverage policy initiative are included in the tracking process. It is helpful to distinguish between different areas of food service — patient, retail/cafeteria, vending, and catering — and to set specific targets for each area.

Tracking shifts in institutional beverage purchases may showcase shifts in beverage selections by staff and visitors, and helps with evaluating the effectiveness of the policy or initiative. Tracking information that quantifies and illustrates the amount of calories or grams of sugar avoided, or the reduction of waste diverted from landfills with fewer plastic bottles sold, are creative ways to communicate the effectiveness of the policy or initiative. Keep in mind that
when tracking healthy beverage increases, changes in tap water consumption will not be accounted for so this should be noted when reporting results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Healthy Beverage Purchasing Tracking Tool” Excel file, Health Care Without Harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sugary Drink Purchasing Tracking Tool” Excel file, Health Care Without Harm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For other evaluation plan ideas, see obesity prevention policy evaluation framework and “Evaluation Plans for Healthy Food Environment Interventions,” The Center for Training and Research Translation

Celebrate Successes

Celebrating successful implementation is a key part of maintaining momentum. Taking time to celebrate can also deepen the organization’s commitment to the new, healthier “normal” that it has worked hard to create for staff, visitors, vendors, and the larger community. Share tracking results and beverage trends in the staff newsletter with encouraging commentary. Host events with local advocates and community leaders to highlight the positive steps the organization has taken to support healthy, sustainable choices. By choosing to promote healthy beverages instead of sugary drinks, the organization is demonstrating its leadership and commitment to community health.
Additional Resources

_Beverage Vending Machine Standards, Implementation Guide_, and other tools, New York City Food Standards (undated)

_Encouraging Healthier Choices in Hospitals_, Health Care Without Harm and Center for Science in the Public Interest (May 2014)

“Focus on a Fitter Future: Advancing a Healthy Hospital Initiative” presentation, Children’s Hospital Association (undated)

_Healthy Beverage and Food Policy and Practice Toolkit_, Boulder County Public Health and partners (revised 2017)

Healthy Kansas Hospitals Toolkits, Kansas Hospital Association (last updated June 2019)

_Rethink Your Drink: Healthy Beverage Toolkit for Health Care_, Illinois Public Health Institute et al. (undated)

_A Road Map for Comprehensive Food Service Guidelines_, Center for Science in the Public Interest (Sept. 2019)


Endnotes


2 More information about the CDC MAPPS strategy can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/recovery/PDF/MAPPS_Intervention_Table.pdf.


Everyone deserves to be healthy. The Public Health Law Center collaborates with others to reduce and eliminate commercial tobacco, promote healthy food, support physical activity, and address other causes of chronic disease. Our belief in health and equity for all people is at the core of our work.

www.publichealthlawcenter.org