

Healthier Foods



How to Guide

This guide is designed to provide a step-by-step approach to implementing the HHI Challenges and submitting data for this Initiative.



How to use this guide

The HHI How-to Guides provide a step-by-step approach to achieving and measuring six specific areas of environmental intervention. The challenges have been carefully selected for their positive impact on human health and the environment, for their achievability, as well as to drive demand for healthier products in the marketplace. HHI How-to Guides include case studies, sample policies and resources to help facilities meet the goals of each challenge and lead communities to a healthier future.



Engaged Leadership: The furthest reaching sustainability programming has leadership support, demonstrated by environmental charters, reporting structure and goal setting that recognizes the importance of continuous environmental quality improvement for the long term.



Healthier Food: Healthier food for staff, patients and visitors, positively impacts human health and the environment. Balanced menus, healthy beverages and local and sustainable food are within reach.



Leaner Energy: Partner with Energy Star for Health Care and Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through decreased energy use. Case studies, sample RFP for developing a Strategic Energy Master Plan and other resources shine a light on energy conservation success.



Less Waste: Gather baseline waste data and reduce Regulated Medical Waste (RMW), increase recycling and recycle construction and demolition debris to take control of materials, wastes and associated costs.



Safer Chemicals: Improve health of employees, patients and communities by choosing safer chemicals in materials and products. Transition to greener cleaners, reduce PVC/DEHP in medical devices and reduce toxicity of furniture and finishes for healthier interiors.



Smarter Purchasing: Green the supply chain through product disclosure, sample specification language and case studies on surgical kit reformulation, single use device reprocessing and use of EPEAT resource for purchasing environmentally preferred computers.

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Healthier Hospitals Initiative

The Healthier Hospitals Initiative (HHI) is a national campaign to implement a completely new approach to improving environmental health and sustainability in the health care sector. Eleven of the largest, most influential U.S. health systems, comprising over 500 hospitals with more than \$20 billion in purchasing power, worked with Health Care Without Harm (HCWH), the Center for Health Design and Practice Greenhealth to create HHI as a guide for hospitals to improve sustainability in six key areas: Engaged leadership, healthier foods, leaner energy, less waste, safer chemicals, and smarter purchasing. Sponsoring health systems include Advocate Health Care, Bon Secours Health System, Catholic Health Initiatives, Dignity Health (formerly Catholic Healthcare West), Hospital Corporation of America, Inova Health System, Kaiser Permanente, MedStar Health, Partners HealthCare, Tenet Health Systems and Vanguard Health Systems. Together we are leading communities to a healthier future. More information is available at www.healthierhospitals.org.

This document was developed in collaboration with multiple partners within the Healthier Hospitals Initiative. The authors gratefully acknowledge and thank the following colleagues and organizations for their input and feedback in the development and review of this document:

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SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

Advocate Health Care
Bon Secours Health System
Catholic Health Initiatives
The Center for Health Design*
Dignity Health (formerly Catholic Healthcare West)*
Health Care Without Harm*
Hospital Corporation of America
Inova Health System*
Kaiser Permanente*
MedStar Health*
Partners HealthCare*
Practice Greenhealth*
Tenet Healthcare Corporation
Vanguard Health Systems

*Founding Sponsors

Introduction

The way food is produced, processed, packaged, distributed and consumed in the U.S. has significant impacts on human health, climate change, air and water pollution, and the viability of future agricultural production. The industrialized food system encourages quantity over quality and highly processed foods over fresh and whole foods, negatively impacting the environment and individual health. Nationally, the United States spends billions of dollars to treat diet-related, chronic diseases—\$147 billion to treat obesity alone, another \$116 billion to treat diabetes, and hundreds of billions to treat cardiovascular disease and cancer. Fortunately, institutions, individuals and policy makers have the power to create a food system that promotes health.

Health Care Facilities have a unique opportunity to use their purchasing power and mission of healing to model healthy food procurement and consumption by serving fresher, healthier, more nutritionally dense foods to patients, staff and communities. And they are doing that from coast to coast. Health care organizations are writing healthier menus, working with local farmers to purchase locally, sustainably-grown products, reducing the amount of meat they purchase and serve, and purchasing more fair trade and certified organic products. A facility has many strategies at its disposal to make this goal a reality.

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Hospital Farmers' Market at Carroll Hospital Center, Westminster, MD.

Healthier Food Challenge

Baseline


Facility (or system) has signed the Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge OR has formally adopted a sustainable food policy.

Level 1 Commit to **one** of the following categories: Balanced Menu Challenge, Healthy beverages or Local and/or sustainable foods.

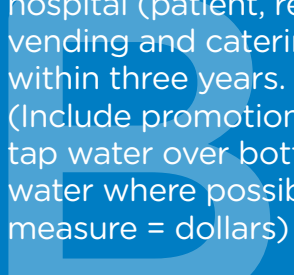
Level 2 Commit to **two** of the following categories: Balanced Menu Challenge, Healthy beverages or Local and/or sustainable foods.

Level 3 Commit to **three** of the following categories: Balanced Menu Challenge, Healthy beverages or Local and/or sustainable foods.

Balanced Menus Challenge: Decrease amount of meat purchased by 20 percent within three years from baseline. (Meat = beef, pork, poultry and lunch meat; measure = lbs.)



Healthy Beverages Challenge: Increase the percentage of healthy beverage purchases by 20 percent of total beverage purchases annually over baseline year OR achieve healthy beverage purchases of 80 percent of total beverage purchases for use throughout the hospital (patient, retail, vending and catering) within three years. (Include promotion of tap water over bottled water where possible; measure = dollars)



Local/Sustainable Food Challenge: Increase the percentage of local and/or sustainable food purchases by 20 percent annually over baseline year OR achieve local and/or sustainable food purchases of 15 percent of total food dollar purchases, within three years (Measure=dollars)



HHI Data Collection

The Less Waste Challenge Requires data submission through the Institute for Health Care Improvement’s Extranet Site. (www.ihl.org) See

the [Healthier Food Measure](#) for data collection details and the [Data Submission Guide](#) for guidance on IHI Registration and data submission.

Baseline

Facility (or system) has signed the Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge OR has formally adopted a sustainable food policy.

Facilities committing to the healthier foods challenge should first have in place a sustainable food policy. Acceptable options include:

- Signing Health Care Without Harm's [Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge](#).
- Developing a food policy vision statement that links desired outcomes and program values to the institution's broader mission by addressing key issues in the food system affecting the health of individuals, communities and the environment. [Policy Guidance and Samples](#)



Tim Goltz, MD, Family Physician, champions the Healthy Food work at Lincoln County Healthcare, ME.



Hospital chef demonstrates healthy meal for Farm to Table Event at Overlake Medical Center, Bellevue, WA.

Healthy Food in Health Care



A Pledge for Fresh, Local, Sustainable Food

Nutrition-related chronic diseases are placing new demands on an already overburdened health care system, and taking their toll on human productivity and quality of life. Our current large scale, industrial food system favors animal products and highly refined, preservative laden, calorie-dense foods, rather than fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and other high fiber foods important for health. It is a system misaligned with dietary guidelines. Moreover, the way our food is produced and distributed impacts our health and the environment in which we live. For example:

Antibiotic Resistance

The routine use of antibiotics contributes to growing antibiotic resistant bacteria. Each year 20 to 30 million pounds of antibiotics (including related antimicrobials) are used in agriculture—by volume, about 7-10 times the total antibiotics used in human medicine. Industrialized food systems that produce poultry, pork, beef, and farmed fish routinely use antibiotics as growth promoters rather than to treat identified disease. Routinely feeding antibiotics to animals that are not even sick increases antibiotic resistance among bacteria that cause human infections. Injecting dairy cows with recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH or rBST) increases udder infections, requiring more antibiotics and a higher likelihood of increased antibiotic resistant bacteria in milk.

Air and Water Pollution

Pesticide drift, field dust, waste burning, and toxic gases from degrading manure are all factors of food production that contribute to air pollution. Such air pollution can lead to asthma and other respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular disease, and lung cancer. In the U.S., food is trans-

ported an average of 1,500 miles to reach its destination. Through the use of diesel and other fossil fuels, vehicles unnecessarily contribute to global warming. Fertilizers and pesticides contaminate ground water in many locales and some pesticides have been found regularly in rainfall. Large-scale animal feedlot operations contribute to water pollution when untreated animal waste releases biologically active hormones, nitrates and other toxic breakdown products into watersheds.

Worker Health and Safety

Widespread pesticide use in industrial-scale food production exposes farm workers and their families to dangerous chemicals, often at levels that exceed established "safety" limits. Longer-term, low-level pesticide exposure has been linked to an array of chronic health problems including: cancer, birth defects, neurological, reproductive, and behavioral effects, and impaired immune system function. Industrialized meat packing is recognized as one of the most dangerous occupations: every year, over one quarter of all workers needs medical attention beyond first aid.

Healthy Food in Health Care

Hospitals and health systems have opportunities to help prevent these food-related health concerns by modeling good nutrition in their institutions and by influencing how food is produced and distributed. Through its food purchasing decisions, the U.S. health care industry can promote health by providing more fresh, good tasting, nutritious food choices for patients, staff, and the community. And by supporting food production that is local, humane, and protective of the environment and health, health care providers can help create food systems that promote the well being of the whole community.



Hospital chef demonstrates healthy meal for Farm to Table Event at Overlake Medical Center, Bellevue, WA.

Balanced Menus

Decrease amount of meat purchased by 20 percent within three years from baseline. (Meat = beef, pork, poultry and lunch meat; measure=lbs.)

Background

The commitment to reduce meat and poultry purchases by 20 percent within three years from baseline serves as both a climate change mitigation mechanism and a pathway to serving the healthiest, most sustainably produced meat available. It is also an opportunity for hospitals to model healthy eating patterns for patients, staff and visitors.

The reasons for taking the balanced menus challenge are profound and compelling. Most hospitals buy substantial amounts of meat, typically through large distributors who source from the U.S. commodity beef, pork and poultry

markets. Significant costs are associated with industrialized meat and poultry production and distribution, including antibiotic resistance, and air and water contamination. U.S. food production relies heavily on fossil fuels, and red meat production has a particularly large climate footprint.

Americans eat more than twice the global average for meat consumption. Hospital food service operations often mirror this trend. Reducing the overall amount of meat served in hospitals provides health, social and environmental benefits that are consistent with prevention-based medicine. Hospitals can deliver an important preventive health message to patients, staff and communities by reducing the amount of meat and poultry they serve and by purchasing sustainably-produced meats as an alternative. In addition, hospitals can reinvest the money saved into the procurement of higher-quality, sustainably-produced meat.

STEP 1: Make the Case

Many reputable researchers, organizations and government agencies acknowledge the importance of reducing meat consumption to improve health and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other environmental impacts. These [statements and articles](#) will support a proposal for the healthier foods challenge to hospital staff and administrators.

It is important to engage and educate food-service staff, other hospital employees, patients, clinicians, hospital administrators and visitors on the importance of eating healthier foods. Use data on the increased rates of obesity, overweight and chronic disease among adults and children to help staff and patrons understand the menu changes. Host educational presentations on the health

impacts of food production, processing, packaging and transportation. Offer cooking demonstrations or healthy buffets as part of an educational presentation to allow attendees to taste the components of balanced meals. Staff dietitians can also demonstrate how staff incentives for making healthier choices can reduce employee health care costs. Engage the hospital's wellness committee, employee health department and marketing team to communicate the benefits of healthier choices.



STEP 2: Develop a Baseline

Determine the facility's baseline purchasing levels of beef, pork, poultry and lunch meat in pounds of product from the previous year's records. Establish a method and routine for tracking these

purchases. The [Balanced Menu Tracking Tool](#) can be a useful tool. This tool also tracks other proteins purchased and served, including seafood and plant-based proteins, to provide a broader picture of the impact of balanced menus.

STEP 3: Learn From Others

- Read case studies on [hospitals](#) that have taken the challenge.
- [Join](#) the Healthy Food in Health Care email list, which allows organizations to post questions

STEP 4: Reduce Meat on Menus

Use a variety of strategies to reduce meat on the cafeteria and patient menus while maintaining nutritional requirements for protein intake. Successful strategies include reducing meat portions; moving meat away from the center of the plate and increasing the amount of vegetables, whole grains and legumes; and substituting nutritionally balanced, whole vegetarian foods for meat. See additional strategies in the [Balanced Menus Challenge Brochure](#).

- Identify recipes to support menu changes. Use the [Balanced Menus Recipe Toolkit](#) to find recipes that meet nutritional and sustainability criteria. These delicious dishes - developed by hospital chefs and reviewed by registered dietitians - feature whole, seasonal foods and little or no meat.
- Offer a diversity of grass-fed meats less frequently. Grass-fed beef, bison, lamb and goat can all be locally-sourced throughout

STEP 5: Purchase Sustainable Meat, Poultry and/or Seafood with Cost Savings from Meat Reductions

The money saved from reducing meat purchases can be used to purchase more sustainably-produced meat, poultry and seafood.

- Learn about and use third party certifications and label claims to identify sustainably-produced meats, poultry and seafood at [Food Eco-Labels: A Purchasing Guide](#) and the [Sustainability Certifications and Label Claims matrix](#).
- Start with suppliers (GPOs, distributors or purveyors, and local farmers). Many good sources for sustainably-produced products are now available through these traditional networks. Ask distributors for their lists of local, sustainably-produced meat and poultry, including organic or other third party-certified items. Review the list of sustainable meat options available from distributors, and gradually increase the volumes, varieties and cuts of sustainably-produced meat and poultry purchases. Use this [Product Availability Survey](#) to help communicate preferences to suppliers.
- Look for local producers who use sustainable

and share experiences and resources with health care peers across the country. Watch the listserv and website for other educational opportunities.

the country. Meat and poultry from pastured animals are lower in overall fat, and offer the healthier and preferred ratio of “good fats” to “bad fats” and other beneficial nutrients compared to their grain-fed counterparts.

- Learn how plant-based proteins are part of a healthy, balanced diet. Research shows that Americans consume, on average, more animal protein than they need or should have. Additionally, protein needs through plant-based proteins in vegetarian, vegan (no animal products) or omnivorous diets are easily met. The American Dietetic Association has developed a formal statement declaring that well-planned vegetarian and vegan diets can support health throughout the life span. These [resources](#) on plant-based diets offer more information and ideas.
- Incorporate recipes that use health-promoting herbs, spices and flavorful sauces containing healthy oils, vinegars and other ingredients to decrease salt, sugar and unhealthy fats in meals.

farming practices through local agriculture networks, farmer cooperatives, farmers markets and sustainable food organizations. Directories of local farms and farmers markets can help locate sources.

- A word about seafood: Seafood is often seen as a healthy menu replacement for meat. Although seafood is a great source of important nutrients and healthy fatty acids (omega-3s), it also poses significant environmental and health problems, including potential exposures to toxic pollution (mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls, dioxin and brominated flame retardants) in many species, the use of antibiotics, unnatural feed raised with pesticides, and where and how the seafood is raised, farmed and harvested. When choosing seafood, work with the purveyor and access the many great resources available to identify sustainable seafood options (see resources below).
- Strategies for reducing cost:
 - Use less familiar, less expensive cuts of sustainable meat and poultry to offset the often higher costs of sustainable meat, such as ground beef, stew meat, and chicken legs and thighs. These are often readily available.

- Avoid using small cuts from large animals, such as tri-tip steaks. These are fewer per animal, expensive and more difficult to source in substantial volume from sustainable producers.
- Reduce reliance on higher-priced, pre-cooked and/or processed meats, such as fajita strips, chicken strips, beef patties and lunch meat.
- Collaborate with other healthcare facilities and even other types of institutions (universities, schools, hotels, sports and entertainment venues, and prisons) in the area to create regional sustainable meat alliances. Investigate collective purchasing strategies, local food hubs, farmer cooperatives and other efforts to build a local, affordable supply of sustainable meat.

STEP 6: Promote Balanced Menu Changes to Patients and Customers

Market the changes in the cafeteria and patient menus to assure the challenge's success. Use these print-ready [marketing materials](#), including table tents, patient tray bookmarks, brochures and posters, to support implementation. Hospitals that promote their healthy meal changes have the highest success rates

and often generate additional revenue from increased sales of healthier menu items. Ask the marketing department to take pictures of the meals and of staff preparing and enjoying them. Ask the dietitians and marketing department to help survey employees for their feedback, and share employee testimonials of weight loss, improved health and satisfaction with the healthier menus.

STEP 8: Track Progress and Celebrate Success

Use the [Balanced Menus Tracking Tool](#) to track the reduction in meat purchasing and the [Balanced Menus GHG Emissions Calculator](#) to estimate the carbon footprint reduction. Ask the marketing department to plan celebrations and recognize food service staff for their participation in the hospital's efforts to increase sustainability. Be sure to promote these successes to hospital administrators and in the hospital's annual report and, if applicable, sustainability report. Develop "green" pages on hospital websites and in hospital newsletters to highlight successes internally and externally. Apply for a [Healthy Food in Health Care Award](#) and a [Practice Greenhealth Environmental Excellence Award](#) to honor the food service staff's and Healthy Food Committee's hard work and accomplishments.

For More Information

- Balanced Menus Challenge webpage: <http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org/balancedmenus.php>
- Balanced Menus Challenge Brochure: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Balanced_Menu.pdf
- Balanced Menus Challenge Recipes: <http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org/balancedmenus.recipes.php?pid=157>
- Balanced Menus Challenge Marketing Materials: <http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org/balancedmenus.marketing.php?pid=157>
- Balanced Menus Challenge Dietitian Outreach: <http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org/balancedmenus.dietician.php?pid=157>
- Food Service and Climate Change: <http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org/issues.climate.php>
- Balanced Menus: A Pilot Evaluation of Implementation in Four San Francisco Bay Area Hospitals (pdf): http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/balanced_menus/Balanced_Menu_Pilot_Eval.pdf
- Antibiotic Resistance and the Agricultural Overuse of Antibiotics Fact Sheet (pdf): http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Antibiotic_Resistance.pdf
- Feeding Arsenic to Poultry: Is This Good Medicine? (pdf): http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Feeding_Arsenic_to_Poultry.pdf
- Sustainable Seafood Resources
 - Seafood Watch by Monterey Bay Aquarium: Ranks sustainability of fish species for consumption in regional markets (West Coast, Northeast, Southeast, etc.).
 - Seafood Selector by Environmental Defense Fund: Ranks environmental impacts of fishing or fish farming according to species.
 - Blue Ocean Guide by Blue Ocean Institute: Ocean-friendly seafood guide that integrates sustainable fisheries, MSC certification and health risk (mercury, PCB) information; contains detailed scorecard on each selection.
- Contact a Regional Healthy Food in Health Care organizer in area: <http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org/contact.php>

Healthy Beverages

Increase the percentage of healthy beverage purchases by 20 percent of total beverage purchases annually over baseline year OR achieve healthy beverage purchases of 80 percent of total beverage purchases for use throughout the hospital (patient, retail, vending and catering) within three years. (Include promotion of tap water over bottled water where possible; measure=dollars.)

Healthy Beverages Defined: Water (filtered tap, unsweetened, 100% fruit-infused, seltzer or flavored); 100% fruit juice (optimal 4oz serving); 100% vegetable juice (optimal sodium less than 140 mg); Milk (unflavored AND Certified Organic or rBGH-free); Non-dairy milk alternatives (unsweetened); Teas and Coffee (unsweetened with only naturally occurring caffeine). Beverages should be locally- sourced, sustainably-produced and Organic when

possible (See Definitions for Local/Sustainable). Beverages should be dispensed by tap or fountain AND reusable beverage containers should be encouraged when possible.

Background

Obesity prevalence in the U.S. is rapidly increasing. Health care institutions throughout the country recognize the urgent need to reduce rates of obesity and chronic illness as well as their associated health care costs. It is well established that sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) contribute to the increased prevalence of obesity and associated chronic diseases that go along with weight gain. The production, consumption and waste associated with sugar-sweetened and bottled beverages have numerous negative environmental consequences that are often overlooked. Alternatively, in the U.S., tap water has been proven to be just as safe, or safer, than its bottled version. By supporting and promoting publicly-owned water infrastructure and reducing access to unhealthy beverages, the health care community can assist in creating a food environment that supports health for both the community it serves and the environment in general.

STEP 1: Create a Project Team

The best way to increase healthy beverage options is to develop a healthy beverage program. Hospitals often have logistical and contractual ties to beverage vendors and their products. Form an internal taskforce made up of individuals

from a broad range of departments. This may include representatives from food service, nursing, nutrition, human resources, facilities, purchasing, the union, external relations, finance, upper management, pediatrics, cardiology and key staff members who may serve as champions.

STEP 2: Develop a Baseline

A critical first step in creating a healthy beverage program is an audit of current beverage policies, practices, access points and product selection. This will give food service the framework it needs to create a clear and comprehensive beverage program plan. Conduct a simple beverage audit to identify where and when SSBs and public drinking water are available throughout the facility. Document what types of beverages are available and how frequently they are used (or total sales per month) at each location and event. The [Healthy Beverage Baseline Audit Tool](#) can help.



STEP 3: Identify the Target Areas and Approach

After the audit, develop a strategy. Most facilities offer beverages in five areas: retail (cafeteria), vending, catering, patient services, and onsite contract venues (such as Au Bon

Pain and Dunkin Donuts). Target the area that has the least impact on the budget first.

The most effective program will utilize the following strategies:

Strategy	Example
Media	Promote tap water and healthy beverage choices Counter-advertising for unhealthy choices.
Access	Reduce access to unhealthy beverage choices. Increase access to filtered water stations. Provide or sell reusable mugs/bottles with hospital logos for healthy non-bottled beverage consumption.
Point-of-Purchase	Develop education/signage for healthy beverages. Focus on beverage product placement. Remove advertisements for unhealthy beverages.
Price	Change relative price of healthy versus unhealthy beverages. Offer discounts for customers using reusable mugs.
Social Support and Services	Create an environment of support for healthy habits with support from upper management and clinical advocates.

More information on above CDC MAPPS strategy available at: http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/recovery/PDF/N_and_PA_MAPPS_strategies.pdf

STEP 4: Make the Case

Before rolling out a healthy beverage initiative, secure buy-in from administration and staff in order to create an environment of social support. Rally the support of key clinical advocates who recognize the link between unhealthy beverage consumption and poor public and environmental health and hold a meeting with upper management. Health care professionals throughout the country have

shown their support by signing the [Health Care Professional Pledge](#). With leadership support, educate staff about the program in an internal newsletter, electronic communication, or by hosting a kick-off event. Regular communication about the program and its importance to the hospital's mission using innovative tactics will go a long way. The [Healthy Beverage Presentation](#) can help generate momentum and support.

STEP 5: Establish Product Specifications and Work with Vendors

The healthy beverage program must be sustainable and flexible in order to meet the organization's changing health and environmental goals. Therefore, it is important to communicate clearly with vendors about the facility's beverage specifications. Review current contracts with beverage vendors and

onsite venues. Facilities have established relationships with vendors to provide a service that meets their needs. In order to encourage vendor compliance with contract terms, develop a written copy of the new beverage specifications and a statement of the facility's commitment to serving healthy beverages to model healthy behaviors and promote public and environmental health.

STEP 6: Overcome Challenges

As with any change, challenges may occur. Many people are closely attached to their food and beverage choices and may resist change. It is important to maintain consistent messaging with support from senior management. The message: The hospital supports beverage choices that support good health. Some facilities have provided advance notice about the transition to healthier beverages in the hospital newsletter, education in the cafeteria, and emails from senior leadership.

Reducing or eliminating SSBs can have financial implications. Facilities that have significantly reduced SSBs have seen little or no financial loss, while those that have completely eliminated SSBs have seen larger losses. The financial impact of eliminating SSBs can be mitigated through innovative programs to encourage consumption of healthier beverages, such as instituting the sale of BPA-free reusable mugs for water refill and promotions for healthy beverage alternatives, fruit- and herb-infused water, and natural smoothies.

STEP 7: Track Progress and Celebrate Success

In order to measure the true impact of a healthy beverage program, it is critical to track beverage purchases and sales before, during and after implementation. Tracking beverage sales by product and overall financial impact helps to make the case to senior leadership for the program's continuation. Effective strategies include quantifying calories or grams of sugar avoided and waste diverted from landfills with reduced consumption of plastic bottles. The [Healthy Beverage Tracking Tool](#) can help.

Once the healthy beverage program has gained widespread acceptance and achieved measurable results, celebrate these successes with staff, visitors

and the community. Highlight weekly beverage trends in the staff newsletter and host an event featuring local speakers and environmental advocates who support, and can lend increased credibility to, the hospital's efforts. Emphasize the initiative's contribution to community health, obesity prevention and increasing environmental sustainability.



"Inova Health System understands that being a responsible member of our community requires that we do our part to not only keep our patients and employees healthy, but to help keep our earth healthy as well."

Knox Singleton, CEO
Inova Health System
Falls Church, Virginia

[Read more about the leadership of HHI sponsoring health system.](#)

STEP 8: Make the Program Sustainable

An internal policy regarding the hospital's commitment to healthy beverages will help make the program sustainable. A healthy beverage policy can be a part of a larger sustainable food service or wellness policy or an independent effort. It should outline the mission, product specifications, responsible personnel, and pertinent information regarding beverage contract specifications. Contracts over-rule internal policies, so be sure to include policy language in contracts, including those for onsite venues such as Au Bon Pain and Dunkin Donuts. All venues on hospital grounds must adhere to the organization's healthy beverage policy.

For More Information:

- To learn more about implementing a healthy beverage program, visit the Healthy Food in Health Care website: www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org
- Hydrate for Health: A Call for Healthy Beverages in Health Care, available at: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Hydrate_For_Health.pdf
- Center for Disease Control (CDC): Rethink Drink - http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/drinks.html
- Food and Water Watch: www.foodandwaterwatch.org
- Corporate Accountability International: www.stopcorporateabuse.org
- EPA: Ground Water and Drinking Water: <http://water.epa.gov/drink/index.cfm>

- American Heart Association: Frequently asked Questions About Sugar - http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyDietGoals/Frequently-Asked-Questions-About-Sugar_UCM_306725_Article.jsp
- Contact a Regional Healthy Food in Health Care organizer in area: <http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org/contact.php>



Local/Sustainable Food

Increase the percentage of local and/or sustainable food purchases by 20 percent annually over baseline year OR achieve local and/or sustainable food purchases of 15 percent of total food dollar purchases, within three years (Measure=dollars)

Local and Sustainable Defined

Local: Farms, ranches and production/processing facilities located within a 250-mile radius of the facility. (Note: For processed foods with multiple ingredients, [e.g., breads], the product must have the majority of ingredients [greater than 50 percent by weight] produced within the 250-mile radius.)

Sustainable: Approved to carry one or more of the following independent third party-certified eco-labels: USDA Certified Organic, Food Alliance Certified, Rainforest Alliance Certified, Protected Harvest, Fair Trade Certified, Bird Friendly, Certified Humane Raised and Handled, Animal Welfare Approved, Salmon Safe, Marine Stewardship Council or other eco-label that

STEP 1: Create a Project Team

Purchasing food and successfully utilizing it is more than a one-person job. The first step in beginning down the path of sustainable food purchasing is to gather a team of individuals who will help order, prepare, serve and market the food. This team can meet at a regularly scheduled time (e.g., weekly, monthly quarterly) to identify

STEP 2: Develop a Baseline

To reach the goal of 20 percent local/sustainable food purchases within three years from baseline, an understanding of current purchasing practices and the ability to track increases over time are needed. [The Green Guide for Health Care Food Service Toolkit](#) includes a tracking tool that can guide food service staff in gathering and tracking this data. Staff can also develop

has transparent and meaningful standards and independent verification processes; AND/OR Carries one of the following label claims allowed by USDA or FDA: “Raised without antibiotics” or “No antibiotics administered” (poultry and meat products); “Raised without antibiotics that cause antibiotic resistance in humans” (poultry); “Raised without added hormones” or “No hormones added” (beef and lamb only); “No genetically-engineered ingredients” (products made from corn, soy, canola or their derivatives); “rBGH-free,” “rBST-free,” or a statement such as “Our farmers pledge not to use rBGH or rBST”/“Our farmers pledge not to use artificial hormones” (milk, butter, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, sour cream, cottage cheese); “Grass-fed” (products from ruminants such as beef cattle, dairy cattle, lamb).

Background

Hospitals have significant buying power as institutions. Their sheer sector size enables them to send important food and eating messages to both consumers and the market place. By prioritizing sustainably-produced food, hospitals have the ability shift the food system in a more sustainable direction, improve the health of their patients, staff and visitors, and invest in the well-being of communities and the environment.

goals and implementation strategies. Examples of individuals to include on the team are the food service director, main food purchaser, executive chef/head cook, patient and cafeteria managers, and a marketing/PR specialist.

their own baseline and benchmarking system to evaluate current sustainable purchases relative to overall food purchases.



Hospital chef prepares nutritious meal at Sparrow Hospital, Lansing, MI.

STEP 3: Choose Product Areas and Important Sustainability Indicators

With an understanding of current purchasing practices, staff can begin to identify areas to focus on to increase sustainable procurement. For instance, a facility may not be purchasing much sustainably-grown produce and choose to focus on this area. Alternatively, the facility could choose to increase sustainably-grown purchases across several product categories.

It is important for the team to determine which

sustainability indicators are most important to the facility. For example, if protecting farmworker, community and consumer health is a high priority, the facility may decide to focus on food produced without synthetic pesticides. If protecting the efficacy of antibiotics is a priority, many hospitals. meat, poultry and dairy products produced without antibiotics could be the focus. To learn more about sustainability criteria and eco-labels, see [Food Eco-Labels: A Purchasing Guide](#) and the [Sustainability Certifications and Label Claims matrix](#).

STEP 4: Make the Case

Once staff have determined current purchasing practices, product categories to focus on and sustainability criteria, discuss plans with administrators and food service staff. Support from these constituents is critical.

Important points to cover when talking to them include why the changes are important; a plan/roadmap for making the changes; cost increases and how they will be handled; and champions of the proposed changes, such as department heads outside of food service.

STEP 5: Inform Distributors, Producers and Vendors

There is a lot of confusion about the definitions of “sustainable” and “local.” Discuss sustainable purchasing intentions with distributors, producers and vendors to ensure that everyone is on the same page about what sustainability means to the facility. Let vendors, producers and distributors know about revised purchasing goals, ask them to highlight products that

meet these criteria, and, to ease tracking on the facility’s end, ask them to help track the sustainable purchases. When determining product types to purchase (e.g., produced without antibiotics, organic, etc.) strive to use third-party certifications or FDA/USDA-approved label claims, which have consistent, specific definitions, to represent these interests. This information can then be directly communicated to supply chain entities to avoid confusion.

STEP 6: Address Cost/Challenges

While facilities experience many successes in purchasing more sustainable food, they are also likely to face some challenges. Cost is often one of the first barriers. Fortunately hospitals across the country have worked for many years on developing innovative strategies to address this issue. Ideas for mitigating cost increases while still working to achieve sustainable purchasing goals include:

- Reducing the amount of meat purchased and served, and using the cost savings to purchase more sustainably-produced meat or produce

- Purchasing local, sustainable food when it is in season and preserving it for future use (e.g., buying berries in the summer and freezing them for winter use)
- Reduce portion sizes according to USDA recommendations
- Purchase sustainably-produced “farm seconds” for foods that will be cooked/processed (e.g., blemished produce for soup)
- Work with other regional facilities to create buying clubs that will help lower costs on certain products with increased demand/bulk orders

STEP 7: Market Healthy Food Efforts

One of the easiest ways to make sustainable purchasing successful is to have patients and customers who support these efforts. However, they can’t do that if they don’t know about it. Provide cafeteria customers with signage about the sustainable products in their meals, and use table tents to explain the program’s goals and rationale. Highlight patient menu options that

use sustainably-produced food, communicate the benefits of local, sustainably-produced food on tray liners, and, most important, keep consumers informed of the hospital’s accomplishments and progress. The more informed they are the more likely they will be to buy/order food that is made with sustainable products and to pay higher prices for those foods. This increased demand and acceptance can help offset costs.

STEP 8: Track Progress and Celebrate Success

It is essential to keep track of progress toward the purchasing goal. When setting up a baseline and tracking system, ensure that the system is tracking on a time period that allows staff to address obstacles as they arise. For example, track sustainable purchases monthly or quarterly instead of annually basis to support incremental steps. Incremental steps will help the organization know whether the goal of 20 percent sustainable purchasing is achievable. These “sub goals” also allow a program to highlight successes along the way and celebrate reaching the end goal.

For More Information

General:

- Healthy Food in Health Care website: www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org
- Healthy Food in Health Care Resource Page: <http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org/resources.php?pid=121>
- Green Guide for Health Care Food Service Credits and Toolkit (specifically focusing on Credit 3): <http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org/sustainablefood.overview.php?pid=59#planning>
- Food and Food Purchasing: A Role for Health Care: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Food_and_Food_Purchasing.pdf
- Food Eco-Labels: A Food Purchasing Guide document: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Food_Eco-Labels.pdf
- Sustainability Certifications and Label Claims matrix: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/EcoLabels_Matrix.pdf
- Contact a Regional Healthy Food in Health Care organizer in area: <http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org/contact.php>

Meat, Poultry, Seafood:

- Guide to Poultry Applicable Eco-Labels: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Poultry_Eco-Labels.pdf
- Purchaser’s Guide to Source Sustainable Poultry: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Purchas_Sustainable_Poultry.pdf
- Sample Poultry Supplier Questions: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Poultry_Supp_Survey_Quest.pdf



Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program at John Muir Medical Center, Concord, CA.

Beverages:

- Purchaser’s Guide to Sourcing Sustainable Coffee and Tea: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Sourcing_Sustainable_Coffee_Tea.pdf
- A Purchasing Guide to Sourcing Dairy Products Produced Without rBGH: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Purchasing_Non-rBGH_Dairy.pdf

Grains/Grocery:

- A Purchasing Guide to Sourcing Food Without Genetically Engineered Ingredients: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Purchasing_Non-GMO_Food.pdf

Service Ware:

- Choosing Environmentally Preferable Food Service Ware: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/EPP_Food_Svc_Ware.pdf

Supply Chain Resources:

- Strategies to Increase Sustainable Food Options via GPOs and Distributors: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Sustainable_Food_and_GPOs.pdf
- Integrating Sustainability Requirements into Health Care Food Service Contracting: http://www.noharm.org/lib/downloads/food/Integrating_Sustainability_Food_Service.pdf

Additional Resources

Easy to use templates, sample language, check lists and others tools facilitate program implementation.

Healthier Food Measures

This Data “Cheat Sheet” details data collection framework for each challenge.

<http://healthierhospitals.org/hhi-challenges/resource-library/healthier-food-measures>

Data Submission Guide – Balanced Menus

A Power Point Guide to assist in data submission on Balanced Menus.

<http://healthierhospitals.org/hhi-challenges/resource-library/data-submission-guide-balanced-menus>

Data Submission Guide – Increase Healthy Beverages

A Power Point Guide to assist in data submission on Healthy Beverages.

<http://healthierhospitals.org/hhi-challenges/resource-library/data-submission-guide-increase-healthy-beverages>

Data Submission Guide – Local/sustainable Food

A Power Point Guide to assist in data submission on local/sustainable food.

<http://healthierhospitals.org/hhi-challenges/resource-library/data-submission-guide-localsustainable-food>

Meeting Minutes

Sample Meeting Minute Template for Modification and Use.

<http://healthierhospitals.org/hhi-challenges/resource-library/meeting-minutes-0>