



REDUCING SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGE CONSUMPTION IN A HOSPITAL CAFETERIA

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Background

Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) is a significant contributor to increased caloric intake and higher body weight. SSBs have been identified as the leading source of added sugar in the American diet, and estimates from the years 1988–1994 to 1999–2004 show average daily caloric intake of SSBs increased from 157 to 203 kcal, with 63% of adults consuming SSBs daily (Powell, LM et al. 2013). SSBs include:

- Regular carbonated soft drinks
- Fruit drinks (non-100% fruit juice)
- Sports and energy drinks
- Ready-to-drink teas and coffees
- Flavored waters

The University of Washington Medical Center's (UWMC) Food & Nutrition Services (FNS) Wellness Program mission is to *improve the health of the community by linking evidence-based nutrition to the healthy foods we serve and to the education we provide staff, patients, and the community.*

The FNS team took the Healthy Beverage Challenge to increase the percentage of healthy beverages served and sold throughout the hospital. This challenge invites institutions to increase the percentage of healthy beverage purchases by 20% of total beverage purchases annually over baseline year, or achieve healthy beverage purchases of 80% of total beverage purchases for use throughout the hospital within three years. In 2012, 30% of total beverages served via The Center Dining patient room service and in the Plaza Café were "healthy beverages," defined by Healthcare Without Harm as:

- Unsweetened, water
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- Milk (Organic or rBGH)
- Non-dairy alternatives, coffee and tea

Issue

SSBs are big money-makers; herein lies the problem:

- When taking steps to increase healthy beverage consumption and decrease consumption of SSBs, the bottom line may be affected. The issue is how to balance what is best for the health of the community while ensuring that the facility remains profitable.



Sampling of 'Tude Juice, a healthier beverage option, at the Plaza Café farmers market

Methods

A literature review was conducted to learn what other healthcare institutions have done to remain profitable when taking steps to reduce SSB consumption in their facilities.

A sample campaign was developed for potential future use by the FNS department, to supplement the positive changes they have already implemented:

- Create educational material to be posted near SSB stations and vending machines that promotes healthy beverage consumption such as the "Refresh. Rehydrate" poster (*at right*).
- At a Plaza Café farmers market, invite a Registered Dietitian to address the topic of SSBs and invite a healthy beverage vendor to provide samples and coupons.
- Create a "Chef's Healthy Combo Meal" that incentivizes selection of a healthy beverage with purchase of a healthy entrée and side from the Plaza Café grill station.
- Create a challenge among UW sister hospitals to see which facility consumes the fewest SSBs in one week (*based on percentages of sales*).

Findings of Literature Review

Data examined from various U.S. healthcare facilities demonstrates little or no financial loss when facilities reduce SSBs. Among facilities that completely eliminated SSBs, however, a larger initial loss in revenue was seen, with an average of 75% of sales recouped within the first year of implementation (Illinois Public Health Institute. Rethink Your Drink).

Financial impact can be lessened by creating programs that encourage consumption of healthier beverages. New England-based Steward Health Care hospitals, for example, created an educational marketing campaign entitled "Stop, Rethink Your Drink, Go on Green," resulting in:

- 43% decrease in SSB purchases
- 36% increase in healthy beverages sold
- No decrease in beverage revenue as a result of making such changes

Conclusions

Upon implementation of the proposed campaign, UWMC FNS will likely realize success similar to that experienced by other healthcare facilities. It is recommended that the FNS team implement the proposed campaign to further advance its Wellness Program.

REFRESH. REHYDRATE.

The Food & Nutrition Services team is working to bring you more local, natural, sustainable and healthy food. We have pledged with *Healthcare Without Harm* to provide you with healthy beverage options and we're increasing the percentage of healthy, unsweetened beverages available for sale.

Have you noticed?

Instead of a sugary beverage today, go ahead – grab one of our compostable cups and fill up at the water tap.
(Free with any purchase in the café)

It's good for your body and your cells!

Our team is working to improve the health of the community by linking evidence-based nutrition to the healthy foods we serve and to the education we provide staff, patients and the community.

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