



NEWS RELEASE

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Also see:

[Healthy Food in Health Care Report](#)

REPORT OUTLINES LEADING TREND IN HEALTH CARE SECTOR: HOSPITALS NATIONWIDE PURCHASING LOCAL, SUSTAINABLE FOOD

Details efforts of 127 Hospitals Nationwide in buying healthier food to promote public health

(5/29/08 – Arlington, VA)

For 127 hospitals across the United States, the words “hospital food” and “healthy communities, healthy environment” are one and the same, according to a new report released by Health Care Without Harm today. The “Healthy Food in Health Care” report outlines concrete steps being taken by hospitals nationwide to change their food buying practices towards more sustainably produced, healthier choices for patients, staff and visitors.

“We applaud the 127 facilities, in 21 states across the country, including some that serve over 9000 meals every day, that have pledged to source local, nutritional, sustainable food,” says Jamie Harvie, National Coordinator of the Healthy Food in Health Care Initiative. “These hospitals recognize that their healthcare food dollars are an important investment in preventive medicine.”

The Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge outlines the steps to be taken by the health care industry to improve the health of their patients, local communities and the environment. This Pledge Report details the concrete food purchasing steps these facilities are making. For example:

- 80 facilities (70%) are purchasing up to 40% of their produce locally
- Over 90 facilities (80%) are purchasing rBGH-free milk
- 100% have increased fresh fruit and vegetable offerings
- 50 facilities (44%) are purchasing meat produced without the use of hormones or antibiotics

“By serving nutritious, local, sustainably grown food to their patients, staff and visitors, hospitals are practicing good preventive medicine,” stated David Hutchinson, M.D., and President of the Minnesota Academy of Family Practice. “The purchase of meat and poultry raised without non-therapeutic antibiotics, milk produced without recombinant bovine growth hormones, organic, whole grain and less processed foods and support for CSA’s and farmers markets are important investments for the health care sector to make in the health of people, communities and the environment.”

“These numbers are just the beginning,” adds Harvie. “This initiative is not yet a year and a half old and more hospitals are signing every month. We’ve jumped from 19 to 21 States and added 8 more facilities in the last month.”

Hospitals around the country are linking their operations to impacts on human and environmental

health, and an emerging part of this trend is increased attention to food service. Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) is not alone in its work to encourage support for local, sustainable food. In 2007, the American Public Health Association recognized the urgency of transforming our food system and passed a policy to promote environmental sustainability, improve nutritional health and ensure social justice.ⁱ That same year, the California Medical Association passed a resolution that encourages hospitals to adopt policies that increase the purchasing and serving of local, sustainable food.ⁱⁱ

“By supporting local, sustainable food systems, these facilities are promoting health at the individual, community and global level,” stated Harvie. “Across the country, pledged hospitals are continuously working to address the public and environmental impacts from current industrialized food production practices by sourcing nutritious, local sustainable food.”

Health Care without Harm, an international coalition of more than 473 organizations in 52 countries, is working to transform the health care sector, without compromising patient safety or care, so that it is ecologically sustainable and no longer a source of harm to public health and the environment. For more information on the healthy food pledge see <http://www.noharm.org/us/food/pledge>.

To learn more about HCWH’s work on food and other issues related to health care www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org.

For more information on the CleanMed conference: www.cleanmed.org

Attachments:

Key Findings of the Report

Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge Report

ⁱThe 2007 American Public Health Association policy “Towards a Healthy, Sustainable Food System” urges support of environmentally sound agricultural practices to reduce contamination, resource use, climate change, in addition to improved food labeling for country-of-origin and genetic modification, and a ban on non-therapeutic antimicrobial and arsenic use. It recognizes the urgency of transforming our food system to promote environmental sustainability, improve nutritional health, and ensure social justice.

ⁱⁱThe 2007 California Medical Association resolution encourages hospitals to adopt policies and implement practices that increase the purchasing and serving of food that promotes health and prevents disease. Included are meat and dairy products produced without non-therapeutic antibiotics, meats derived from non-CAFO sources such as free-range animals, food grown on non-industrial agricultural operations such as small and medium-sized local farms, and food grown according to organic or other methods that emphasize renewable resources, ecological.