
Letter to Editor

NC Prevention Partners' Healthy Hospitals Program

We were pleased to see the article "Reconstructing the Hospital Food Environment to Address the Obesity Epidemic" by Reed and Chenault in *Topics in Clinical Nutrition*. We concur that hospitals can and should take the lead in promoting healthier food choices for its employees, visitors and patients. We believe your readers would appreciate knowing about an additional resource. The article referenced a press release that Nash Health Care earned a Red Apple Award. Nash Health Care is one of 84 hospitals to earn that designation from NC Prevention Partners' Healthy Hospitals program. This healthy dining program is unique because it is built on a conceptual model that has the following 5 principles: (1) provide access to healthy foods; (2) use pricing structure to incentivize customers to purchase healthy items; (3) use marketing techniques to promote healthy foods; (4) use benefit design, wellness incentives, or both to encourage behavior change; and (5) implement education campaign to promote the healthy food environment with staff and visitors.¹ The expected outcomes included increased consumption of healthy foods with decreased consumption of unhealthy foods, increased knowledge of healthy foods, increased customer satisfaction, and no net loss of income. To earn recognition, these principles must be applied at

all places on the hospital campus where food and beverages are sold or provided including the cafeteria, vending machines, catering, food carts, shops, and other eateries. While each hospital implements the principles in a unique and tailored way, the outcome is the same—increased access to healthy and affordable foods to hospital employees. The project was funded by The Duke Endowment in January 2008. The North Carolina Hospital Association recommended that all hospitals participate by the end of 2010. The work of University Health Systems was described by Kolasa and coworkers²; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Center for Training & Research Translation reviewed a case study of pricing and marketing incentives used at FirstHealth³ and recommends the intervention as evidence-based and practice-tested. Hospitals around the nation have begun to replicate the model, including all hospitals in South Carolina. To learn more about NC Prevention Partners' resources go to <https://www.ncpreventionpartners.org>.

—**Kathryn M. Kolasa PhD, RD, LDN**
Professor Emeritus
Brody School of Medicine at East
Carolina University
Greenville, North Carolina
—**Anne Thornhill, MPH**
North Carolina Prevention Partners
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

REFERENCES

1. Odum MF, Thornhill A, Molloy M. Hospital, heal thyself: NC hospitals make prevention a priority to support health of their workforce, patients, and communities. *NC Med J*. 2010;71:96-100
2. Kolasa KM, Dial J, Gaskins S, Currie R. Moving toward healthier eating environments in hospitals. *Nutr Today*. 2010;45(2):54-63.
3. UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. Center of Excellence for Training and Research Translation Healthy Food Environments Pricing Incentives. www.Center-TRT.org. Accessed December 30, 2010.

DOI: 10.1097/TIN.0b013e3182193265