

Sturgeon Community Hospital vending machines go healthy Success Story

Offering healthier vending options in hospitals is a shared passion of both the Sturgeon Community Hospital (SCH) and Nutrition and Food Services staff in Edmonton Zone. As a result, the hospital volunteered to be a pilot site and together they created a plan to shift to healthier food choices in the hospital's vending machines.



Two Public Health Dietitians, Amy Shmyr and Vanessa Baker, were part of the project group. "Giving patrons the chance to make better choices for themselves, especially when other food services are closed, is important to us" says Baker.

In February 2015, 141 staff, patients, volunteers and guests took part in a survey to share their thoughts on vending at SCH. When asked if they would like to have more healthy food and drink options in the vending machines, 83% were in favour with making the changes; 62% answered "yes, absolutely" and 21% answered "somewhat".



The project group worked with various site stakeholders, including the vendor, to replace current items in the vending machines with healthier products. The Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Adults were used to guide the new product options.

Staff, patients and volunteers were invited to taste test the new products in March 2015. "Tasters said they liked the items they tried, and many shared how great it was to see changes taking place" says Shmyr. The project group plans to keep testing new products to ensure they are meeting the needs of consumers.



Mei Tom, Director of Nutrition Services in the Edmonton Zone, and member of the project team, was very impressed by how everyone worked together to make this happen. "It has been great to work with a site that is so motivated about the health of their staff, volunteers and the Albertans they serve."

SCH invites you to come and try some of their new products the next time you visit!