

St Francis Memorial Hospital Press Release

SFMH reaches healthy foods milestone

St. Francis Memorial Hospital has joined a growing number of hospitals in the Champlain LHIN to achieve bronze level status for changing to healthy food options in their retail environment.

“We are happy to be a part of the Healthy Foods in Champlain Hospitals program and to provide healthier food choices to our staff and visitors. A properly balanced diet is an important part of overall health. We are very proud of our team for their hard work in achieving this award,” says Greg McLeod, Chief Operating Officer, SFMH and RV-CHC.

The Healthy Foods in Champlain Hospitals initiative is spearheaded by the Champlain Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Network (CCPN). The program promotes healthy eating by supporting and encouraging the increase of healthy alternatives so the healthy choice is easy for staff, physicians, visitors, patients and volunteers.

It has been recognized that providing healthy food choices is an important way to reduce risk factors for chronic disease and also supports the health and well-being of staff, enabling them to deliver the best possible patient care.

The Bronze Level involves key changes in cafeterias, vending machines, gift shops and franchises, where applicable. Those changes include providing calorie and sodium information for soups and entrees, increasing availability of whole grains, vegetables, and fruit, removing deep fryers and deep fried foods, reducing the variety of chocolate, chips, coated granola bars, candy, and pretzels, reducing sodium in soups, and decreasing portion sizes of high-calorie beverages.

The changes to the cafeteria menu still allow staff to provide the nutritional home-made meals that clients like.

“We changed basic ingredients first, including choosing lower sodium products, whole grain foods and switching to low fat milk in order to introduce a diverse variety of healthy products. We also began posting nutritional information, and many customers tell us they feel more comfortable selecting the foods here because they know the nutritional value of what they are selecting (sodium and fat),” says Sheila Yakabuskie, Food Service Team Leader.

The award was made possible through the hard work of the dietary team and many others at SFMH who “are truly committed to being a leader within this initiative and the region” says Andra Taylor, Registered Dietitian, Healthy Foods in Champlain Hospitals.

“St. Francis Memorial Hospital has been incredibly engaged in this program. It's been amazing to watch the food service team, the auxiliary, hospital staff, and visitors all come together under the common vision to increase access to healthy, great tasting food,” adds Taylor.

“I would like to congratulate Sheila and our entire dietary staff on achieving this award. I would also like to acknowledge the work of our Chief Operating Officer, Greg McLeod. As a hospital, we need to demonstrate leadership on healthy choices. In many ways this is an investment for our staff, physicians and volunteers to ensure we offer healthy choices into the future,” says Randy Penney, RVH and SFMH President and CEO.

St. Francis will continue to work towards silver and gold designation over time.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – MAY 4, 2016