



**HEALTHY
KANSAS
HOSPITALS**

HEALTHY OPTIONS ARE THE ROUTINE, EASY CHOICE.



Center of Excellence Award Winner

Case Study: Hays Medical Center

Overview

As a major employer and primary source of health care in the community, hospitals have an opportunity to impact population health by promoting healthy behaviors within the hospital walls and beyond. Knowing the potential benefits of spreading healthy habits from the inside out, Hays Medical Center (Hays, Kansas) signed the *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* pledge in 2014.

Since then, the hospital has made significant changes to its food and beverage policy – changes designed to promote healthy choices and behaviors in everyday living. As a result, HaysMed has experienced increased food and beverage sales, decreased waste, and a positive change in the behavior of its staff. For outstanding achievements and innovation, HaysMed was named among the *Healthy Kansas Hospitals Centers of Excellence* in 2016.

“ **Helping people be healthy involves more than taking care of the sick and injured – it also involves taking steps to improve population health.** ”
– John Jeter, MD, Hays Medical Center President and CEO



Objective: Leading the Way to Better Health

Hospital administrators and staff at HaysMed took an innovative approach to addressing preventable disease by signing the *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* initiative – a project of the Kansas Hospital Education and Research Foundation. The program is designed to inform and support efforts to promote healthy food and beverage environments in Kansas hospitals. This initiative directly aligns with HaysMed’s core mission: To Help People Be Healthy.

Key Strategies & Tactics

While the hospital’s commitment is ongoing and new ideas are continuously brought to life, key strategies and tactics implemented so far at HaysMed include:

Healthy Hospital Committee

Within two months of signing the pledge, HaysMed formed a Healthy Hospital Committee. Members of the committee include diet, fitness, and wellness experts working alongside marketing and development personnel. The committee helps generate new ideas, maintains momentum for overall sustainability, and works to engage others in both the journey and the goal.

Increased Availability of Healthy Foods & Drinks

Under the guidance of John Fitzthum, Executive Chef/Food Service Director, the hospital doubled its food budget allocation for fresh produce; they previously allocated six percent of the budget to fresh fruits and vegetables. Their policy now requires at least 10 percent, and Fitzthum says it frequently reaches 13-14 percent. They have also drastically reduced the amount of sugary beverages and starchy food options offered throughout the facility. Today, less than one-third of all beverages served at the hospital contain added sugars.

Product Placement & Education

Well-planned pricing and placement strategies were designed to make unhealthy options relatively out-of-reach at the Rock Garden Café, the hospital’s kitchen and dining area. Café staff began promoting an “Ingredient of the Month” to teach hospital associates, patients and visitors about various ways to prepare healthy foods that satisfy even the choosiest of palates. Recipes involving each ingredient are published in the local newspaper to expand reach and education beyond the hospital walls.

Integrated Physical Activity

In addition to offering healthier items, HaysMed found fun ways to get people up and moving throughout the day. They added two indoor walking trails for associates and visitors, as well as four 15-minute workout classes every week for hospital associates. The Healthy Hospital Committee also works with HaysMed’s Center for Health Improvement to promote the importance of physical fitness and regular exercise.

Community Partnerships

The hospital formed partnerships with several members of the community, including WorkWell Kansas, the local school district, and others, to create new opportunities to improve public health. Through its partnership with Bethesda Place, a local nonprofit organization, the hospital provides fresh, locally grown produce for all staff in the physicians lounge. With the help of registered dietitians, the hospital hosts free cooking classes that are open to the public and continuously supplies the local newspaper with healthy recipes and nutritional resources.

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Environmental Health

HaysMed applied similar principles to local environmental health as well, reducing waste and increasing the vitality of the environment, purchasing a new dishwasher to save 350 gallons of water per week, as well as adding a cardboard and aluminum/plastic recycling program. They also replaced most of the fescue grass on campus with native grasses and plants, reducing water requirements for upkeep.

Critical Success Factors

Education & Communication

Knowing change can be difficult and garnering team-wide buy-in can be challenging, HaysMed made it a priority to educate hospital administrators, staff and guests about why they were making certain changes, and how each change represents an improved opportunity for better health.

Open Dialogues

Leadership and Healthy Hospital Committee members felt it was important to consider the viewpoints – and potential pushback – of all parties involved in order to communicate effectively and engage as many people as possible. For that reason, they welcome individuals from a variety of departments to join the committee, even encouraging “naysayers” to join. They keep communication open by providing a suggestion box for innovative ideas and other feedback.

Leadership Support

Top-down leadership support guided these policy changes at HaysMed. President and CEO John Jeter, MD, believed in the importance of making healthy living pervasive within the entire organization long before the hospital signed the *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* pledge. Keeping people out of the hospital by promoting healthy habits and physical activity is an integral part of their mission.

“It’s about being a leader in health care, and that means taking care of not only our patients and their families, but also the 1,200 associates that work at the hospital every day,” said Stephanie Howie, MS, AHFS, Fitness Director at HaysMed’s Center for Health Improvement.

Results

While it is too soon to measure long-term benefits on population health, HaysMed has already seen the following successes from their efforts as a *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* participant and Center of Excellence:

Increased Sales & Revenue

Food and beverage sales at HaysMed have increased substantially. Sales initially grew by 10-16 percent, and since completing the Rock Garden Café’s remodel in early 2016, sales have spiked even further – as much as 30-35 percent over the previous year. While most of the increase comes from employees, the hospital is selling more guest trays than ever before. According to Fitzthum, guest tray sales have grown from 10 to 75 trays per week.

Reduced Waste

Since implementing the changes, Fitzthum says people are eating fresher and throwing away less food, which is ultimately saving the hospital more in the long run.

Healthier Organizational Culture

Through hard work and dedication, HaysMed has fused healthy lifestyle changes into its culture. Its medical fitness personnel, dietary department, leadership team and staff work tirelessly to keep coming up with new ideas and continuously foster higher levels of engagement from staff, patients, visitors and the entire Hays community.

Next Steps

Looking ahead, the committee hopes to see more people dining at the Rock Garden Café, including Hays area residents from outside the hospital. They plan to expand their *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* goals into the rest of the community, and would ultimately like to remove all soda and sugary beverages from the facility. For now, they are taking it one step at a time, implementing changes that are most suitable for the hospital and the community it serves.

About Hays Medical Center

Hays Medical Center is a 207-bed, not-for-profit hospital in Hays, Kansas. Services include medical, surgical, and pediatric care, along with cardiac, neonatal and intensive care units, oncology, joint and spine care, diagnostic imaging, emergency care, rehabilitation and hospice. The HaysMed system includes the St. Rose Health Center in Great Bend, which is co-owned with Centura Health, and Pawnee Valley Community Hospital in Larned. More than 1,200 associates are employed at HaysMed and its affiliated physician clinics.



About Healthy Kansas Hospitals

The *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* initiative is a project of the Kansas Hospital Education and Research Foundation. Established in 1969 by the Kansas Hospital Association, KHERF’s mission is to facilitate collaboration and innovation to improve health delivery for Kansas communities. The Kansas Hospital Association is a voluntary, non-profit organization existing to be the leading advocate and resource for members. For more information, visit HealthyKansasHospitals.org.

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