



Healthy Vending Toolkit



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Introduction

Obesity and poor nutrition are serious problems in Clark County. A key strategy of obesity prevention is improving access to healthy food and reducing access to unhealthy food.

Obesity is a serious problem in our community. A key strategy of obesity prevention is improving access to available and affordable healthy food where people live, work and spend time. It can be difficult to eat nutritious food when there are a lack of healthy options. This can be especially true when making food and beverage selections from vending machines. Evidence suggests that when healthier foods are made readily available and affordable, people choose them more often. Healthy Vending policies and practices improve the nutritional quality of food available in vending machines and give people healthier options to choose from.

Healthy vending policies can be designed to make healthier food more readily available, affordable and appealing. Policies can work to change individual factors (e.g., knowledge of how to choose healthier options), environmental factors (e.g., access to healthier options), and social norms.

Clark County residents eat in a variety of community and work settings; all are appropriate places to implement the guidelines:

- Worksites
- Government buildings
- Hospitals
- Social service organizations
- Childcare & after-school care
- Schools & youth programs

Policy Development

Whether you are developing a healthy vending policy for your worksite or for a public place, it is important to incorporate a participatory approach. Include key individuals from the beginning of the process as it will help increase buy-in and later help facilitate the implementation of the policy. Steps taken by the team to assess the opportunities and barriers you may face can assist you in determining the range and scope of your policy.

Worksites

Each year in the United States, chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, arthritis and diabetes cause seven of 10 deaths and account for about 75 percent of the \$2.6 trillion spent on medical care. Obesity alone is a significant health-care cost driver. The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index data for 2011 show full-time workers in the U.S. who are overweight or obese and have other chronic health problems miss about 450 million more days of work each year than healthy workers, resulting in an estimated cost of more than \$153 million in lost productivity annually.

Maintaining a healthier workforce can lower direct costs such as insurance premiums and workers' compensation claims. It will also positively impact many indirect costs such as absenteeism and worker productivity.^{1,2} To improve the health of their employees, businesses can create a wellness culture that is employee-centered; provides supportive environments and provides access and opportunities for their employees to engage in a variety of workplace health programs.

Establishing a healthy vending policy is one strategy that can be undertaken to support a healthy work environment and can complement other strategies and efforts you may already be doing.

Develop a Team

Getting support and commitment from the leadership is key to a successful program. Leadership can support the program by:

- Participating in the program
- Serving as role models for healthy living
- Making announcements about the program and encouraging others to participate

The team should be representative of your organization's various sites and/or departments. Individuals on the committee should be interested in promoting a healthy environment. Identify people who you will want or need to help you develop, adopt, and implement the policy. Members may include:

- Staff from departments who will implement the policy
- Organization Management
- Staff interested in the topic



Research

It is important to do a little research before beginning depending on how much your committee knows about your organization's current vending operations. Often organizations may have different departments that are involved with the purchase and vending of food. Some things you may want to research include:

- Where are all of your vending machines physically located?
- What types of machines are at each site? (Beverage, refrigerated, non-refrigerated, etc...)
- Who is the vending operator for each of those machines?
- Who oversees the vending contracts for your organization?
- Are the current contents of the machines determined by the company that stocks the machines?
- What is your budget for promoting the new healthy vending policy?
- Are there any current nutrition policies or standards in place? If not, are there any similar initiatives under way that the healthy vending policy could be worked into?

Randolph-Sheppard Act

The Randolph-Sheppard Act (20 U.S.C. 107 et seq.) created the Vending Facility Program requiring qualified blind individuals be given a priority to operate vending facilities on Federal properties. The program, enacted into law in 1936, provides persons who are blind with remunerative employment and self-support through the operation of vending facilities, which included cafeterias, snack bars, and automatic vending machines, on federal and other property. The program priority has broadened in most states through state laws to include state, county, municipal, and private locations as well. The Randolph-Sheppard program is administered in each state by the State Licensing Agencies (SLAs), state rehabilitation agencies designated under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended).

- Public buildings generally have a vending contract held by a state-approved blind operator



- The blind operator may sub-contract a vending machine company who will stock and maintain vending machines
- The vending machine company makes a small profit but the majority goes back to the blind operator
- Worksite personnel have the right to determine what is stocked in vending machines inside their building

Profitability of the vending operations is important to the blind operator as they often do not receive grants, subsidies or other tax payer income. When sales from vending drops, they lose income. Although there are no specific provisions to determine who has the final word on contents of vending machines, the worksite personnel implementing the healthy vending initiative should work closely with the vending company and the blind operator to arrive at a mutually beneficial policy that supports the healthy choice yet still preserves sales. Be mindful also that sales in some locations follow seasonal cycles and a dip in sales may not necessarily be due to the type of items stocked in the machine.

Assessments

The next step is to conduct a needs assessment to help you determine exactly where change can be made and to what extent. It can also serve as a snapshot of where you currently are which can be useful for program evaluation.

Logistics of a Needs Assessment

Who do I ask? Depending on the types of questions you need answered, you may need to include the following people:

- Vending Machine Contractors
- Employees
- Customers or clients
- Management

How Do I Ask? Needs assessments can be conducted via survey or by holding a face to face meeting. A survey is a less time

consuming option and a great way to get input from a large number of people easily. Face to face meetings are great to have when you need to get information from only one person or a few people. A face to face meeting allows you to start building a relationship with those individuals and also allows for them to ask any questions they may have about the process. ***See the sidebar for assessment ideas.***



Assessing the Employees and/or the People you Serve

A key to promoting and selling healthy vending items is to include the vending machine users in the process. Survey employees and vending machine users to see what items they purchase most often, new items they would like to see in the vending machines, and if they know how to identify healthier options. Ask if they depend on the contents of the machines for snacking only, or if they also rely on the machines for a meal option. The responses collected will help determine which products to purchase as well as provide information regarding the willingness of the vending machine users to purchase healthy options.

Assessing the Machines

In addition to surveying your employees, you will want to take an inventory of the current products being sold in your vending machines. You can simply make a list of all of the items in each machine or take a picture of each one to make it easier. This will help you determine how many slots in each machine are devoted to healthier items. We have included a sample tool in Appendix A to help you.

Drafting and Adopting your Policy

Even if your healthy vending initiative starts with making a few more healthier selections available in your vending machine, it's always a good idea to write down or somehow formalize the changes you are making so that they will be sustained. One way to do that is to develop and adopt a healthy vending policy for your worksite or organization.

Consider the following when drafting the language for your policy:

- Who will oversee the implementation of the policy? Who will enforce it?
- What is the timeline for implementation?
 - Will everyone be required to implement the standards within a defined time frame? Will they be required to implement all the standards at once, or will they be phased in? If phased in, what are each of the deadlines?
- Will you set your own standards or use pre-existing standards?
- Will the standards be piloted in one venue before they are expanded to all locations?
- Can suppliers and distributors meet the standards within the time frame?
- Is the policy just focused on increasing healthier options within the vending machines, or do you want to incorporate pricing and placement strategies as well?
 - **Pricing** - The pricing of healthy items can be a strong determinant for employees/customers when choosing from a vending machine. Working with your vendor to decide pricing is very important. If possible, it is recommended that the price of the healthy items be set lower than the price of similar less-healthy items.
 - **Placement** - Proper placement of the healthy vending machine items will help employees/customers identify healthy choices and will make them far more visible to the consumer.
 - The approved healthy items should be grouped together in the vending machine to help employees easily identify them.
 - Healthy items should be placed in the slots that are at eye level so they are the first thing that customers see.
 - Healthy options should be stocked at all times, to ensure that a variety of healthy items are available on a regular basis.

The adoption of your policy should be spearheaded by your champion. The exact process of adopting a policy will vary from organization to organization, so it is important to know the policy adoption process for your organization. You will also want to think about supporting information that can help support the adoption of your policy. You may want to provide:

- Local data on poor nutrition, or chronic disease statistics.
- The potential reach of the policy and how it will impact health, productivity, and absenteeism.
- The potential costs and resources needed to implement the policy.



Setting Standards for Foods and Beverages

There are different approaches to setting nutrition standards, but the strongest standards are backed by recommendations based on scientific evidence and made by credible organizations, such as the Institute of Medicine. One way to set standards is based on nutrient content where foods and beverages are compared to minimum and maximum levels of certain nutrients such as sodium, fat and sugar. Another method classifies foods into categories based on how often they should be consumed, for example the “Go, Slow and Whoa” foods or the stoplight color coding method which places foods and beverages into green, yellow and red categories. No matter how you determine your standards, be prepared to justify them and accept that not everyone has the same opinion on what constitutes a “healthy” food.

Consider the people who use the vending machines when creating your policy:

- Are children frequent consumers?
- Is your building a recreational facility where people go to be physically active?
- Is it primarily a worksite where employees are the only consumers?
- Do you have a variety of customers using the vending machines?
See Appendix B for a list of sample standards and model policies.

Implementation

Support for implementing a healthy vending policy is vital to its success. This should include communicating with employees/customers and vendors throughout the entire process. The timeline that was developed in the planning process will need to be clearly communicated to everyone and an evaluation plan will need to be developed.

Communicating with Vendors

Regular communication with your vendors can help ensure that your vending machines are being stocked with the healthy options you requested.

- If possible have regular face to face meetings with your vendor to go over successes and other issues you may be having.
- Request a list of products (sometimes called a “pick list”) that they can stock in the machine and ask if they can acquire new products not on the list. Sometimes vendors can get specific products that you request from their wholesaler or from a wholesale store, so it doesn't hurt to ask about a product you don't see on the list.
- Provide your vendor with a “cheat sheet” to help them determine if vending items will meet your standards. This will help them assess whether new items they come across could be used in your machines.

Promotion

Promoting your new policy and letting staff and customers know what new products are being offered is critical for success.

- *Posters/Banners*
Hang posters on bulletin boards and on the vending machines letting consumers know about the new healthy options.
- *Table Tents*
Set out promotional table tents on break room and cafeteria tables.
- *Stickers*
Identify approved items with a sticker next to the item inside the machine, so customers can easily pick out the healthy options. (You will need to work with your vendor on this, as they will probably be the ones who place the stickers when they restock the machine.)
- *Emails/Newsletters*
Send out regular emails to employees letting them know about the policy and healthy new items that are available. Also include articles in company newsletters about the policy or information on how to choose a healthy snack.
- *Limit Unhealthy Advertising*
Limit advertising on vending machines to food and beverages that are healthier.
- *Taste Test*
If possible work with your vendor to get some samples of the new products you will be offering in the machines and have a taste testing event for employees and other vending machine users so they can taste the new products and provide you with their feedback.
- *Post Nutrition Information*
Place nutrition information next to each item in the machine or on a poster next to the machine so users know exact calorie counts of the items they are purchasing.

- Work with your vendor on product placement, and pricing strategies.
For more information on product placement and pricing see the Drafting and Adopting your Policy section.

Communicating with Employees/Customers

On-going communication with vending machine users will help provide good customer service and is a means of outreach and education about the healthy changes you are making. Simple marketing strategies such as promotional signage and internal communication will assist with sales, customer satisfaction, and achieving the desired goal: providing vending machine users with healthy options.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring by checking contents of vending machines is important to ensure your vendor is complying with your policy. Develop a quick method to document a spot check of your vending machines and remember to keep it simple. This will facilitate discussion when necessary between you and your vendor.

Evaluation can help you make sure that your policy is being implemented as planned and that it is having its intended effect. Specifically, evaluation can be used to:

- Identify barriers to implementing the policy
- Help improve compliance
- Inform future decision making

When developing your evaluation tool you will need to focus on what questions you would like answered. The types of questions you may want to include are:

- To what extent have the healthy vending standards been implemented?
 - What additional resources, support is needed to implement the standards more fully?
- What is the impact of the policy?
- Are there any negative or unintended effects of the policy? Have sales been affected?
- What other policies, or interventions can be implemented to increase the impact and help support the healthy vending policy?

See Appendix A for sample spot check forms.



Appendix A

Vending Machine Spot Check

Location:

Date:

Type Food:	Healthy slots / total slots		X 100 = %	Compliant?
Machine ID:	# Healthy Items	# Total Slots	% Healthy Items	
Are healthy foods less costly?				
Notes:				
Type Food:	Healthy slots / total slots		X 100 = %	Compliant?
Machine ID:	# Healthy Items	# Total Slots	% Healthy Items	
Are healthy foods less costly?				
Notes:				
Type Food:	Healthy slots / total slots		X 100 = %	Compliant?
Machine ID:	# Healthy Items	# Total Slots	% Healthy Items	
Are healthy foods less costly?				
Notes:				
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Machine ID:	# Healthy Items	# Total Slots	% Healthy Items	
Are healthy foods less costly?				
Notes:				
Type Food:	Healthy slots / total slots		X 100 = %	Compliant?
Machine ID:	# Healthy Items	# Total Slots	% Healthy Items	
Are healthy foods less costly?				
Notes:				

I. Purpose / Scope

This policy requires that food and beverages sold in all vending machines designed to dispense food and beverages located within any space or facility that is owned, leased or operated by the _____

meet the following nutrition standards:

II. Policy

Beverage Standards

At least 80% of all beverages dispensed in vending machines must meet the following beverage standards:

- Water, non-carbonated, no added sugars or artificial sweeteners, any size
- Plain fat-free or 1% low fat milk (or flavored fat-free or 1% low fat milk up to 150 calories per 8 oz), up to 12 oz
- 100% fruit/vegetable juice, up to 12 oz (8 oz or less preferred)
- Low calorie beverages (less than 50 calories per 12 oz), up to 12 oz
- Non-caloric beverages, including diet sodas, any size

Nutrition Standards

At least 80% of foods sold in vending machines must meet the following nutritional standards:

- Not more than 35% calories from fat
- Not more than 10% of calories from saturated fat
- Does not contain trans fat added during processing (hydrogenated oils and partially hydrogenated oils)
- Not more than 35% total weight from natural and added sugars
- Not more than 480 mg sodium per serving (600 mg for entrees)
- Fruits and vegetables without added sugar or fat; nuts, seeds, and cheese or yogurt made from reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free milk are exempt from these standards
- All efforts will be made to include items that are whole grain and/or contain at least 3 grams of fiber per serving
- At least one item meeting the snack/food criteria in each vending machine shall also meet the FDA definition of "low sodium" (<140 mg/serving)

Pricing / Placement Standards

- Beverage and food items that do not meet the stated nutritional standards will be priced a minimum of 20% higher than the normal cost of the item.
- Items meeting the mandatory standards must be placed in the top third of the vending machine so that they are visible at eye level.
- Advertising on vending machines shall include advertising only of beverages and foods that meet the nutrition and beverage standards.
- Vendors are asked to provide quarterly feedback to _____ on pricing and sales of all items and an analysis of the most and least popular items.

III. Implementation

Foods and beverages sold in _____-contracted vending machines will adhere to the Healthy Vending Machine Policy's beverage and nutrition standards according to this time frame:

- **By _____, 50%** of all foods and beverages in _____-contracted vending machines will meet the beverage and nutrition standards
- **By _____, 65%** of all foods and beverages in _____-contracted vending machines will meet the beverage and nutrition standards
- **By _____, 80%** of all foods and beverages in _____-contracted vending machines will meet the beverage and nutrition standards

IV. Quality Assurance / Evaluation

Periodic assessment of vending machines to ensure they are meeting policy specifications will be conducted by _____ staff. Assessment will occur at a minimum of two times per calendar year. Staff will work with _____ Purchasing Manager and vending subcontractor to assure that any compliance issues identified during periodic assessments are resolved and that vending options meet the stated guidelines. Staff will also collect utilization data from vending subcontractor for evaluation purposes.

V. References

- Blanck, H., Yaroch, A., Atienza, A., Yi, S., Zhang, J. & Mâsse, L. (2009). Factors influencing lunchtime food choices among working Americans. *Health Educ Behav.* 36: 289-301.
- French, S. (2003) Pricing effects on food choices. *J Nutr.* 133(3): 841S-843S.
- French, S., Hannan, P., Harnack, L., Mitchell, N., Toomey, T. & Gerlach, A. (2010) Pricing and availability intervention in vending machines at four bus garages. *J Occup Environ Med.* 52(suppl 1): S29.
- San Diego and Imperial Regional Nutrition Network. Literature review on strategies for healthy vending. Available at: http://www.banpac.org/pdfs/healthy_vending/healthy_vending_machine_literature_review.pdf

Model Vending Machine Policies (hyperlinked to URL address)

- Activate Quad Cities Sample
- Bay Area Nutrition & Physical Activity Collaborative: Healthy Vending Machine Toolkit
- County of San Diego Dept. of Parks and Recreation
- Eat Well Work Well Sample
- Fit City Challenge
- North Carolina Healthy Vending Policy Fact Sheet
- Smart Snackers (Voluntary Test Period)

Promotional Efforts

Promotional efforts such as point of purchase signs on vending machines, cafeteria lines and worksites can increase awareness and selection of healthier foods and beverages.

We have developed point of purchase signs that can be placed both on and around your vending machines, and worksites. These signs are FREE of charge.

All signs are 8.5 x 11 in size. The signs come in both a cling form that will adhere directly to vending machines and glass surfaces or in the traditional form that you can affix to a wall.

Below are examples of the two signs we have developed. One focuses on drinks, while the other focuses on snacks and foods. If you are interested in receiving free clings or professionally-printed signage,

*please email us at gethealthy@snhdmail.org
or call us at (702) 759-1270.*

Change Our Community. Change Our Health.

Do You Need to
RE-THINK YOUR DRINK?

A 20-ounce soda contains 16 teaspoons, or 16 packets, of sugar! Quench your thirst with one of these healthy options instead!

100% Juice
Low or Nonfat Milk
Water

gethealthyclarkcounty.org
www.changeourcommunityclarkcounty.org

SNHD
Southern Nevada Health District

SNACK SMART!

RED
Eat Rarely, If At All

- Candy
- Cookies
- Regular Potato Chips

YELLOW
Eat Occasionally

- Pretzels
- Baked Chips
- Dried Fruit
- Nuts

GREEN
Eat Often

- Fruits and Vegetables
- Air Popped Popcorn
- Low-Fat String Cheese
- Fat-Free and Low-Fat Yogurt

USE SNACK TIME TO GET MORE OF THE FOODS YOUR BODY NEEDS TO STAY HEALTHY: EAT FRUITS, VEGGIES, AND WHOLE GRAINS COMBINED WITH A LEAN PROTEIN AND KEEP CALORIES BETWEEN 150-200.

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