

MEDCHI, THE MARYLAND STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution 21-20

INTRODUCED BY: Medical Student Section
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SUBJECT: Health Food Options in the Hospital Setting

1 Whereas, A lifestyle supplemented by affordable and healthy foods aids in the prevention of
2 numerous chronic health conditions such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and heart disease¹;
3 and
4
5 Whereas, Hospitals have an ethical obligation to promote and financially enable their community
6 to make healthy food choices without the pressure of profit-driven decisions²; and
7
8 Whereas, U.S. hospital employees experience an 8.6% higher chronic illness burden than the
9 general U.S. workforce with healthcare costs totaling to 10% higher than the average U.S.
10 worker³; and
11
12 Whereas, One-third of patients that enter hospitals are malnourished with even more becoming
13 malnourished across their stay which causes longer stays, more frequent readmissions, increased
14 care costs, and higher risk for complications and mortality⁴; and
15
16 Whereas, Making the salad bar the more affordable option relative to standard sandwich and
17 burger fare in a Wisconsin hospital system cafeteria resulted in a 200% increase in sales of the
18 salad bar, therefore negating any financial loss associated with the price reduction⁵; and
19
20 Whereas, Reducing fruit prices by 60% percent in a Wisconsin hospital system increased fruit
21 sales by 1000%⁵; and
22
23 Whereas, Numerous hospitals that did reduce or completely remove unhealthy beverage options,
24 such as sugar-sweetened and carbonated beverages, reported no reduction in revenue⁶; and
25
26 Whereas, Creating healthier options in a Wisconsin hospital system benefited local farmers and
27 businesses, increasing purchases of local produce to over 150,000 pounds in one year⁵; and
28
29 Whereas, Local produce is more nutritious, tastes better due to freshness, is less likely to contain
30 pesticides, and enhances community connection & wellbeing⁷; and
31
32 Whereas, A color-coded labeling intervention improved sales of healthy items and was enhanced
33 by rearrangement of healthy food locations in more visible areas of the hospital cafeteria⁸; and
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35 Whereas, Sales of healthy items were enhanced by the arrangement of healthy food locations to
36 more visible areas of the hospital cafeteria⁸; and
37

38 Whereas, AMA policy H-150.949 “encourages healthful food options be available, at reasonable
39 prices and easily accessible, on the premises of Health Care Facilities and calls on all Health
40 Care Facilities to improve the health of patients, staff, and visitors by: (a) providing a variety of
41 healthy food, including plant-based meals, and meals that are low in saturated and trans fat,
42 sodium, and added sugars; (b) eliminating processed meats from menus; and (c) providing and
43 promoting healthy beverages”⁹; therefore be it
44

45 Resolved, that MedChi encourage increased local sourcing of hospital cafeteria food to provide
46 fresher and healthier, more nutritious produce while supporting the community; and be it
47 further,
48

49 Resolved, that MedChi encourage lowering prices of healthy food options below those of their
50 unhealthy alternatives in hospital cafeterias; and be it further
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52 Resolved, that MedChi adopt the current AMA policy H-150.949 and encourage hospital
53 systems to implement solutions that aid patients and visitors to make healthier eating choices in
54 their cafeterias, such as but not limited to color-coding systems that label what foods are
55 healthier and increased healthy food visibility through strategic placement.
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58 Fiscal Note: No significant fiscal impact.
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