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Baldwin Area Medical Center Announces Sugary Beverage Phase-out

In Wisconsin first, Baldwin Area Medical Center Announces Sugary Beverage Sales Phase-out Creating Statewide Community Wellness Model

(Duluth, MN) Baldwin Area Medical Center announced today the phase-out of sugary beverage sales and distribution to patients. This important announcement is consistent with a national trend in leading healthcare institutions including the Cleveland Clinic, Packard Children's Hospital, Chicago based Vanguard System, Baylor Health and **many more**. It is the first hospital in Wisconsin to publicly announce a sugary beverage phase-out policy.

This wellness initiative was initiated in January 2014 and includes the implementation of healthy vending criteria. By announcing this initiative, Baldwin Area Medical Center establishes statewide healthcare leadership on patient, employee, and community wellness.

"By phasing out sugary beverages, Baldwin Area Medical Center demonstrates statewide leadership in community health improvement", stated Jamie Harvie, Executive Director of the Institute for a Sustainable Future and coordinator of the **Commons Health Hospital Challenge**. "Baldwin Area Medical Centers' leadership is an essential health creation model, and provides an important example for patients,

employees, businesses and communities”, he added. In 2013, the Wisconsin Medical Society adopted Resolution 114 which supports educating parents, schools, and students about the link between consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and childhood obesity and the benefits of water consumption.

“The jury is in regarding the impact of sugar sweetened and artificially sweetened beverages. These ingredients are basically poison and contribute not only to obesity and diabetes, but to an increased risk for heart disease as well,” says Alison Page, CEO at Baldwin Area Medical Center. “While we acknowledge that consumption of these beverages is only one of many factors contributing to obesity, reducing consumption is a fairly easy way to begin reversing the trend. We are in the business of promoting health and wellness and will no longer support the sale of products that destroy good health.”

Through this initiative, Baldwin Area Medical Center serves and sells water, low-fat or non-fat milk, unsweetened coffee and teas, and reduced size 100% fruit and vegetable juices. Additionally, some sugar-sweetened beverages will be available for patients as directed by their health care provider. In addition, the hospital has phased out the sale of artificially sweetened beverages and nutritionally deplete vending options. Their foodservice department also does not own a deep fat fryer and strives to offer healthy food choices to patients and employees. In a statement of support for the Hospital Challenge the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics states, “We believe it is easier for providers to encourage better nutrition when these choices are being modeled by the local clinics and hospitals in which we serve”.

“Sugar-sweetened beverages are a significant source of empty calories, have little to no nutritional value, and are inconsistent with the beverage choices we are asking our patients to make, so it did not make sense to continue to offer them within our facility. Part of our community wellness initiative includes creating an environment with healthy choices both within our facility and our community. ” said Natasha Ward, registered dietitian and Community Health Improvement Director at Baldwin Area Medical Center. “Though we no longer sell sugary and artificially sweetened beverages, employees remain able to bring to work their beverage of choice.”

Sugar sweetened beverages, few of which have any nutritional value, account for half of all added sugars in the average American diet. Studies overwhelmingly show that consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) leads to weight gain and obesity which in turn promote diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and many other health problems. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, American Heart Association and others have called for a sharp reduction and/or limits in the consumption of sugar sweetened beverages, the largest contributing dietary source of added sugar. In a recent study,

one third of hospital stays were attributed to diabetes. In addition to weight gain, higher consumption of SSBs is associated with development of metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes.

Baldwin Area Medical Center is an independent, integrated clinic and twenty five bed hospital located in western Wisconsin. Since 1936, has prided itself as being the trusted health and wellness partner of the people of Baldwin and the surrounding communities and is committed to providing comprehensive health and wellness services and exceptional customer service to those they serve.

Baldwin Area Medical Center offers comprehensive healthcare services, including primary care, emergency care, cardiac care, advanced surgical procedures, diagnostic imaging, maternity care, orthopedic services, and treatment for a broad range of medical conditions. Baldwin Area Medical Center is equipped with the most advanced medical technology, and staffed by a team of highly skilled healthcare professionals.

The Commons Health Hospital Challenge goals are supported by the American Heart Association, the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians, the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Minnesota Cancer Alliance and more. A variety of tools and resources for hospitals and communities are available on the [Commons Health Hospital Challenge website](#).

ISF is a not-for-profit organization working to support and improve ecological health, through advocacy, research, consultation and education. ISF provides expertise on environmental toxins, health care design and healthy food systems and has presented and consulted internationally.

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