



## Overcoming Other Challenges

Change is challenging. Offering healthy choices in recreation facilities is no exception. Being prepared for the potential barriers goes a

long way to overcoming them. Listed below are some of the biggest challenges experienced by recreation staff already in the process of becoming healthy choices facilities—and the ways they found to overcome them.

### **Time Crunch**

Making changes can be time consuming, particularly for recreation staff who are already busy with their primary responsibilities. Here are some timesaving and time management ideas.

- Ask supervisors for additional time to work on the healthy choices committee tasks.
- Ask other staff members to for help (e.g. researching products, meeting with vendors).
- Work with the parents, volunteers, organizations and teams that use of the facility.
- Connect with other recreation centres working on Healthy Choices initiatives to share ideas.
- Go to the Brand Name Food List for ideas.
- Make small changes wherever possible, and plan for bigger changes over the long-term

### **Funding**

Accessing funding is often a challenging process, but small grants are available through a range of sources:

- Investigate grant opportunities with the Ministry of Health or other related organizations.
- Your local jurisdiction might be willing to support healthy initiatives.
- Connect with local businesses for support.

### **Revenues**

For many facilities, food and beverage sales are an important source of income. While sales might drop initially due to Healthy Choices, these usually bounce back as patrons become more aware of their availability and their benefits. Some facilities have decided that

community health is a higher priority than revenue, at least in the short-term.

*You can maximize revenues by:*

- Working with vendors and lease operators to meet goals for revenue and healthy choices;
- Making changes to both vending and concessions (comparable prices and products);
- Offering at least 50% Healthy Choices;
- Doing promotional activities;
- Selling healthy products at eye level;
- Making Healthy Choices more affordable than unhealthy choices; and,
- Connecting with local schools to promote healthy eating, especially when schools are located near recreation facilities.

### **Resistance from Lease Operators**

In some facilities, food service is managed by lease operators and making changes to the food environment requires their cooperation. While initial resistance isn't uncommon, many operators are willing to work in partnership to provide healthier choices. Overcome any initial resistance by:

- Explaining the economics and the social responsibility of offering healthy choices;
- Supporting any physical changes needed (e.g. new equipment);
- Supporting knowledge exchange with other Healthy Choices concessions (see Appendix H, Rutland Arena Success Story)

### **Working with Sport Clubs**

Sports clubs and teams are often affiliated with recreation facilities or rent the space. Making changes to the eating environment will sometimes affect these partnerships as clubs may sell food as fundraisers or run their own concessions. It's important to work with them to implement Healthy Choices:

- Include sports teams/clubs on the Healthy Choices committee.
- Create a facility-wide policy that ensures all food services meet the guidelines (see Information Sheet #4 on creating Healthy Choice Policies).
- Promote Healthy Choices through fundraising.

### **Access to Suppliers and Products**

The food industry sells a vast assortment of unhealthy foods and drinks. And they're everywhere. It's not always easy to find Healthy Choices to sell in vending machines or prepare in cafeterias or concessions. But they are out there, and more are being developed all the time. In the meantime:

- Contact healthy vending companies for product ideas and supplier information.
- Research healthy products.
- Visit the Brand Name Food List website (see Appendix C).
- Work with local grocery store or wholesaler to purchase products.