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Leading Twin Cities Hospital Joins Others in Supporting Healthy, Sustainable Food HCMC becomes first public teaching hospital in the country to sign Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge

(Minneapolis, MN) Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) has just joined the ranks of more than 200 hospitals nationwide who have committed to supporting healthy, sustainable food. Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) congratulates HCMC on being the first public teaching hospital in the country to sign the Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge.

The [Pledge](#), a voluntary program of HCWH, outlines steps hospitals can take to support food that is healthy for people, communities and the environment. “Adoption of a local, sustainable food program requires stepwise progress and begins with a commitment,” said Marie Kulick, Midwest healthy food coordinator for HCWH. “By signing the Pledge, HCMC is sending an important signal to the marketplace that hospitals want food produced and distributed in a way that supports the local community and protects public health.”

Initially, Hennepin is focused on steps that will increase patient and employee access to fresh, local, sustainably grown vegetables and fruits including increased purchase of seasonally available local produce and implementing a program whereby hospital employees can purchase shares of produce grown on a local farm and have them delivered to their workplace during the growing season.

“Hennepin’s pledge supports local farmers and by keeping dollars in the community it strengthens our fast-growing local food system overall,” said Jim Harkness, president of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, a HCWH member group.

Chris Burkhouse, co-owner of Foxtail Farms the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm working with Hennepin said that she’s thrilled that health care providers are recognizing the multiple benefits of local, sustainably produced food. “We’re also getting calls from other hospitals and corporate worksites, and see this really opening the door for the whole CSA movement.”

In April 2008, the Minnesota Academy of Family Practitioners (MAFP) passed a resolution entitled “Improving Health through Sustainable Food Purchasing,” which encourages hospitals to consciously implement healthy food service policies and practices. For more on the resolution and to see a letter they recently sent to MN hospital CEOs on the topic see www.mafp.org/healthyfoodsltr.asp. “From the way food is grown, to the way it’s packaged, shipped, prepared and discarded, hospital food purchasing decisions and food service policies can play important roles in promoting healthy lifestyles, preventing chronic disease, and contributing to ecological health,” said David Hutchinson, family physician and president of MAFP. “Thus, MAFP applauds Hennepin in taking this important step.”

HCWH is an international coalition of more than 430 organizations in 52 countries, working to transform the health care industry worldwide, without compromising patient safety or care, so that it is

ecologically sustainable and no longer a source of harm to public health and the environment. For more details on how food choices affect local economies, the environment and public health, go to www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org

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