

## Media Release

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1 December 2017

### **Making the healthy choice an easy choice**

South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) will be swapping sugary sweetened drinks for healthier options from 1 December as part of the NSW Health led initiative *Healthy Food and Drink for Staff and Visitors*.

The initiative aims to increase the availability of healthy food and drink options while reducing unhealthy options in cafes, vending machines and catering across all health facilities in the State.

SWSLHD Director Population Health Dr Stephen Conaty said there is strong evidence of a link between being overweight or obese and drinking sugary beverages.

“Across the state one in five children and one in two adults are overweight or obese. In south western Sydney one in every four children is overweight or obese - something we should all be concerned about,” Dr Conaty said.

“Excess weight is associated with a wide range of chronic health conditions including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke and some cancers.

“Sugary drinks such as soft drinks, cordials, some flavoured waters, iced teas, energy and sports drinks contain added sugars and have no nutritional benefit.

“Water is always the healthiest drink and we encourage our staff and visitors to ‘make water your drink’, but there are also other healthy options including juices with no added sugar, diet drinks, tea, coffee and milk drinks.

“We want to encourage healthy behaviour without completely removing choice,” he said.

The District, alongside all other health facilities across NSW, will be phasing out sugar sweetened beverages by December 2017. Dr Conaty also said that the change is part of the District’s commitment to ensuring a healthy community now and for the future.

“The health and wellbeing of staff, visitors and our community is priority for the District, which is why we’re committing to a healthy food and drink environment,” Dr Conaty said.

“There will be further changes over time as we increase the availability of healthy food choices so we can help people make the healthy choice an easy choice.” he said.

The *Healthy Food and Drink for Staff and Visitors Framework* does not apply to food and drink options provided to patients in hospital, for example patients on clear fluid diets will still be able to receive the same drinks as they currently do. Patients, visitors and staff will also be free to bring their preferred choice of food and drinks from outside if they would like to.

For more information visit [www.health.nsw.gov.au/health](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/health) or questions can be directed to [healthyfood@moh.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:healthyfood@moh.health.nsw.gov.au)