



# St. Mary's Hospital

**Corporate Office:** Madison | **Employees:** 2,700

**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** 1,400

**Success Story:** Get Fresh, Get Local Program and Center for Wellness

## Get Fresh, Get Local Program Components

- The program provides healthy eating options at the cafeteria, as well as through employee access to a Community-Supported Agriculture program.
- The Food & Nutrition Department helps plan the program and responds to customer requests.

## Program Highlights

Three years ago, St. Mary's decided to invest in farm-fresh ingredients from local suppliers that yield higher vitamin potency, better taste, and greater nutritional value than traditional processed foods. Area suppliers offer in-season local produce and other Wisconsin-produced food items. In 2010, about 16 percent of St. Mary's total cafeteria food spending was from local suppliers. St. Mary's newest initiative is a hospital-sponsored Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in which employees can buy shares and receive weekly shipments of fresh produce.

## Program Success

The Get Fresh, Get Local program is popular by virtue of the health and taste benefits that are being demanded by consumers, but St. Mary's has also led the effort to promote its success. Featured local foods carry a Get Fresh, Get Local label, and sales of these items outperform similar items without the label. Over the past three years St. Mary's has seen a 300 percent increase in the number of ears of corn it sells each week. St. Mary's is garnering recognition for being at the forefront of acute-care hospitals in the area by taking this approach to food.

## Overcoming Challenges

The program required St. Mary's to use resources wisely and to allocate appropriate employee time to the preparation of local produce. In addition, St. Mary's had to find a farm with insurance and high accountability for on-time delivery.

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**“From the perspective of family medicine physicians, we believe in and promote lifestyle choices that encourage health and well-being, preferable to treating chronic diseases that develop from poor dietary choices and inactivity. Through the CSA program and the many cafeteria initiatives to promote local produce, St. Mary's is supporting and encouraging healthy choices.”**

- Dr. Anne Kolan, family medicine resident at St. Mary's

*St. Mary's new Center for Wellness, open to both rehabilitation patients and employees.*

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## Center for Wellness Program Components

- An 11-member Employee Wellness Committee meets monthly and plans activities and events.
- All employees are encouraged to participate in the free employee exercise program at the Center for Wellness.
- A rehabilitation staff member provides an orientation and safety lesson to every employee who wishes to use the Center.

## Program Highlights

Created in 2008 as part of a new patient wing, the Center for Wellness operates first as a rehabilitation center for cardiac and pulmonary patients and second as an employee exercise area. Patients and employees exercise side by side, an added wellness perk for employees who get to know patients outside of their immediate work. The center includes 35 exercise machines, as well as free weights, exercise balls, and a walking track.

## Program Success

Because the Center for Wellness uses existing patient resources, better facilities and improved access benefit employees. On average, 40 employees use the center for Wellness each day, though more than 50 employees use the center during colder months. Employees report that the free admission and convenience of hours and location are major motivators in their participation, and that without the Center they might get little exercise at all.

## Overcoming Challenges

To increase awareness of the Center for Wellness, St. Mary's includes information in new employee orientation packets and fringe benefit lists, and runs reminders in staff announcements.

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