THE BRONX

HEALTHY BEVERAGE ZONE

TOOLKIT
Funding and support for the Bronx Healthy Beverage Zone project provided by

The Aetna Foundation’s Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge grant

www.TheBronxHBZ.org
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STARTING WITH THE GOAL

There is a growing concern about poor health outcomes in the Bronx and the increasing economic burden due to obesity and diabetes. Although the Bronx is resilient, since 2009, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings Report has ranked the Bronx as number 62 out of New York State’s 62 counties in terms of health factors and outcomes1. In response, several Bronx partners have come together to build a coalition to improve the health of our borough. In early 2015, the coalition developed an ongoing neighborhood health strategy called, “#Not62—The Campaign for A Healthy Bronx.” The #Not62 Campaign engages multiple sectors to address the social, economic, and physical environment throughout the Bronx which contributes to residents’ health.

Through the #Not62 Campaign, the Bronx “Initiative for Healthy Eating & Active Living (iHEAL)” was formed as a committee with the common agenda of making the healthy choice the easier choice for all Bronxites. It was here where the Healthy Beverage Zone (HBZ) project was developed to promote healthy beverage consumption at workplaces to address the obesity epidemic.

The HBZ is a project that employs evidence-based strategies, led by Union Community Health Center, Bronx Health REACH, and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s Bronx Neighborhood Health Action Center to assist organizations interested in becoming a HBZ site by creating a supportive environment to promote healthy beverage options at their workplaces.

Sugar-sweetened beverages are the leading source of added sugar in the American diet2,3 and are associated with weight gain, diet-related diseases (such as diabetes and heart disease),4,5 and poor dental health6. By communicating a clear and consistent message in support of healthy lifestyle choices, the HBZ is taking an important first step in creating a workplace-based environment where the healthy beverage choice is the easy choice.

Our goal in launching this borough-wide strategy is to build a movement to promote healthy beverage options for all who work, live, and visit the Bronx!
OBESITY TRENDS AND IMPACT

In previous years, calories consumed from sugary drinks increased among both adult\textsuperscript{7,8} and youth\textsuperscript{9} in the United States. In the 1970s, sugar-sweetened beverages made up about 4\% of Americans’ daily calorie intake. By 2001, that daily amount more than doubled to 9\%\textsuperscript{7}. Additionally, soda portion sizes have risen dramatically over the past 40 years. Before the 1950s, standard soft-drink bottles were 6.5 ounces\textsuperscript{10}. By the early 1990s, 20-ounce plastic bottles became the norm\textsuperscript{11}; and today, contour-shaped plastic bottles are available in even larger sizes – including the 42-ounce bottle made available to the general public in 2011 by the Coca-Cola Company as part of its 125th Anniversary Celebration\textsuperscript{12}.

It is estimated that Americans on average consume approximately 320 cans of soda per year, or about 0.9 cans per day\textsuperscript{13}. If one’s exercise and diet remain unchanged, coupled with the current rate of soda consumption, then a person could potentially gain up to 15 pounds of excess weight annually.

Unfortunately, 32.2\% of Bronxites as of 2015 report consuming one or more sugar-sweetened beverages per day, compared to 23.8\% of adult residents across NYC\textsuperscript{14}.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{soda_container_sizes.png}
\caption{Rise in soft drink container sizes throughout the decades.}
\end{figure}

\textit{Source: Center for Science in the Public Interest. Liquid Candy: How Soft Drinks Are Harming Americans’ Health}
OBESITY TRENDS AND IMPACT (cont)

While soda consumption has declined among adults and children, other sugar-sweetened beverages are gaining popularity. This includes energy drinks, fruit juices, sport drinks, sweetened teas and others. Many of these beverages are commonly labeled to give the impression that they are healthy, although they are filled with sugar. The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that less than 10% of our daily calories come from added sugar. Just one, 20-ounce sugary drink, which contains nearly seventeen teaspoons of sugar, can exceed this limit for adults and children.

Obesity also exacts a toll on our economy. In the United States, the costs of rising health care, disability costs, declining productivity, employee absenteeism, and other economic burdens was $117 billion in 2000. Given the current trend, that economic burden is expected to increase to $860 to $960 billion by the year 2030. This impact is felt greatest in low-to-moderate income consumers, such as those found throughout many areas of the Bronx. Additionally, the nearly 335,000 adults in the Bronx who report consuming one or more 12 ounce cans of sugary drinks per day in 2015 are collectively spending nearly $185 million a year on a product that provides no nutritional value and may put them at an increased risk of obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases.

$185 million in 2015...
The amount approximately spent by Bronx adults who reported drinking 1 or more sugar sweetened beverages a day.
Based on data from the NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene Community Health Survey, 2015
HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES ARE GOOD FOR BUSINESS

When businesses and employers invest in the health of their communities, they see benefits to the bottom line and to the local economy\textsuperscript{20}. Workplaces are ideal settings for promoting healthy beverage messages, considering that many Americans spend the majority of their day at work and make daily decisions about beverages that can either promote or erode their health. With a quarter of working-age Bronxites both living and working in the borough\textsuperscript{21}, an effective workplace-wellness program can help positively influence healthy behaviors and lead to a more productive and profitable workforce.

Investing in and supporting healthy communities can also have a positive impact on businesses’ bottom line. When businesses are located in healthy communities and are active in working with others to improve the community’s health, the characteristics associated with healthy communities can benefit their image and reputation. This can potentially lead to growth in their customer base and prospective pool of talented employees.

Good health is good for business.\textsuperscript{20}

When employers invest in their employees by offering wellness programs and services such as the HBZ, there are lower health care costs, fewer sick days, and improved productivity. When communities are healthier, employer health care costs are reduced, which enables more economic growth, and everyone in the community is better off.
WHY BEVERAGE CHOICES MATTER

In addition to obesity, sugar-sweetened beverages have been linked to other chronic disease such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, tooth decay, and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. Therefore, your organization is in a unique position to improve the health of your employees, clients, and neighborhoods by increasing their consumption of healthy beverages. Many people take drinking water for granted, and drinking an adequate amount of water on a daily basis is important for good health\textsuperscript{22}. Replacing sugary beverages with one to three cups of water daily could decrease calorie intake by up to 200+ calories\textsuperscript{23}.

Side by side comparisons of NYC tap water to regular soda\textsuperscript{24}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NYC Tap Water</th>
<th>Regular soda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 calories per 12 ounces</td>
<td>About 150 calories per 12 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 grams or teaspoons of sugar per 12 ounces</td>
<td>Up to 40 grams, or more than 9 teaspoons of sugar, per 12 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 pounds weight gain</td>
<td>Increased risk of weight gain annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 milligrams sodium</td>
<td>Contains sodium, which contributes to high blood pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps prevent cavities</td>
<td>Contributes to tooth decay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than a penny per 12 ounces</td>
<td>About $1 to $1.50 per 12 ounces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Truth About Sugary Drinks

Sugary drinks are the leading source of added sugar in our diet and remain a leading contributor to obesity, diabetes, fatty liver disease, and dental cavities.
HOW YOUR WORKPLACE CAN BECOME A HEALTHY BEVERAGE ZONE CHAMPION

Becoming a Healthy Beverage Zone is easy! It starts by having someone make a commitment to change your organization’s culture around beverage consumption. Campaign partners will assist you in achieving the various activities to adopt healthy beverage standards. This toolkit guides you through four levels you can implement to become a HBZ Champion (described in greater detail below).

CORE PARTNER

Becoming a partner starts by completing the activities that make up the HBZ CORE level. All of the activities in this level, with the exception of designating a site coordinator, are one-time activities that make it easy for you and your organization to become a HBZ. There are five activities to complete to be recognized as a CORE partner. For a full description of each activity in this level, please refer to Appendix A in this toolkit.

1. Your organization’s leadership is educated, involved, and invested in promoting healthier beverages
2. Designate a HBZ coordinator or liaison at your site
3. Complete the HBZ Initial Workplace tools (2 items)
   - Initial Workplace Contact Form
   - Workplace Observation Tool
4. Employees complete the Beverage Consumption Baseline Survey
5. Inform and engage employees about why beverage choices matter

Make a commitment.

“Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.”

- Vince Lombardi
HOW YOUR WORKPLACE CAN BECOME A HEALTHY BEVERAGE ZONE CHAMPION (cont)

CHAMPION PARTNERSHIPS
Once you have completed the activities to become a HBZ CORE partner, we can assist you in new ways to transform your workplace into becoming a HBZ CHAMPION. There are three CHAMPION levels your organization can strive for with increasing levels of commitment: SILVER, GOLD, and PLATINUM. Making water the “easy choice” in each of these levels includes efforts to create sustainable change at the workplace. Below is a description of the various levels of commitment for each level.

SILVER CHAMPION PARTNER ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
Adopting all of the following activities in this level will help to make your organization an HBZ SILVER CHAMPION. For a full description of each activity in this level, please refer to Appendix B in this toolkit.

1. Adopt a Healthy Meeting Policy
2. Adopt a Healthy Vending Policy
3. Implement a HBZ education project
4. Complete the Employee Beverage Consumption 6-month post survey

Champion Partnership!
“BCHN is excited to join the HBZ project. Promoting healthy beverages supports the Worksite Wellness program we’ve implemented throughout the community by encouraging not only our employees, but Bronxites to reclaim their health by making the healthy choice the easy choice.”
Renee Whiskey, Community Health Programs Developer, Bronx Community Health Network
HOW YOUR WORKPLACE CAN BECOME A HEALTHY BEVERAGE ZONE CHAMPION (cont)

GOLD & PLATINUM CHAMPION PARTNER REQUIREMENTS
Activities in these two categories will help your colleagues achieve a greater level of commitment to promoting HBZ. Recognizing that every organization will know which strategies will work best, we have designed these two categories with flexibility in mind. Recognition as a HBZ GOLD CHAMPION will require you to complete any two of the activities below plus the 12-month post survey. Recognition as a HBZ PLATINUM CHAMPION will require you to complete any five of the activities below plus the 12- and 18-month post surveys. Review the activities below with your leadership and colleagues to determine which activities best meet your goals. For a full description of each activity in this level, please refer to Appendix C in this toolkit.

1. Develop a Wellness Committee
2. Implement a Corporate Social Responsibility platform and introduce an Employee Pledge
3. Implement a Corporate Social Responsibility platform and lead by example
4. Implement a Corporate Social Responsibility platform and phase out unhealthy beverage marketing
5. Implement two additional Healthy Beverage Zone education projects
6. Install new or replace water stations so that co-workers and visitors can refill water bottles

What is Corporate Social Responsibility?
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an organization’s practices that can have a positive impact on social wellbeing. It recognizes that equity and the environment are just as important as economics. By incorporating HBZ into your workplace, your organization’s voice is added to the growing chorus of groups striving to improve health outcomes in the Bronx!
EXPAND YOUR ZONE!

By becoming a HBZ partner, you can encourage other organizations and businesses to also take the pledge. Below are some examples on how you can expand your zone to support your co-workers, visitors, customer, and community:

1. Ask your local grocery store or bodega to provide healthy beverage options such as water or seltzer. As demand for these products increases, store owners are more willing to carry healthier options.
2. Post healthy beverage signage at locations viewable by the public. Let everyone know that your organization supports healthier beverages with signage provided by the HBZ project.
3. Share the HBZ message in your organization’s newsletter or mailings. Take advantage of existing publications and other promotional materials to share that your organization is on its way to becoming a HBZ champion. Encourage your customers to follow suit.
4. Share your healthy beverage accomplishments, news, and pictures on social media or on the web using the hashtags #Not62 and #HealthyBeverageZone (#HBZ).
5. Encourage neighboring merchants to be a part of improving the community’s health. Speak with your merchant association or business improvement district leadership about becoming a HBZ partner.
6. Recommend a friend! Do you have a local business or organization that you partner with that may be interested in becoming a HBZ partner? Let us know, and we will contact and inform them of the benefits of joining the project and in making the Bronx a healthier place to live and work.

Becoming a healthy beverage zone champion

“The HBZ project creates an opportunity to reach more people throughout the Bronx with education around the dangers of sugary beverages and how making one small change can substantially improve their health.”

Dr. Douglas Yark, CEO, Union Community Health Center
BRONX, RETHINK YOUR DRINK!

What Is a Healthy Beverage?
NYC DOHMH has defined a healthy beverage as having less than or equal to 25 calories per cup examples include:
- Water
- Seltzer or club soda
- Unsweetened tea or coffee
- Unflavored milk

What is a Sugar Sweetened Beverage?
Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) are drinks with added sugar examples include:
- Non-diet soft drinks
- Flavored juice drinks
- Sports drinks
- Sweetened tea
- Energy drinks

RESTATING THE GOAL

By promoting healthy beverage consumption, we can support healthy behaviors at workplaces throughout the Bronx and take action to help prevent obesity and diabetes. By communicating a clear and consistent message in support of healthy lifestyle choices, we can take an important first step in creating an environment where the healthy beverage choice is the easy choice.

Restating the goal.
Working together, we can create a healthier place for all who work, live, and visit the Bronx!
Appendix A – Core partner activities description

Core level activities are systems-oriented and focus on logistical changes your organization needs to promote a HBZ in your workplace.

Your organization’s leadership is educated, involved, and invested in promoting healthier beverages
The first step to implement a HBZ at your workplace is to meet with decision makers at your organization who are interested in making healthier choices a priority. Your HBZ project liaison will present the information in this toolkit and work with your leadership to become invested in promoting healthy beverage choices. We will need their permission (in writing) to conduct the other initial steps and to create buy-in at the workplace. Buy-in can be as simple as a mass email or letter stating that the organization is interested in becoming a HBZ partner.

Designate a HBZ coordinator or liaison for your site
A significant step in becoming a partner is to identify a colleague who is willing to take on a greater commitment to transforming your workplace into a HBZ. To ensure the success of the project, a significant amount of involvement is needed in creating a culture of health. The HBZ coordinator will support their colleagues in educating them about healthier beverage choices.

Informing and engaging employees onsite
The marketing of healthy beverages at the workplace is important to the success of this project. By actively engaging colleagues and visitors with signage promoting water and other healthy beverages, you help them understand why the healthy choice is important. When you become a partner, we will provide your organization with free water prompt signs, infographics, and other educational materials to motivate your co-workers and visitors to make the healthy choice the preferred choice.

Complete the HBZ Initial Workplace tools (2 items)
After your workplace becomes a member, a project liaison will conduct a needs and resources assessment, using the Initial Workplace Contact Form, with the head of your organization (i.e. Executive Director, CEO, or COO) or HBZ Coordinator to determine the existing beverage consumption habits and support necessary to promote healthy beverages. Additionally, a site audit of the beverage options at the workplace will be completed by a trained HBZ liaison, using the Workplace Observation Tool. The site audit will be used to identify the availability of vending machines, water foundations, and signage used at the workplace that promotes healthy beverage messages.

Employees complete the Beverage Consumption Baseline Survey
Tracking behavioral changes at the workplace is important to assessing the success of the HBZ project. An online survey will be distributed to everyone at the workplace to assess existing beverage choices. The survey will include items that capture the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors around water, sugar-sweetened beverage consumption, and demographic information. Follow-up surveys will be conducted at workplaces among all staff at 6-, 12-, and 18-month intervals after the baseline survey.
Appendix B – Silver level partner activities description

Silver level activities are more policy orientated and promote HBZ educational opportunities for the workplace.

Adopt a Healthy Meeting Policy
One way to support healthy beverages at the workplace is to institute a policy to serve healthy beverages at all organizational meetings, functions, and other gatherings. A written policy explaining what healthy beverages are and when they must be served sets clear expectations for everyone. It also demonstrates to your colleagues that the organization is committed to promoting healthy beverage choices. Choose guidelines that best suit the specifics of your organization, but at a minimum, your organization’s policy should specify whether it applies to formal or informal meetings, instructions for purchasing beverages, and expectations for employees and guests.

Adopt a Healthy Vending Policy
An effective and realistic way to adopt healthy beverage consumption at your organization is by changing your vending policies. Many organizations have vending machines or kiosks at their workplace as a way to generate additional revenue. Including measures such as the nutritional guidelines for items to be included in the vending machines, increasing the ratio of healthy beverages to sugary beverages, and moving water to eye level are easy and cost-effective ways to promote healthy beverages.

Implement a HBZ education project
Educational projects can include different activities that provide opportunities for co-workers at your site to understand the purpose and importance of having policies in place, as well as opportunities to participate in the policy making process, and to share concerns. Additionally, these sessions might help identify challenges and strategies for implementation. Any educational plan should provide employees with the knowledge, skills, and support to promote healthier beverages at the workplace.

Complete the Employee Beverage Consumption 6-month post survey
As mentioned in the description for the pre-survey, tracking changes in behaviors at the workplace is important to measuring success. The HBZ Coordinator will provide instructions to employees to complete an online survey to determine changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors around drinking healthy beverages.
Appendix C – Gold and Platinum level partner activities description

Gold and Platinum level activities incorporate Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) changes to promote an optimal HBZ workplace.

**Develop a Wellness Committee**
The primary goal of a wellness committee is to create an environment that supports the healthy lifestyle behaviors you are trying to promote. Wellness Committees are the primary tools to sustain long-term healthy behaviors at your workplace, and are empowered to design, plan, and implement policies and activities to shift employees’ behavior towards drinking healthier beverage options. Setting up a wellness committee should be initiated by your HBZ Coordinator with your leadership’s approval.

**Implement a Corporate Social Responsibility platform and introduce an Employee Pledge**
An Employee Pledge is a formal, non-binding commitment for your co-workers to adopt healthier beverage consumption behaviors at the workplace. Introducing an employee pledge is a great way to let new and existing employees know that they are active participants in this project. Incorporating the pledge into new hire orientations firmly establishes a culture of health at the workplace, and sets the tone that employee’s health is important to the organization.

**Implement a Corporate Social Responsibility platform and lead by example**
Moving your organization towards becoming a HBZ should also take into consideration the community your organization serves, including patients, clients, and customers. Encourage employees to adopt “Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Free” practices by voluntarily committing to not consume unhealthy beverages in areas accessible to the public, or in view of clients or patients. This “lead by example” approach helps to identify your organization as one that is invested in building a culture of health in your community.

**Implement a Corporate Social Responsibility platform and phase out unhealthy beverage marketing**
Companies that produce unhealthy beverages spend millions of dollars on advertisements, endorsements, giveaways, promotions, and sponsorship annually to promote their products, especially in low-to-moderate income communities and communities of color. Resisting the lure of these dollars can be challenging, especially for local organizations that may rely on this funding to support their community programs. Phasing out unhealthy beverage corporate marketing and donor/recipient relationships sends a message that your organization is moving away from dependency on these funding sources and strengthens your organization’s commitment as a HBZ partner.
Appendix C – Gold and Platinum level partner activities description (cont)

**Implement two additional Healthy Beverage Zone education projects**

Similar to your earlier educational project, your organization should develop two additional activities to boost healthy beverage consumption at your workplace. As before, the purpose of these educational projects is to discuss the policies in place, allow co-workers to participate in the policy making process, and to share concerns. These new projects will help to identify challenges and strategies to increase the knowledge, skills, and support to promote healthier beverages at the workplace.

**Install new or replace water stations so that co-workers and visitors can refill water bottles**

Your facility may have older water fountains that do not allow co-workers or customers to fill water bottles, or may use expensive water cooler systems that require constant maintenance. Replacing or installing water jet systems can make water consumption more appealing by providing employees the ability to take water with them in reusable bottles and increase their frequency of water intake.
REFERENCES
5. Frank Hu. Resolved: there is sufficient scientific evidence that decreasing sugar-sweetened beverage consumption will reduce the prevalence of obesity and obesity-related diseases. Obes Rev. 2013; 14:606-19.
13. Beverage Marketing Corporation, June 2014, Based on a 12 ounce can with an average of 44 grams of sugar at 140 calories per can.
HBZ Lead Organizations:

Union Community Health Center
In 2015, Dr. Vanessa Salcedo launched the SSB (sugar-sweetened beverage) Free Zone at Union Community Health Center (UCHC), creating a role-modeling environment where staff was encouraged to ditch the sugary beverages and opt for healthier beverage choices such as water and seltzer. The UCHC model was received well across the community by elected officials, community organizations, and media, and has also received national recognition. As a result, the model was adopted by the Bronx Neighborhood Health Action Center and the HBZ was formed with UCHC serving as one of the lead organizations of the initiative and in partnership with the #Not62 Campaign.

Bronx Reach
The Bronx Health REACH Coalition led by the Institute for Family Health is comprised of health care providers, community based organizations and other concerned agencies, constituted to plan and implement a multi-sectorial initiative to address racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes in diabetes and cardiovascular disease in the Bronx. The focus is to advance health equity through health promotion and education, working with community based organizations to make system wide changes in key sectors to increase access to healthy food, physical activity and healthcare services.

#Not62 –The Campaign for A Healthy Bronx!
Through collaboration and partnership across multiple sectors in the Bronx, the mission of “#Not62–The Campaign for A Healthy Bronx” is to address the social and economic conditions that impact the overall quality of life; and help create an environment where Bronx residents can attain their highest level of health.

Supported by The Bronx Neighborhood Health Action Center
The Bronx Neighborhood Health Action Center is part of NYC DOHMH’s plan to bring more health and community services to New Yorkers in neighborhoods with high rates of diabetes, heart disease and other chronic diseases. The Action Centers will provide space for community-based organizations and Health Department Staff to work together to advance neighborhood health.