

**Understanding Healthy Food Choices
In Recreation Facilities in the Counties of
Lanark, Leeds & Grenville
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On behalf of the Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Healthy Communities Partnership



Executive Summary

Community recreation facilities are gathering places for people of all age. They provide safe, public spaces for physical activity and create a social environment that can strengthen a sense of community. The availability of healthy food options at these facilities can have a positive impact on the health of residents in the community.

The purpose of this report is: 1) to gain a better understanding of policies related to healthy food choices in municipal, and privately owned recreation facilities; and 2) to identify barriers to and interest in developing healthy food policies;. Recreation providers in municipal recreation facilities, bowling alleys, and curling clubs were invited to participate in an online survey and a telephone interview.

A total of 9 participants (6 municipal recreation representatives', 2 bowling alley representatives' and 1 curling club representative) completed the online survey and 8 participants (6 municipal recreation representatives', 2 bowling alley representatives') completed the telephone interview.

Overall, those who participated in this project were open to creating healthier food environments and indicated a willingness to try implementing healthier food choices with support by the partnership. There was the perception that creating healthier food environments would be hard; however, the majority of the participant²s support making changes to the food environment in their facilities. There was a lack of policies to create healthy food choices; yet, participants were open to receiving support to move towards creating healthier food environments. Challenges and solutions to providing healthy food choices in recreation facilities were identified.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Healthy Communities Partnership (the Partnership) completed a community picture report that provided an overview of the community and health profile related to six priorities: physical activity, healthy eating, injury prevention, substance and alcohol prevention, tobacco exposure and prevention, and mental health promotion. The report also outlined the community consultation, partnership development and priority setting exercise used to identify community priorities and recommendations to create healthy communities. The healthy eating priority states that “all residents of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark have a healthy body and the necessary resources, food skills & knowledge to access safe, healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food”¹ One recommended action to achieve this priority was to “provide supportive environments for healthy food choices”.² Therefore, as a next step, the Partnership identified the need to learn more about healthy food choices in recreation facilities. The purpose of this report is: 1) to gain a better understanding of policies related to healthy food choices in municipal, and privately owned recreation facilities; 2) to identify barriers to and interest in developing healthy food policies; and 3) to develop recommendations for future action by the Partnership to increase the availability of healthy foods in recreation facilities in the counties of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville.

BACKGROUND

Healthy eating and physical activity are important factors in maintaining the health of a community. Municipal recreational facilities (e.g., recreation centres, arenas, playfields, splash pads, parks, waterfronts and marinas), and privately owned recreation facilities (e.g., bowling alleys, curling clubs, and golf clubs) are often the hub of many communities. Recreation facilities and programs are gathering places for people of all ages, including families and older adults. They provide safe, public spaces for physical activity and create a social environment that can strengthen a sense of community. When healthy food options are available at these recreation facilities they can have a positive impact on the health of residents in the community.

The Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance recommends “increasing the availability of healthy foods and food choices (i.e., food from the four food groups in Canada’s Food Guide) in schools, workplaces and public facilities and limit food and beverages high in

¹ Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Healthy Communities Partnership. 2011. Community Picture March, p.14.

² Ibid.

calories, fat, sugar or salt”.³ This recommendation was also supported in the Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, and Healthy Weights Guidelines for Public Health in Ontario.⁴ Local governments (e.g., regional, county, municipal) and recreation business owners are well positioned to influence the availability of healthier foods in their facilities and programs⁵, but only a small number of recreation providers offer these foods. Packaged foods that are high in sugar and fat and sold in vending machines and snack bars are often the only food choices available⁶. In 2010, the Ontario Heart Health Network scanned municipal recreation policies that support the availability of healthy foods in vending machines and concession stands and found that only a few (<11) municipalities in Ontario have these policies.⁷ Clearly, there is a need for recreation providers to increase the availability of healthier food choices in their facilities.

In order to assist recreation providers, some Canadian researchers are investigating barriers and opportunities to increasing healthy food choices in recreation venues. For example, a study conducted in Quebec City looked at foods offered in sport, recreational and cultural facilities and found that most foods available in vending machines and snack bars were of low nutritional value.⁸ Another study in British Columbia found that recreation environments are not offering or promoting healthy food choices, however, there was strong interest and motivation by recreation providers to change this situation through education and training.⁹ In Southern Ontario, a research team conducted a study to understand recreation providers and patrons’ perspectives to altering recreation facilities’ food environments and found both groups were interested in and receptive to healthier food options at recreation facilities.¹⁰ Overall, barriers identified by recreation providers in these studies were:

- They would offer healthier food choices if they understood better what their patrons would actually buy;
- There needs to be a consensus on what constitutes “healthy” food and beverage choices;

³ Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance. 2010. Evidence-Informed Messages: Healthy Eating. p.4.

⁴ Cancer Care Ontario Program in Evidence-based Care. 2010.

⁵ Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance 2010. Evidence-Informed Messages: Healthy Eating.

⁶ Chaumette, Morency, Royer, et al. 2009. Food Environment in the sports, recreation and cultural facilities in Quebec City: A look at the situation. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 100, 310-314.

⁷ Bergeron, K. 2010. Ontario Heart Health Network Collaborative Policy Scan Project Report. Toronto, Ontario.

⁸ Chaumette, Morency, Royer, et al. 2009.

⁹ Naylor, Bridgewater, Purcell, Ostry & Vander Wekken. 2010. Publically Funded Recreation Facilities: Obesogenic Environments for Children and Families. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 7, 2208-2221.

¹⁰ Thomas & Irwin. 2010. Food Choices in Recreation Facilities: Operators’ and Patrons’ Perspectives. *Canadian Journal of dietetic Practice and Research*, 71 (4), 180-185. p. 183.

- Food choices are dictated by food service contracts that restrict the brands of foods and beverages they were allowed to sell;
- Lack of knowledge on how to negotiate with food service contractors for healthier food choices;
- Poor sales of healthier foods and associated loss of revenue;
- They are cautious about providing food and beverages that could contribute to the loss of revenue;
- Lack of education for both staff and the public on healthy eating and making healthy choices;
- Lack of training for food service staff to understand nutrition information;
- Lack of a healthy food policy;
- The need for the community to have patience to allow providers time to change;
- Unsure how to promote the change to healthier food choices;
- Lack of equipment or space to prepare or store healthier food choices.

Collectively, the studies provide insight into the opportunities that exist for recreation providers to increase access to healthier food choices. For example, recreation providers wanted to know which healthy items would sell; they were willing to develop stronger partnerships with community stakeholders (e.g., health units, community health centres) to learn more about providing healthy food choices; and were open to receiving resources to learn how to change their food environment. They were also interested in hearing success stories from other municipal recreation providers who are working to increase access to healthier food choices. For example, in the municipality of Gatineau, Quebec, city council voted to eliminate unhealthy foods from hockey arena canteens over the next three years.¹¹ Recreation providers also identified that construction of new recreation facilities and/or upgrades would be an ideal time to provide staff with proper equipment to make healthy food choices more readily available (e.g., through the presence of stove-tops instead of grills or deep fryers).

The Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance's toolkit for healthy public policies¹² recommends that healthy food policies in recreation facilities include:

¹¹ As cited in Thomas & Irwin. 2010.

¹² OCDPA. 2010. Toolkit for Healthier Communities-Influencing Healthy Public Policies www.ocdpa.on.ca/OCDPA/docs/OCDPA_HCToolkit.pdf

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- Guidelines for food and beverages sold in snack bars and cafeterias and served at meetings, special functions, and community events;
 - Pricing strategies that put the cost of healthier food and beverage choices (e.g. vegetables, fruit, and milk) lower than the cost of food and beverages low in nutritional value/nutrient density;
 - Promotional strategies that feature healthier food and beverage choices prominently on menu boards to encourage purchase of these items;
 - Elimination of advertising and marketing of food and beverages of low nutritional value/low nutrient density on menus, menu boards, vending machines, scoreboards pool floors, gyms, etc.;
 - Provision of nutrition education for all food service staff;
 - Establish policies to support the use of local foods in the community and for municipal or regional food venues, community programs and events;
 - Local sustainable food procurement practices for municipal food services and recreation facilities, grocery stores, food markets, and convenience stores.

Additionally, several provincial organizations in Canada have developed resources and programs to help recreation providers create healthy food policies for their facilities. Table 1 provides an overview of the types of resources designed to encourage a healthier food environment in recreation facilities and sports programs.

Table 1: Overview of Provincial Initiatives to Increasing Healthy Food Choices in Recreation Facilities^{13,14}

Province	Resource	Purpose	Weblink
Alberta	Healthy Eating for Children in Recreation and Community Centres	This booklet is to help workers and volunteers at recreation and community centres to understand the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth.	www.healthvalberta.ca/om/Documents/Healthy-Eating-RecCentres-2011.pdf
British Columbia	Healthy Choices in Recreation Settings-Toolkit	An initiative to encourage the sale of healthy food and beverage options in community recreation facilities and local government buildings through on-site vending machines, concessions, cafeterias and snack bars.	www.stayactiveathletics.com/files/HC_Toolkit_Web.pdf
Manitoba	Making a Move to Healthy Food Choices Toolkit	This toolkit was developed to encourage recreation facility operators to make a conscious decision to move towards healthier food choices in their local recreation facilities.	www.reconnections.com/docs/MakingtheMoveToHealthyChoicesToolkit-Apr19-10.pdf
New Brunswick	Healthy Foods in Recreation Facilities: It Just Makes Sense Toolkit	The goal of this toolkit is to provide awareness, education and resources to encourage a greater availability of healthy food choices in New Brunswick's recreational facilities.	www.gnb.ca/0131/wellness_sense-e.asp
Newfoundland and Labrador	Eat Great and Participate	Aims to raise awareness about the importance of physical activity and healthy eating and to increase the availability of healthy food and beverage choices in recreation, sport and community facilities and at events across Newfoundland and Labrador.	www.livinghealthyschools.com/eatgreat.html
Nova Scotia	Proceedings of Healthy Eating in Recreation and Sport Settings Provincial Gathering 2010	To provide recreation, sport and healthy eating stakeholders the opportunity to come together to learn more about the potential for collaboration, address issues and challenges, and provide comments and advice on how to make the healthy choice the easy choice in recreation and sport settings throughout Nova Scotia.	www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/publications/PASR-Healthy-Eating-Recreation-Sport-Report.pdf
Ontario	Eat Smart! Recreation Program	A toolkit to guide implementation of the Eat Smart! Recreation Centre Program. This includes outlining nutritional standards for vending machines and snack bars.	www.eatsmartontario.ca/become/recreation_centre
Prince Edward Island	Healthy Rink Initiative	The Healthy Rink Initiative is a project designed to ensure that arenas on PEI are fun, safe and healthy environments for all Islanders. This includes providing healthy food choices.	www.recreationpei.ca/index.php?page=programs_healthyrink
Saskatchewan	Support Healthy Eating at Work and Play- A Resource Guide for Creating Food Policies at Your Worksite or Recreation Facility	The purpose of this guide is to create a healthy food environment at worksites and recreation facilities.	www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/your_health_documents/SHEManualfinalJune2009.pdf

¹³ Andrews, R. 2011. Healthy Eating in Recreation & Sport Settings Provincial & Territorial Scan Summary, Capital District Health Authority, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

¹⁴ NOTE: The Northwest Territories has developed guidelines for providing healthy foods in health and social service facilities verses recreation facilities.

METHODOLOGY

An online survey and key informant telephone interviews were conducted with recreation providers between February and March 2012. The purpose of the survey and interviews were to gain a better understanding of healthy food policies in recreation facilities and to identify barriers to and interest in developing healthy food policies. The information gathered was used to develop recommendations for future actions by the Partnership to provide supportive environments for healthy food choices in recreation facilities.

Participants

The Partnership identified recreation providers in municipal recreation facilities, bowling alleys and curling clubs as participants for this project (Appendix A). The Partnership generated a contact list that included email addresses and telephone numbers of Directors and owners of these facilities. The sample size was 22 for municipal recreation representatives; 6 for bowling alley; and 12 for curling clubs.

A total of 9 participants completed the online survey representing 6 municipal recreation facilities, 2 bowling alleys, and 1 curling club. Brockville, Carleton Place, Mississippi Mills, Rideau Lakes represents the municipalities that were considered when completing the survey.

A total of 8 participants completed the interview process, representing 6 municipal recreation facilities and 2 curling club

Procedures

The Chair of the Partnership sent out an email (Appendix B) to recreation providers outlining the purpose of the project and inviting them to complete an online survey (Appendix C). They were also told that they might be one of a small group of providers randomly selected to participate in a key informant telephone interview. Survey and key informant interview questions were informed by the Municipal Recreation Facilities Food Environment Audit Tool¹⁵ and by the barriers and opportunities identified in the background section of this report. An interview guide (Appendix D) was also created. Two reminder emails to invite potential participants to participate in both the survey and telephone interviews were sent out. Telephone follow-up was also initiated to recruit participants for the telephone interviews.

¹⁵ Outlined in the Naylor et al. study. The full tool was provided by the Naylor at the request of the consultant completing this project.

Limitations and Strengths

As with all research, this project has some limitations that need to be noted. Participating in surveys and interviews has high participant burden (i.e., time it takes to participate, motivation to log-on), which could account for the low response rate by curling club owners. Participant bias may also be a factor as only those participants that were highly motivated or had time to contribute to this project, participated. Lastly, the results can not be generalized to other communities or recreation providers. Strengths that enhance the credibility of the results included the use of two different data collection methods (survey and interviews) and checking with those interviewed to clarify information.

RESULTS AND DATA INTERPRETATION

Online Survey

Current Food Environment

Snack bar/concession stands were the primary method for patrons' to purchase food at recreation facilities; 7 of the 9 facilities identified that they had a snack bar/concession stand. Of these 7, 2 are municipally operated, 3 are operated by the owner, and 2 is operated by a private company. Only 1 facility has a snack vending machine and 5 have beverage vending machines.

Some healthy food choices are available in some recreation facilities; yet, there are a number of healthy food choices that are not readily available. Table 1 outlines the types of foods that are never, occasionally, often and always available. Healthy food and beverage choices that are available in the facilities considered for this survey are 100% fruit and/or vegetable juice, and 2% milk. The following options were limited in availability (respondents chose occasionally, 1 or 2 times/month or never): fresh fruit, raw or cooked vegetables, meat, fish, and poultry that are lean and prepared with minimum of added fat and/or low fat, and low sodium recipes or mixes for soups, gravies, and sauces. Yogurt and hot chocolate made with milk was found to be limited.

Table 1: Types and frequency of food available at snack bar/concession stands

Types of Food	Always	Often 1-2 Times/week	Occasionally 1-2 times/month	Never
Fresh fruit	1	1	2	5
Raw or cooked vegetables are served, with minimum of added salt, fat, or sauces	0	0	3	6
100% fruit and/or vegetable juice	7	0	1	1
Whole grain products (frequency in table to right)	4	0	2	3
2% milk	6	0	1	2
Hot chocolate made with milk	2	0	1	6
Yogurt	2	0	2	4
Meat, fish, and poultry are lean, prepared with minimum of added fat (e.g., baked, grilled, roasted)	2	1	2	4
Low fat and low sodium recipes or mixes for soups, gravies and sauces	1	1	1	5

The majority of participants (>5) identified preservability, budget, storage and preparation area as limitations to purchasing healthy foods for their facilities, It was also found that equipment and space to prepare or store healthier food choices was an issue for some of the participants, but not others. 5 participants agreed that they lack equipment or space to prepare or store healthier food choices, and 2 disagreed that this was an issue. 1 participant was unsure if it was an issue or not.

Four facilities allowed fundraising tables by clubs. There was a mixed response when they were asked if all fundraising should be done with healthy food choices or non-food choices - 4 participants agreed, 3 were unsure and 2 disagreed.

All participants answered that their organization will not be building any new recreation facilities where food would be sold in the next 3 years. Therefore, of those that participated in this survey, there is not the opportunity to influence the design of the food service areas.

Training

Nutritional training is provided for facility staff and volunteers at 2 of the recreation facilities. Safe food handling training is provided for staff and volunteers at 8 of the 9 facilities. Four participants agreed that nutritional training should be provided to staff and volunteers, 1 was unsure and 1 participant disagreed. All participants agreed that safe food handling training should be provided to all staff and volunteers.

Attitudes

Level of Agreement to Creating Healthier Food Choices in their Facilities

Participants were agreeable to creating healthier food choices in their facilities and would offer healthier food choices if they better understood what their patrons' would actually buy. Participants had a mixed response when asked if more information was needed about what constitutes "healthy" food; 5 participants agreed that they need to know more about what constitutes "healthy" food and beverage choices, whereas, 2 disagreed that this knowledge is needed. 1 participant was unsure.

When considering the degree of difficulty to making healthier food choices available in their facility, there was also a mixed response with 5 agreeing that making healthy food choices available in their facility would be hard, 1 was unsure and 2 disagreed that making this type of change would be hard.

A mixed response was also found when participants were asked their level of agreement regarding to the following statement "food choices offered are dictated by food service contracts that restrict the brands of foods and beverages" - 2 participants agreed that this would be an issue, whereas, 5 participants disagreed. 1 participant was unsure if food service contracts were an issue or not.

Participants did support changes to how healthy foods are made available within their facilities. All, but 1 participant agreed that healthy choices should be positioned to be highly visible to customers and that foods provided for on-site child/youth programs should include healthy food choices. All participants agreed that healthy food and beverages should be provided at an equal or lower price to other food and beverages sold and there was agreement that staff members should be supported to make healthy food changes to the facility.

Level of Agreement of the Types of Supports Needed to Move towards Creating Healthier Food Environments

Participants are open to receiving support to move towards creating healthier food environments. There was agreement by all participants that they want to hear success stories of recreation providers who offer healthy food choices, they are open to receiving information to learn more about how to change their food environments, and they are open to offering healthy food choices that are locally produced. There was less agreement by participants regarding the need for information on how to negotiate with food service contractors for healthier food

choices, education about what healthy food choices are, the degree of difficulty of making healthy food choices available in their facilities, and if their customers would be receptive to healthier choices. Table 2 outlines these results.

Table 2: Level of Agreement of the Types of Supports Needed to Move towards Creating Healthier Food Environments

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
We would offer healthier food choices if we understood better what our patrons would actually buy.	2	5	1	0	0
We need to know more about what constitutes “healthy” food and beverage choices.	1	4	0	2	1
The food choices we offer are dictated by food service contracts that restrict the brands of foods and beverages we are allowed to sell.	1	1	1	3	2
We need information on how to negotiate with food service contractors for healthier food choices.	1	1	2	2	2
We associate the sale of healthier food choices with the loss of revenue.	0	3	3	2	0
We need more education about what are healthy food choices for staff.	1	3	1	2	1
Making healthy food choices in our facility will be hard.	0	5	1	2	0
We think our customers would be receptive to healthier choices.	1	2	3	2	0

Policies

When asked if a healthy food policy was needed for their facilities, only 1 participant agreed, 4 were unsure and 2 disagreed. When asked if their facility has an overall healthy food policy, only 1 participant answered “yes”, 6 participants answered “no”, and 2 answered “unknown”. All participants answered that there were no policies that restricted the availability of affordable healthier food and beverages for customers, and no policies to source and procure local foods to sell at their facilities. All participants answered “no” when asked if their facility had a committee that considers healthy food choices as options for sale within the facility.

In summary, the overall perception from those who participated in the survey was that creating healthier food environments would be hard; yet, the majority of the participants support making changes to how healthy foods are made available within their facilities. There was currently limited support and lack of policies to offer more healthy food choices; however,

participants were open to receiving support to move towards creating healthier food environments.

Telephone Interviews

There were 6 municipal recreation and 2 curling club representatives that participated in a telephone interview to better understand healthy food choices and policies in recreation settings. The types of recreation facilities described during the interviews included arenas, sports fields, walking trails, outdoor rinks, pools, splash pads, beaches, and playgrounds.

Those interviewed provided a description of the types of food choices available in their recreation facilities. Healthy food choices described included granola bars, fresh fruits, juices, homemade chili, air popped popcorn, 100% juices, and milk. Other food choices, described were french fries, chicken fingers, deep fried mozzarella sticks, hot dogs, poutine, western sandwiches, grilled cheese sandwiches, chocolate bars, potato chips and popsicles.

Of the two curling club representatives, one shared that the facility where they curl, there are healthy food items available for breakfast, lunch and dinner, including yogurt, fresh fruit, vegetables and hummus platters as well as full vegetarian dishes and gluten free foods.

In contrast, in the facility for the other curling club, described the availability of “country cooking with meat, potatoes and vegetables” at special events such as bonspiels. Examples of the types of foods that are available at special events were stews, chili, baked beans, quiche, sandwiches, homemade soups, fruit salad, and fresh bread/buns. It was stressed by the interviewee, that when they are purchasing food for special events, they buy the food locally in their community such as from the local grocery store and/or from local farmers. During normal curling hours, which were described as after the dinner hour, at this facility, the types of food and beverages available are snack foods, such as peanuts, chips, popcorn, pop, beer, and juice.

Two interviewee’s described how serving food within their facilities was not just about providing nutrients, but also about economic development (i.e., student employment, local business) and community engagement (i.e., with patrons, community volunteers). For example, one interviewee described how a local company operates the canteen at their arena, thus, creating economic benefits. Another interviewee described how healthy food choices are being offered at an outdoor rink for a lower price than some of the unhealthier foods and young people are purchasing them. This particular canteen is operated by a group of volunteers and it was shared that they have learned how to buy the right amount of produce to limit waste.

Selling healthier foods has met some resistance by patrons' in the past. One interviewee described how they tried to sell healthier foods such as soups and bagels, but they did not sell, as patrons' purchased the traditional food offerings, such as hot dogs or potato chips.

Some municipalities are making efforts to create healthier beverage environments. One interviewee highlighted how the municipal council for the Town of Gananoque has banned the sale of power drinks at their facilities.

A number of those interviewed spoke highly of the safe food handling course offered for free through the local health unit.

Those interviewed described the following challenges to providing healthy food choices in their recreation facility:

- Shelf life of some healthier food choices such as fresh fruit, vegetables, muffins
- The ability to purchase the right amount of foods that have a short shelf life;
- Food costs are often higher to purchase fruits and vegetables;
- Purchasing healthier foods, such as fruits and vegetables at the local grocery store in a small rural area is challenging as there are at times a limited selection and the cost of the produce is more than at larger centres;
- Lack of consumer purchasing of healthier food choices
- Past experience of providing healthy food choices was not well received by their patrons';
- Lost revenue;
- Competition outside of facilities where patrons' can purchase food. Examples provided were Tim Horton's, McDonalds, and Country Style Donuts;
- Creating healthier food choices is not a priority; there are other competing interests that were felt to be more important.

Those interviewed identified the following solutions to overcome challenges to providing healthier food choices:

- Influence parents to ask for more healthier food choices;
- Influence patrons' to request healthier food choices be available for purchase;
- Advertisements to inform patrons' about choosing healthier food choices in the recreation facility;

- Develop a strong partnership with the local health unit/Healthy Communities Partnership to help support changing the food environment in recreation settings.

Those interviewed were also asked to identify the types of support that they would like to implement healthy food choices. The types of supports identified were:

- **Promotional material** to promote the benefits and availability of healthier food choices. It was recommended to create brochures, pamphlets and posters to be available in the recreation facility targeting parents to want to make healthier food choices for themselves and their children. It was also suggested that the development of promotional videos on the benefits and availability of healthy food choices could be used to run on the TVs in municipal buildings, such as arenas and/or libraries.
- **Forum** to bring together local recreation providers interested in developing healthier food choices and policies so they can work together to create healthier food environments;
- **Case studies** that outline successes, challenges and lessons learned by other recreation facilities that have implemented healthier food choices;
- **Education** to help staff understand healthy food choices and that eating habits need to change;
- **Encourage political will** by municipal councils to move forward on healthier food choices in the community, including at municipally run recreation facilities. One interviewee also encouraged municipal council to move to make healthy foods available at all municipal functions (i.e., community consultations; fundraising events; special festivals).

Overall, those interviewed were open to creating healthier food environments and indicated a willingness to try implementing healthier food choices with support.

CONCLUSION

This report found that across the counties of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville the availability of healthy food choices is not equal across the recreation facilities being considered by those interviewed; some recreation facilities do not offer healthy choices, whereas, some recreation facilities are providing healthy food choices and consumers are purchasing them. Challenges, opportunities and potential solutions were identified that can be used to support more healthy food choices in recreation sites.

Appendix A

Participant Recruitment: Municipalities, Bowling Alleys and Curling Clubs

Municipalities/Counties

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Athens & Rear of Yonge & Escott
Augusta
Edwardsburgh/Cardinal
Elizabethtown/Kitley
Front of Yonge
Leeds and Thousand Islands
Merrickville/Wolford
North Grenville
Rideau Lakes
Prescott
Gananoque

Brockville
Lanark County
Beckwith Township
Tay Valley Township
Carleton Place
Mississippi Mills
Town of Perth
Township of Drummond/North Elmsley
Township of Lanark Highlands
Township of Montague
Town of Smiths Falls

Bowling Alleys

Kemptville Bowling
Elgin Bowling Lanes
Delaney Bowling Gananoque
The Bowling Centre

Curling Clubs

Brockville Golf & Country Club
Almonte Curling Club
Gananoque Curling Club
North Grenville Curling Club
Pakenham Curling Club
Prescott Curling Club
Smiths Falls Curling & Squash Club
Carleton Place Curling Club

Appendix B
Email Message

SUBJECT: You are the expert-tell us what you think

Dear <recreation provider>

The *Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Healthy Communities Partnership* invites you or someone else on staff to participate in an online survey to help us better understand:

- Food policies and practices in your recreation facilities;
- Interest and challenges to developing healthy food options; and

The survey should take no more than 7 minutes to complete and is available until March 1, 2012. Visit <insert url link>

The survey is anonymous. All data will be stored in a secure computer file. You are free to stop the survey for whatever reason by exiting the survey before the end. We have hired Kim Bergeron and Susan MacIsaac, who are independent consultants, to conduct this survey.

We appreciate your participation in this survey! Your feedback will help the Partnership increase the body of knowledge we all need to make your community even healthier. As part of this project, the consultants will be conducting telephone interviews with a small group of randomly selected recreation providers. You may be contacted to participate.

If you have any questions about this project or require additional information, please contact Kim Bergeron <insert information>

Sincerely,

Dr. Paula Stewart, Medical Officer of Health Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit and Co-Chair, Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Healthy Communities Partnership

Appendix C

(opening screen to the online survey)

Healthier Food Choices in Recreation Settings Survey

The *Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Healthy Communities Partnership* invites you to participate in an online survey to help us better understand:

- Healthier food choice policies and practices in your recreation facilities;
- Barriers to developing healthy food policies; and
- How to help recreation providers develop healthy food choices in recreation facilities.

The survey should take no more than 7 minutes to complete.

The survey is anonymous. You will be asked to identify if you are answering the questions as an employee of a municipal recreation facility, bowling alley or curling club. You will also be asked to identify which municipality best represents your work location. All data will be stored in a secure computer file. The data will be accessible only by Kim Bergeron and Susan MacIsaac, independent consultants hired to conduct this survey. All responses will be compiled into a summary report. Once the report has been completed at the end of March 2012, the data collected will be destroyed.

You are free to stop the survey at any time by exiting the survey before the end. In cases of withdrawal, any data you have provided will be destroyed upon your request. You are not obliged to respond to any questions that you do not wish to answer.

We appreciate your participation in this survey! Your feedback will help the Partnership increase the body of knowledge we all need to make your community even healthier.

If you have any questions about this project or require additional information, please contact Kim Bergeron <insert information>

Interested in knowing more?

If you want to know more about the work of the *Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Healthy Communities Partnership*, please contact (name, position, telephone number, e-mail).

I have read the information provided and I consent to participate in this online survey

Yes

No

(If yes, proceed to questions; If no, they will exit the survey to the Partnership website)

(next screen)

Think about the recreational facility where you work (check only one answer)

Facilities Assessment

Does your recreation facility have a snack bar/concession stand?

Yes

No

If yes, please list up to 3 food items you consider to be healthy food choices.

If yes to snack bar/concession, which one best describes who operates the cafeteria/snack bar?

Municipality (publicly operated)

Owner

Private company (contract services out to a company)

Other, please describe

Does your recreation facility have a snack vending machine?

Yes

No

If yes, please list up to 3 food items you consider to be healthy food choices.

Does your recreation facility have a beverage vending machine?

Yes

No

If yes, please list up to 3 beverages that you consider to be healthy choices.

Does your recreation facility allow fundraising food tables by clubs?

Yes

No

Please check how often the following foods are available in your facility.

Types of Food	Never	Occasionally 1-2 times/month	Often 1-2 Times/week	Always (most days)
Fresh fruit				
Raw or cooked vegetables served, with minimum added salt, fat, or sauces				
100% fruit and/or vegetable juice				
Whole grain products				
2 % milk				
Hot chocolate made with milk				
Yogurt (2% or less fat)				
Meat, fish, and poultry prepared with minimum of added fat (e.g., baked, grilled, roasted)				
Low fat and low sodium recipes or mixes for soups, gravies and sauces				

Communication & Education

Is nutritional training provided for facility staff and volunteers? (choose one)

Yes

No

Unknown

Is safe food handling training provided for staff and volunteers? (chosed one)

Yes

No

Unknown

Consider the following statements and indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
We would offer healthier food choices if we understood better what our patrons would actually buy.					
We need to know more about what constitutes “healthy” food and beverage choices.					
The food choices we offer are dictated by food service contracts that restrict the brands of foods and beverages we are allowed to sell.					
We need information on how to negotiate with food service contractors for healthier food choices.					
We associate the sale of healthier food choices with the loss of revenue.					
We need more education about what are healthy food choices for staff.					
We need a healthy food policy.					
We lack equipment or space to prepare or store healthier food choices.					
Making healthy food choices available in our facility will be hard.					
We are willing to explore offering healthier food					
We are open to receiving information and resources to learn more about how to provide healthier food.					
We want to hear success stories of recreation providers who offer healthy food choices.					
We are open to offering healthy food choices that are locally produced.					
We think our customers would be receptive to healthier choices.					

Consider the following statements and indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Healthy choices should be positioned to be highly visible to customers.					
Healthy food and beverages should be provided at an equal or lower price to other food and beverages sold.					
Foods provided for on-site child/youth programs should include healthy food choices.					
All fundraising should be done with healthy food choices or non-food choices					
Nutritional training should be provided to staff and volunteers					
Safe food handling training should be provided to staff and volunteers.					
Staff members should be supported to make healthy changes to the facility.					

Which, if any, of the following are limitations to purchasing healthy food in your recreation facility?

	Yes a limitation	Not a limitation
Budget		
Storage		
Preparation area		
Preservability		

Other, please specify

Is your organization building any new recreation facilities where food will be sold in the next 3 years?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

Policy Assessment

Consider the following (check only one per statement)

	Yes	No	Unknown
Does your recreation facility have an overall Healthy Food Policy that ensures the availability of healthy food and beverage choices for customers?			
Are there policies that restrict the availability of less healthy food and beverages for customers?			
Are there policies that improve the availability of affordable healthier food and beverage choices at your facility (e.g.,			

	Yes	No	Unknown
lower pricing for healthy food, providing discount coupons, vouchers redeemable for healthy foods)?			
Is there a policy to source and procure local foods (e.g., % of foods used must be local) to sell at your facility?			
Does your facility have a Committee that considers healthy food choices as options for sale in your facility?			

Demographics

What best represents where you work? (check only one)

- Municipal recreation facility
- Bowling Alley
- Curling Club

What municipality best represents your work location that you were considering when answering the questions in this survey? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| United Counties of Leeds and Grenville | Brockville |
| Athens & Rear of Yonge & Escott | Lanark County |
| Augusta | Beckwith Township |
| Edwardsburgh/Cardinal | Tay Valley Township |
| Elizabethtown/Kitley | Carleton Place |
| Front of Yonge | Mississippi Mills |
| Leeds and Thousand Islands | Town of Perth |
| Merrickville/Wolford | Township of Drummond/North Elmsley |
| North Grenville | Township of Lanark Highlands |
| Rideau Lakes | Township of Montague |
| Prescott | Town of Smith Falls |
| Gananoque | |

Is there anything else we should have asked about healthy food choices in your recreation facility? Please list.

Thank you for contributing to this project!

(exit to the Partnership website)

Appendix D Interview Guide

Dear <municipal recreation, bowling alley or curling club representative>

The Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Healthy Community Partnership is comprised of organizations, networks and individuals working together to make the healthy choice the easy choice. We are interested in creating healthy communities where residents live, learn, work and play. You have been identified as someone who has important background and knowledge help us better understand healthier food choice policies and practices in recreation facilities.

You are invited to participate in a 20-minute telephone interview between March 5, 2012 and March 16, 2012 with <Kim Bergeron or Susan MacIsaac> the consultants hired to help us with this project. The interview will focus on the successes and challenges your <municipality, bowling alley or curling club> has experienced related to providing healthier food choices in your recreation facilities.

Your participation is both voluntary and confidential. Information collected will be kept anonymous: only Kim or Susan will have access to what was said. Data from all interviews will be analyzed in the aggregate (compiled together as themes) and presented in a summary report in March 2012.

If you are interested in participating in this telephone interview, please respond “I am interested” to this email and <Kim or Susan> will contact you to set up a convenient date and time.

If you are not interested in participating, please respond “I am not interested in participating” to this email.

If you have any questions, please contact me at <insert contact information>.

Thank you for your support in making your community even healthier.

Sincerely,
<Kim or Susan>

Interview Script

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this telephone interview to understand healthier food choices policies in recreation settings. As you are aware, I am conducting this interview on behalf of the Lanark, Leeds & Granville Healthy Communities Partnership.

Do you have any questions about the purpose of this interview?
(answer questions if they have any)

This interview will take approximately 20 minutes. During the interview I will be taking notes to capture our discussion. Your participation is both voluntary and confidential. Information collected will be kept anonymous. Data from all interviews will be analyzed in the aggregate (compiled together as themes) and presented in a summary report in March 2012.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

1. What does providing healthier food choices in your recreation facility look like to you?
2. Briefly describe ways that your <municipality, bowling alley or curling club> is or could create healthier food choices at your facility?
4. What do you see as challenges to creating healthy food choices for your <municipality, bowling alley or curling club>? How could they be overcome? Which ones have you already overcome?
5. What kind of support, if any, would your organization like to implement healthier food choices?
6. That covers the things I wanted to ask, what should I have asked that I didn't think of?
7. If I have further questions or need to clarify something, would it be alright to contact you again?

Thank you for participating in this interview. The information you have provided will assist the Partnership in developing recommendations for municipal recreation providers like yourself to improve access to healthier foods in recreation settings in the Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Counties.