

TAKE BACK THE TAP TOOLKIT

OBJECTIVE:

To eliminate the use of bottled water coolers in facilities throughout the Lower Mainland Health Authorities and encouraging a return to tap water.

WHY TAP WATER?

It's Pure and Pristine

Metro Vancouver has some of the best drinking water in the world. Our water comes directly from rainwater and snow melt from the pristine mountains of the North Shore and Coquitlam. It is treated and stored in Capilano, Seymour and Coquitlam and undergoes state-of-the art filtration and purification to ensure it is clean and safe to drink. Furthermore, our water is tested every day and up to 136,000 times per year.

Subject to Higher Regulatory Standards

According to Statistics Canada, in 2008, Canadians were drinking approximately 60 litres of water per person, per year. Many people believe that bottled water is cleaner but this is not always true. Two of the largest producers of bottled water, Aquifina and Dasani, use filtered tap water. Furthermore, bottled water is less regulated than tap so it is not subject to the same rigorous testing. Finally, improperly maintained water coolers can develop harmful bacteria such as coliform (E.Coli type).

Reduces Carbon Footprint

The other issue with bottled water is its lifecycle. There is oil needed to create the plastic bottles, then additional fuel needed to ship it to and from the bottling plants and finally more fuel to deliver it to our facilities. Often, the delivery trucks are left idling in inappropriate areas on sites. Then there is end of life disposal of bottles.

It's Free!

Going to tap also cuts costs. At PHSA alone, various departments spend approximately **\$69,000.00** collectively per year on bottled water for staff and patient/visitor waiting areas. The average monthly cost per bottled water unit is **\$52.63**.

STEPS:

Step 1:

Identify the number of bottled water coolers units in your area. Also, find out who is in charge of purchasing it for your department and how much is spent.

Step 2

Take some time on a team meeting agenda or even consider hosting a lunch n' learn to inform people about some of the myths of bottled water versus tap and sharing information on Metro Vancouver's water supply. Have a discussion with the team to find out why they prefer bottled water versus tap. Ask them whether they might consider switching to tap in light of what they now know about Metro Vancouver's water. Use the information above in the "Why Tap Water?" section and consider showing the group the following short feature, "The Story of Bottled Water", <http://www.storyofstuff.org/movies-all/story-of-bottled-water/> (if this link doesn't work, let me know and I'll send you another one). You can also refer to Metro Vancouver's "Tap Water Campaign" website at <http://www.metrovancouver.org/region/tapwater/Pages/default.aspx>.

Step 3

If there are concerns about water supply, piping or access to a tap in your area, make a note of them and let the Green+Leaders Program Coordinator know. Facilities may be able to provide some support in facilitating this change.

Step 4

Make the switch!

EVALUATION

Send the results (successes and challenges) to the Green+Leaders Lead at sarah.currie@fraserhealth.ca