



Vending with Vision: Logan Hospital's ABC Strategy in Action

At Metro South, Logan Hospital is leading the way in expanding access to healthier food choices through the implementation of the A Better Choice (ABC) strategy.

Under the leadership of Sarah Hautaniemi, Retail and Quality Assurance Coordinator, and her dedicated team, Logan hospital has developed and implemented innovative approaches to support the ABC initiative's goal of promoting healthier food and drink choices. The initiatives success, particularly in vending services, is a testament to the power of teamwork and hands-on leadership. Sarah remains actively involved in daily operations, while Pam, the other half of the dynamic duo, plays a vital role in managing vending logistics and ensuring high standards of customer care. Their combined efforts have streamlined operations and highlighted the importance of a committed team in driving long-term success.

Establishing In-House Vending

While vending machines have long been part of Logan Hospital's food services, their transformation under Sarah's guidance has been particularly impactful. A standout aspect of the hospital's approach is the inclusion of fresh, in-house-prepared food in vending machines, an uncommon practice in healthcare settings. Items such as sandwiches, salads, and other nutritious meals are made daily by the hospital's food services team, supporting the [ABC Strategy](#) while ensuring convenient access to healthy options for staff, patients, and visitors.

Sarah's proactive coordination with kitchen staff ensures a smooth preparation and restocking process, highlighting the hospital's strong commitment to health promotion and setting a new standard for vending services.

Managing Day-to-Day Operations with a Health Focus

Effective day-to-day management is key to delivering on Sarah's commitment to health and nutrition through vending services. Despite staffing challenges, she prioritises restocking, stock rotation, and quality control to uphold high standards of food safety and freshness. Healthy choices remain consistently available, with a strong focus on meeting ABC targets. Compliance and traceability are supported through regular temperature checks, machine monitoring, and date tracking. Strong communication and teamwork enable Sarah and her team to manage peak periods efficiently, ensuring reliable service while promoting health, sustainability, and responsible food management across all vending locations.

Supplier Relationships and Product Trials

Trialling new suppliers can present challenges, but the team remains committed to expanding the range of healthy, sustainable products. Packaging compatibility with vending machine specifications is a key consideration, especially when replacing discontinued items. Each product must be assessed for its fit within the machine's coil mechanism to ensure smooth dispensing. Despite these logistical hurdles, the team's efforts are driven by a broader goal; ensuring consistent access to nutritious, reliable options that support the hospital's health promotion objectives.

Sarah emphasises the value of working with multiple suppliers, noting that this flexibility enhances operational efficiency and ensures a steady supply of healthy products. One notable innovation, born from strong supplier relationships, is the development of a custom sandwich container designed to better fit vending machine coils.

A Better Choice

Healthy options made easy



Led by Sarah, this improvement has reduced the risk of dispensing issues and sparked interest in broader adoption across other health services. Regular communication with suppliers also enables Sarah to evaluate new product samples using [FoodChecker](#) and the ABC Strategy, ensuring that only nutritious, approved items are offered.

Hot Food Vending

Logan Hospital is also the first health service in Queensland to introduce a hot food vending machine, offering 24/7 access to convenient, nutritious, hot meals. This innovation required overcoming several logistical challenges, including ensuring that packaging could withstand the machine's internal heating process. The fully automated machine stores, heats, and dispenses meals, requiring close coordination between product selection, packaging design, and machine functionality.

The hot food machine, which holds over 44 meals per week, is strategically located for easy access. Sarah led its implementation, working closely with suppliers and testing various approaches until a reliable solution was found. Now operating efficiently, the machine is restocked twice a week.

To meet growing demand, Sarah oversees the restocking of all cold and hot vending machines, unpacking deliveries, rotating stock, and preparing trolleys throughout the day. Snack machines are refilled up to three times daily — a true reflection of the team's commitment to quality and customer satisfaction.

Impact, Feedback, and Future Planning

While Sarah acknowledges that it's impossible to please everyone, overall feedback on the ABC initiative has been overwhelmingly positive. She values customer input and uses it to continuously improve the vending experience. The popularity of the hot food vending machine has grown significantly, largely through word of mouth, and its increasing

usage has become a new operational challenge the team is proud to meet.

Sarah encourages other Hospitals and Health Services to embrace the ABC Strategy and recognise their role in creating healthier food environments. She highlights the importance of having a dedicated individual overseeing vending operations, noting that thoughtful product placement and accessibility are key to driving meaningful change. Logan Hospital's success demonstrates how leadership, innovation, and collaboration can transform vending services into a model of health promotion and sustainability.

“Our in-house approach allows us to continually refresh options, respond to feedback, and provide healthier, more appealing choices for staff and visitors”
Sarah Hautaniemi, Logan Hospital.



The first hot food vending machine in a Queensland health service is looking nutritious and delicious.

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