



24 Sustainability Success Stories in 2024

Story 4 of 24: Sustainability in Food & Nutrition

Culinary Sustainability: UPMC Williamsport Takes a Stand on Food Waste

A transformation has been happening in the UPMC kitchens and cafeterias of North Central Pa. region. Over the past 2 years, the North Central Pa region food management team has been focused on reducing food waste to be better financial stewards of UPMC's resources. Overall, food waste has been reduced by over 50%, all while showing how culinary artistry and tasty food can be at the heart of sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.

Their philosophy is simple: only order what's essential, replenish supplies judiciously, and only throw away what is unusable. As a result, every ingredient is cherished, and every resource is used purposefully.

The team developed a method to track waste through their kitchen that quantifies leftovers, storage, and production waste. However, success resulted from team engagement, which came from understanding the why, real time coaching, and awareness of the results.

The food managers were able to analyze where the team can be better stewards, not only to the hospital but to the supply chain as well. Being mindful of anticipated needs and food waste has allowed the team to be exact in amounts produced, reduce purchasing when needed, which in turn leads to less congestion with storage needs and allows them to keep products fresh.

The impact is palpable, and they aren't done yet. [UPMC Williamsport](#), along with the entire North Central Pa. region of hospitals, reduced food waste by 13% in just the last year alone, putting them over the threshold of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of 50% food waste reduction target by 2027. This reduction of food waste translates to a prevention of approximately 17 metric tons of CO2 greenhouse gas emissions, which is equivalent to driving an average gasoline-powered car for 43,500 miles or charging 2 million smart phones.

UPMC Williamsport's success is a testament to the power of conscious choices, analytical insight, and an unwavering commitment to making a positive impact on both the plate and the planet.