



NEWS RELEASE

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## Exploring more local food options at hospitals and healthcare institutions

Niagara Health System (NHS) is leading an initiative to increase the use of local food on menus at the hospital and at healthcare institutions across the region.

Today marked the first step in creating a dialogue among hospital and healthcare workers and food service suppliers, producers, and processors in a workshop titled Bringing Local to Niagara Healthcare.

More than 4,500 people are served more than 13,500 meals each day in our hospital and healthcare institutions in Niagara.

“We are working with our healthcare partners in the region to identify any opportunities for menu items that could be sourced locally in Niagara or Ontario,” says Lisa Slack, Director of Nutrition and Food Services at NHS. “Pooling demand will help decrease the barriers we may have with our individual purchase volumes. Our new regional kitchen at the St. Catharines Site is an ideal set up and has the capacity to support the production of local menu items for both our hospital patients and partners in healthcare in Niagara.”

Today’s discussions focused on exploring opportunities and partnerships that would increase purchasing power to source and serve food locally.

NHS is able to dedicate resources to developing new menu items using locally sourced foods with support from the Greenbelt Fund, as part of the 2014 Local Food Challenge. The Greenbelt Fund, a non-profit organization, supports and enhances the viability, integrity and sustainability of agriculture in Ontario and Ontario’s Greenbelt.

“The Niagara Health System is showing great leadership in the healthcare community as a local food champion. They are tapping into the needs of the Niagara region when it comes to nourishing their patients with what grows right here at home,” said Burkhard Mausberg, CEO of the Greenbelt Fund.

For more information about the Local Food Challenge and the Fund, visit [Ontariofresh.ca](http://Ontariofresh.ca).

**Media contact:** Caroline Bourque Wiley, Manager, Communications, 905-378-4647, ext. 43113, [cwiley@niagarahealth.on.ca](mailto:cwiley@niagarahealth.on.ca).