

Press Release

For Immediate Release

October 26, 2015

Advocate Health Care to offer antibiotic-free meat

Downers Grove, IL— Antibiotic-free meats will be available at all Advocate Health Care hospitals beginning October 26, 2015 which is also the celebration of Food Day, a day aimed at encouraging Americans to “change their diets and our food policies.” As the first health system in the area to address the issue of antibiotics in meat in a comprehensive manner, Advocate will begin adding antibiotic-free meats to patient and visitor menus beginning with ground beef, beef patties and roast turkey. Over the next few years, additional antibiotic-free meats will also be added.

“This is the right thing to do for our patients,” said Dr. Rishi Sikka, senior vice president of clinical transformation for Advocate Health Care. “As a health care system, we stress the importance of antibiotic stewardship and this is another component of our overall approach.”

Twenty two percent or approximately 210,000 pounds of the 950,000 pounds of meat purchased by Advocate annually will be antibiotic-free.

The shift toward antibiotic-free meats is a part of a larger antibiotic stewardship program embraced by Advocate due to the fact that the rate at which antibiotics become resistant depends on how responsibly they are used. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that approximately two million Americans develop antibiotic resistant infections each year and nearly 23,000 individuals die as a result of these bacterial infections.

80 percent of antibiotics sold in the U.S. are given to animals that are being raised for food. If antibiotics are overused on a farm, the meat coming from the farm could contain antibiotic resistant bacteria and if it is not properly cooked before being consumed, an antibiotic resistant infection could develop. In addition, the irresponsible use of antibiotics can put farm workers at an increased risk for developing antibiotic resistant infections and this bacteria can also end up in soil and waterways. “Simply providing patients with antibiotic-free meat will not put an end to antibiotic resistant bacteria. This is just one small step of a very long journey and there is much work to be done.” said Dr. James Malow, infectious disease physician and internal medicine chair at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center in Chicago. “If everyone does their part in making responsible choices when it comes to the use of antibiotics, we can make a significant impact on the number of antibiotic resistant infection

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About Advocate Health Care

Advocate Health Care is the largest health system in Illinois and one of the largest health care providers in the Midwest. Advocate operates more than 250 sites of care and 12 hospitals, including five of the nation’s 100 Top Hospitals, the state’s largest integrated children’s network, five Level I trauma centers (the state’s highest designation in trauma care), three Level II trauma centers, one of the area’s largest home health and hospice companies and one of the region’s largest medical groups. Advocate Health Care trains more primary care physicians and residents at its four teaching hospitals than any other health system in the state. As a not-for-profit, mission-based health system affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ, Advocate contributed \$783 million in charitable care and services to communities across Chicagoland and Central Illinois in 2014.