

Room Service: A Sustainable Waste Reducing Model of Patient Food Service

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Introduction

Yes - you can be environmentally and socially responsible while giving your patients worldwide recognised best practice service!

Mercy Hospital reviewed its food service in 2016, taking into account food waste and contradictory patient satisfaction comments (too much food / not enough food). A decision was made based on lean principles and sustainability criteria to implement a room service model in Mercy's 42 bed inpatient ward.

Method

We used a PDSA model which involved a total change in menu, systems, kitchen layout, staffing processes and culture.

Abstract

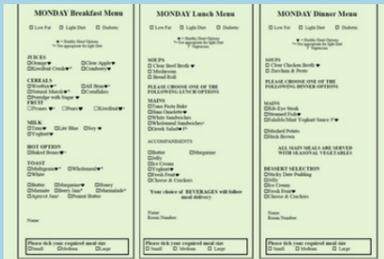
Mercy's food services team reviewed overseas research on possible models. The most frequently cited best practice model was room service: Food cooked freshly at times to suit the patient and delivered individually to the patient's room.

McCray et al., (2018) study of Mater Hospital Brisbane's introduction of room service reported a **15% food cost reduction** and **reduction in plate waste from 29% to 12%**. Nutrition outcomes, based on energy and protein consumption also improved significantly as did various measures of patient satisfaction.

Mercy planned and implemented a room service model of food service in February 2018.

Since introduction, **food cost has reduced by an average of 14%** and anecdotally plate waste has **reduced from 30% to 10%**. Local suppliers are prominent. Other food service streams (cafe and staff meals) allow the use of over-ordered ingredients.

Implementation: Before



Paper based menu. Patient chose from limited options the day before service.



Meals were batch cooked and delivered to all ward patients at set times.



Traditional kitchen layout and work processes.

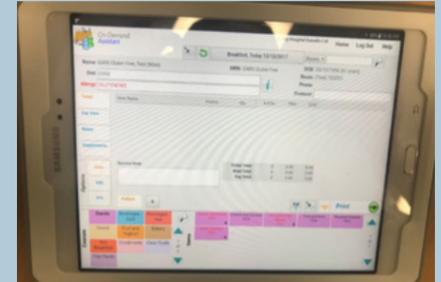
Implementation: After



Menu is extensive, durable cover contains pages that can be updated based on feedback or audit.



Food is freshly cooked to order anytime between 7 am and 7 pm and presented on washable linen.

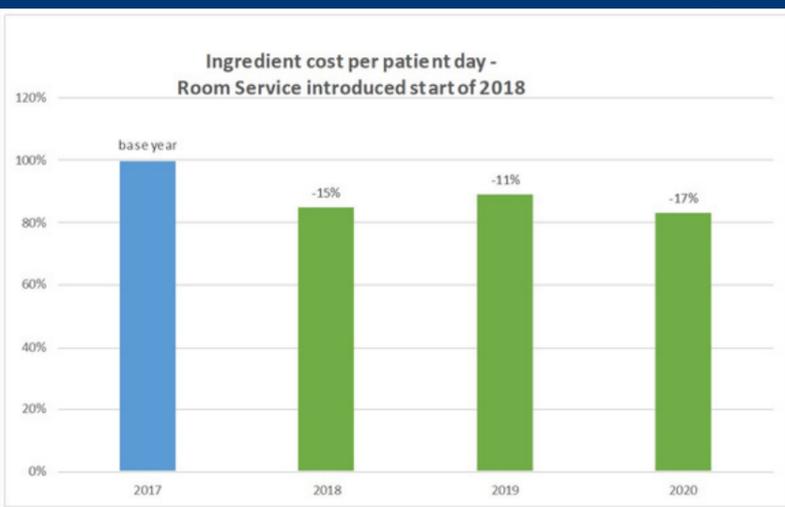


Ordering is via phone to Food Services Assistant's i-Pad. New IT system supports patient nutritional safety.



New kitchen layout: Chilled bins, Merrychef ovens and a trayline area support the new cooking style.

Results, improvements and conclusions



Room service

- ✓ Decreased food and waste costs
- ✓ Increased patient satisfaction
- ✓ Offer a best practice service
- ✓ A practical solution - not a pipe dream

Sustainability extras

- Local supplier focus - Worm farm for fruit and vege scraps -
- Composting for a wider variety of food waste -
- Increasing offer and uptake of meat- and dairy-free options

Food costs per patient (directly reflecting quantity of food used) have fallen by an average of 14.3% in the period since the introduction of room service, confirming research estimates of 12-20%.

Plate waste has anecdotally decreased from around 30% to 10%.

References, resources and acknowledgements

McCray, S., Maunder, K., Krikowa, R., & MacKenzie-Shalders, K. (2018). Room service improves nutritional intake and increases patient satisfaction while decreasing food waste and cost. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 118(2), 284-293. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2017.05.014>
 Room service research report. (n.d.). CBORD | Your CBORD Team Serving the Asia-Pacific Region. <https://www.cbord.com.au/room-service-research-report/>
Thank you to Mercy Hospital's Food Services Team.