

Transforming patient experience and reducing food waste through room service

Executive Summary:

CHU Sainte-Justine (Montreal, Quebec)

Aim:

Implement an on-demand room service model for hospital food services to eliminate food waste and increase patient satisfaction. Reap the added benefit of enhanced staff satisfaction and the opportunity for sustainable procurement.

Introduction:

Patient dissatisfaction with hospital food leads to considerable food waste, which is a significant driver of global emissions and climate change. A just-in-time food service system can lead to reduced tray waste, increased patient satisfaction and long-term cost savings. Instead of receiving a tray of food at set times of day (traditional meal service), patients order from a restaurant-style menu at any time. They have more choice and flexibility to exercise their personal eating habits and cultural preferences.

Intervention:

The women and children's teaching hospital CHU Sainte-Justine in Montreal, Quebec, implemented a room service model in 2016; patients can now order food from an à la carte menu and enjoy a fresh meal prepared and delivered to their room within an hour. The food services team designed the new system in consultation with nurses, to maximize their confidence and reduce their workload. The hospital's re-branded food services, called **Délipapilles!** (from the French words for "delicious" and "taste buds"), has been celebrated by patients, staff and the broader public.

Outcomes:

- **Significant reductions in food waste and costs**
 - Total food waste: from 45% to 5%
 - The cost of a meal: from \$8 to \$6.20
 - The number of patient meals served per day: from 180 to 130
- **A significant increase in patient satisfaction**, from 50% to 99% of patients reporting high satisfaction. Patients and families also report that room service has brought a human, comforting and healing touch to the way food is served, while offering more choice, flexibility and control around food/meals.
- **New revenue streams**, through the expansion of room service to visitors and the opening of a new restaurant and café in the hospital.
- **Greater staff satisfaction** for food services staff (greater visibility and interaction with patients/families) and clinical staff (more seamless workflows).
- **Sustainable procurement**, through the purchase of more local and organic food.

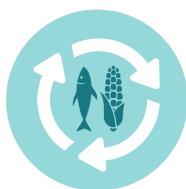
Conclusion:

By decreasing food waste and increasing patient satisfaction through room service, CHU Sainte-Justine unlocked the cascading benefits of valuing food as part of care. The hospital's efforts to increase local and sustainable purchasing, and manager Josée Lavoie's leadership for policy changes, are paving the way for other institutions to follow.

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