

How often have you visited a restaurant with friends?

We all know that it is the visual appearance of a meal that entices us to eat and enhances our enjoyment of the food.

For too long we have been reliant on paper based menus, their distribution, collection and collation all require the use of valuable resources in both time and paper.

There are major infection control issues with paper menus that have never been addressed. I have yet to see paper menus sanitized before being returned to the kitchen.

Technology today enables us to offer clients something new and exciting in the way that they order meals. A new system that will improve a patient's stay in hospital.

The aim of this project is to provide:

- greater patient satisfaction with meals delivered
- less wastage in food
- a saving in paper
- a saving in staff time
- fewer margins for error in incorrect allocation of meals at preparation, plating and delivery stages.

The idea for this concept came about after a staff member submitted an improvement form at a Continuous Improvement Committee Meeting, asking “why we don't re-use the blank side of hardcopy printouts to save trees”?

This suggestion made staff question, “how can we change the way we collect menus to reduce the paper waste?”.

These factors influenced EDMH's submission to the Management Innovation Council seeding grants program for our project:

PICTURE POSTCARDS MENUS

OBJECTIVES

Our objective is to have a proof of concept model up and running at Edenhope early in 2008.

We envisage the system at this stage being able to:

1. Communicate with admission software to populate the client list
2. Display on a tablet style PC, client name and room number to the operator. (SLIDE 1)

3. Display the menu and food items as they are selected and ordered (SLIDE 2 & 3)
4. Collate the number of meal items required
5. Wireless transfer the information to the point of printing. (SLIDE 4)
6. Print a summary sheet detailing the number of meal items required.
7. Printing of patient meal dockets

BENEFITS

- Improved client satisfaction with meals, as clients will be able to view all meal items on the menu and choose what looks best to them.
- Hotel Services Staff will no longer have to count individual meal requirements off each menu as a summary sheet will have the meal item totals completed.
- Huge reduction in paper as patient meal selections will be printed on docket sized paper.
- A data based system will provide us with the ability to easily gather statistical information during menu collection.
- Enable the facility to identify clients at risk in the event of a food poisoning scare, as we will be able to easily review who had what meal and when.
- For facilities with off site kitchens the ability to order closer to service days allowing for “just in time” stocking of meal requirements and greater portion control.
- Accumulation of meals for Internal cost allocations.
- Changes in patient meal needs can be easily updated or cancelled helping to prevent wastage.
- Dietetic review can be carried out remotely as access to client meal history will be available instantly.
- Families of nursing home residents can pre order likes and dislikes at the time of admission ensuring clients receive the meals they like, not what a staff member thinks they might like.

Information technology is rapidly expanding and is already used in improving health outcomes in a variety of ways.

In the future patients will all have a bedside screen which will enable them to call a nurse, watch movies and TV, access the internet, do their banking and order their meals – CALD clients will be able to access hospital information in their own language – the opportunities are endless.

This project will enable us to provide a system which hopefully will be available for all health services in the future to enable improved access to meal ordering for clients.

In closing I would like to thank the Victorian health Service Management Innovation Council for the opportunity to undertake this project and Edenhope staff, Neil Harvey

Deputy CEO/Director Corporate Services and Andrew Saunders, Hotel Services Manager for taking on this challenge.