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Hospital Dishes Up New Approach to Patient Meals

Customer satisfaction is a key ingredient in the success of any service provider. At Yale-New Haven Hospital (YNHH), the ingredients of inpatient meals and patient satisfaction were recently improved. After three years of planning, the Hospital introduced a better concept in preparing and delivering meals to inpatients. "At Your Request"® Room Service Dining has been a big hit at YNHH. The new approach allows patients to order any item on the menu from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., as long as their physician has not placed any restrictions on their meals. The orders are received by telephone in a new call center, where up to ten dietetic technicians create a meal ticket, which prints directly in the kitchen for preparation and assembly. A team of cooks creates the custom-ordered meals in the newly renovated kitchen, where they are combined with beverages and other meal accompaniments.

The Hospital selected Petra as their construction manager to complete the renovations required for this new approach. Joseph T. Sepot Architects and mechanical engineer Frank Centore of NATCOMM, LLC, were the design professionals for this challenging project.

The first step in the multi-phased approach was construction of a new satellite kitchen to provide swing space for the remaining five phases and to allow uninterrupted meal preparation to continue. Petra's Project



Approximately 15,000 patient meals per day are prepared and delivered for the new room service program



The newly renovated kitchen at Yale-New Haven Hospital is ready for service

Manager, Noel Petra, commented, "It was critical to keep the kitchen in continuous operation throughout the renovation. This was one of the most challenging aspects of the project." Noel worked closely with Susan Chamberland, Project Manager for YNHH, throughout the renovation. The construction phases also required temporary barriers and walls to segregate food preparation from construction activities. This is particularly important in a hospital environment, where cleanliness, dust containment, and air quality must be diligently controlled and monitored. Negative air pressure was established and maintained within the

construction perimeter to keep dust particles from reaching the food service and healthcare environments.

The entire existing kitchen was demolished and retrofitted to accommodate the new full-service kitchen for the room service program. Substantial upgrades were completed to the electrical, plumbing, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. A significant amount of ventilation is required to support a full-service commercial kitchen. It was challenging to find the physical space required to accommodate the large amount of

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ductwork from the basement kitchen through a number of floors in the Hospital. Existing underslab utility lines and drain lines were replaced. In many cases, the excavation had to be completed by hand because of space limitations. The 5,000 square foot project also received several inspections throughout the construction phases by outside regulatory agencies, along with the local Health Department.

"Petra's ongoing communication with us throughout the project was extraordinary," remarked Jennifer Pascucci, Director, Food and Nutrition Services at YNH. "We met weekly with Petra and with representatives from the Hospital's Engineering and Facilities Departments, along with

other Hospital representatives such as Information Technology, and outside agencies such as AT&T to ensure that our efforts were focused and that everyone's expectations were met. This level of detail and coordination allowed the project to progress smoothly. The Petra team literally created new production lines overnight on five different occasions so that everything was in place for the kitchen staff to begin work at 5:30 a.m."

When the custom-prepared meals are completed, Food and Nutrition Ambassadors deliver the finished trays on specially designed carts to the patients' rooms. Patients receive their meals within 45 minutes of placing their order. The program is one of the largest room service programs in North America. It is currently the largest room service hospital for Sodexo,

servicing approximately 1,500 patient meals per day from two traylines.

"Introducing room service is a major advance in how we provide nourishment to our patients," said Jennifer Pascucci. "It is an investment by the Hospital to increase patient satisfaction. Patient units with this new room service have already enjoyed an increase in their scores. Few, if any, patients will ever see the new state-of-the-art kitchen in the basement. But it sure is making a big difference in our patients' experience here."

Petra is proud to be a part of the experience. After all, customer service is a key ingredient.

To discuss program management or construction services, please call Guido Petra, President or Terry Wooding, Executive Vice President at 203-865-6043.

Project Profile

Owner:

Yale-New Haven Hospital,
New Haven, CT

Project:

Main Kitchen Renovation

Project Delivery System:

Construction Management

Project Team

Yale-New Haven Hospital

Brad Bevers,
AIA, Director of Facilities
Design and Construction
Susan Chamberland,
Project Manager
Gary Funk,
Senior Draftsperson

Sodexo

Jennifer Pascucci,
Director, Food and Nutrition Services

Gita Sullivan,
Room Service Project Manager,
Food and Nutrition Services
Mark Spizzoucco,
Associate Director
Operations

Petra Construction Corporation

Noel Petra,
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Healthcare Team Leader
Joanne Zezima,
Assistant Project Manager

Mike Kiwanis,
Superintendent
Bob Bergen,
Estimating
Dave Harlow,
Estimating

Joseph T. Sepot Architects

Joseph Sepot

Engineering

Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing (MEP)
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Special thanks to all of Petra's subcontractors and material suppliers

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