

Transforming Critical Care Through Strategic Nutrition Management:



HOW HOSPITAL FOOD SERVICE PARTNERSHIPS DRIVE CLINICAL EXCELLENCE



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When most people think about intensive care units, their minds go to ventilators, medications, and skilled physicians. Few consider the profound impact of clinical nutrition on patient recovery. Yet at DHR Health in Edinburg, Texas, a groundbreaking partnership between the dietitians from Luby's Culinary Services and the hospital's critical care team has demonstrated just how vital proper nutrition management can be in improving patient outcomes.

This isn't just another story about hospital food service. It's about reimagining how nutrition teams can become integral players in critical care, driving measurable improvements in patient care and contributing to prestigious achievements like the Joint Commission Disease Specific Certification in Respiratory Failure.

The Evolution of Clinical Nutrition

In critical care settings, the traditional approach to patient care often relegated nutrition to a secondary consideration. Modern healthcare demands a more integrated approach, recognizing that nutrition plays a fundamental role in patient recovery, particularly for those requiring mechanical ventilation or extended ICU stays.

At DHR Health, this recognition led to a transformative partnership that placed nutrition at the forefront of patient care. By elevating the role of clinical nutrition beyond conventional food service, this collaboration has created a model for how hospitals can enhance patient outcomes through strategic nutrition management.



The Luby's Difference: 75 Years of Culinary Excellence

With over seventy-five years of deep-rooted expertise in restaurants and hospitality, Luby's Culinary Services has revolutionized healthcare food service throughout Texas. Our healthcare division represents a sophisticated evolution of traditional hospital food service, combining clinical nutrition expertise with restaurant-quality dining experiences. This unique approach addresses one of healthcare's most persistent challenges - delivering medically tailored menus that patients actually want to eat.

At the core of our operation, licensed and board-certified dietitians employ medical nutrition therapy and detailed nutritional care protocols to design customized plans that align with patient needs and treatment goals. Our comprehensive approach transforms routine food service into a crucial component of the healing process, creating environments where nutrition actively supports recovery.



A Strategic Approach to Clinical Excellence

The healthcare industry faces mounting pressures to improve patient outcomes while managing costs and operational complexity. Critical care units, in particular, must balance multiple competing priorities while delivering the highest standard of care.

Traditional approaches to hospital nutrition services often struggle to meet these challenges effectively.

Modern healthcare facilities need food and nutrition service partners who understand the complexities of clinical care and can contribute meaningfully to patient outcomes. The partnership between Luby's Culinary Services and DHR Health represents a fundamental shift in how healthcare organizations approach nutrition services. This requires moving beyond the traditional vendor relationship to establish true strategic partnerships that can:

- Integrate seamlessly with hospital interdisciplinary teams
- Adapt quickly to changing patient needs
- Support compliance with regulatory requirements
- Contribute to quality metrics and certifications
- Drive continuous improvement in patient care



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This innovative model integrates several key components that together create a comprehensive framework for clinical nutrition excellence:

Early Intervention Protocols

By establishing clear guidelines for nutrition assessment and intervention, the program ensures that patient nutrition needs are addressed as a primary component of critical care. These protocols integrate seamlessly with other medical interventions, creating a truly holistic approach to patient care.

Evidence-Based Practice Integration

The partnership emphasizes the importance of evidence-based nutrition practices in critical care settings. This approach ensures that nutrition interventions align with the latest research, case studies, and clinical guidelines, maximizing their impact on patient recovery.

Collaborative Clinical Rounds

By incorporating nutrition expertise into daily clinical discussions, the program facilitates better communication and more comprehensive patient care. This collaborative approach ensures that nutrition considerations are woven into every aspect of critical care decision-making.

Transforming Healthcare Through Partnership

The success of this initiative demonstrates the powerful impact that strategic nutrition partnerships can have on healthcare outcomes. Our innovative patient engagement model,



including personalized bedside meal ordering and direct patient interaction, ensures that nutrition plans not only meet clinical requirements but also satisfy patient meal preferences. This personalized approach has revolutionized the traditional hospital dining experience.

There is strong clinical evidence that by elevating nutrition services from a support function to a key clinical component, hospitals can enhance patient care quality while potentially reducing recovery times and improving overall outcomes. This model has proven particularly valuable in intensive care settings, where patient needs are complex, and the stakes are high. The achievement of Joint Commission Disease Specific Certification in Respiratory Failure underscores the significance of this approach and its potential to transform critical care delivery.

This transformation requires a fundamental shift in how healthcare organizations view nutrition services. Rather than treating nutrition as an ancillary service, successful organizations recognize it as a core component of patient care. This shift in perspective enables more effective

collaboration between interdisciplinary teams and nutrition service providers, ultimately leading to better patient outcomes.

The Future of Hospital Nutrition Services

As healthcare continues to evolve toward value-based care models, the role of nutrition services becomes increasingly crucial. Forward-thinking hospitals are recognizing that their nutrition service partners can be powerful allies in achieving clinical excellence and improving patient outcomes.

The partnership between Luby's Culinary Services and DHR Health exemplifies this new paradigm. By combining clinical nutrition expertise with innovative service delivery models, nutrition partners can help hospitals achieve their clinical quality goals while enhancing the patient experience.

This collaborative approach represents the future of hospital nutrition services—one where food service providers serve as strategic partners in achieving clinical excellence. As healthcare continues to transform, such partnerships will become increasingly vital in delivering optimal patient care.

Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect official policy of THT.



LUBY'S CULINARY SERVICES®

BUSINESS HEALTHCARE EDUCATION SENIOR LIVING

Our attention to safety, nutrition, patient engagement and technology has made us the preferred food service provider for healthcare operations in Texas. Our licensed and board-certified dietitians use medical nutrition therapy and nutritional care protocols to design custom plans that better meet patient needs. Onsite managers make sure things run smoothly.

