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## Hotel-Style Room Service Dining Succeeds at Mater Private Hospital Brisbane

Mater is a private not-for-profit healthcare organisation with a mix of seven public and private hospitals. Mater Private Hospital Brisbane, one of the seven, is a flagship for the level of care and customer service the organisation strives to provide. It is here that project team members Sally McCray, Director Nutrition and Dietetics, David Terrill, Room Service Project Manager, and Liam O'Toole, Food Service Manager decided to push forward with transformational change and implement a new style of patient food service—hotel-style room service.

### The Decision to Move to Room Service

Pragmatic in their approach and driven to improve patient nutrition, safety, and satisfaction, the Mater Project Team, toured hospitals in the US in 2003 to see new ways of providing patient meal service. They were impressed with diet office technology and the benefits of diet office software. Later, as the team learned more about room service, they wondered if the freedom to order what you want to eat when you want, and to have it delivered quickly, would improve a patient's nutritional intake.

The team built a business case for diet office technology that would support a room service ordering process. In 2012, the management team at Mater agreed to go to a tender process and request submissions from a variety of vendors. After careful review, the Mater team chose CBORD to provide [Nutrition Service Suite®](#) (NSS), diet office automation, along with [Room Service Choice®](#), new technology that supports both a call center and bedside assistance with mobile meal ordering technology. In order to make a strong case to the senior team, and bring experience into the planning process, the Mater team hired [DM&A](#) to help plan and support their room service implementation. The team believed the expertise DM&A and CBORD brought to them was critical to their success.

### Project Objectives

- Improve patient satisfaction scores
- Lower food waste
- Improve patient safety
- Improve work flows—less paper, less manual input
- Improve patient nutrition

### Project Results

The team was pleased to report that they have measured and tracked results that have dramatically improved **Press Ganey scores**, moving their organisation up from the 35th percentile in Q2 2013 to the 80th percentile in Q2 2014. This is a direct result of patients getting the food they want when they want it. In addition to their overall scores, they looked at scores by wards and discovered that Oncology and Surgery showed the greatest improvement. This is typical of what CBORD clients have experienced when they implement Room Service. Departments with the sickest patients are most affected by not being able to eat what they want when they want. They feel differently after chemotherapy treatments or surgery and their appetite changes dramatically. These patients are the most dissatisfied by having to choose their meals hours or a day in advance.

**Plate waste** at Mater decreased from 30% to 12%. With a traditional meal service patients often would reorder when they receive something they did not want or that was delivered while they were not in their room and was cold when they returned, , driving up both food cost and waste. With room service, the dietitians have also noted that requests for mid-meals have significantly decreased, noting a reduction of supplements by 60%. Overall food cost is has gone down by over 15% which is over \$500,000. With statistics like these, Mater Hospital won the

Private Hospital Association of Queensland award for non-clinical innovation and the overall prize for innovation in the state.

**Patient safety** was improved by taking out much of the manual entry. NSS is able to combine multiple diet orders and ensure patients receive only compliant foods. Patients now call in meal orders and the staff answering calls can see what foods are compliant with their diet, food allergies, while also receiving alerts and changes to the order. Staff can also see how the patient is doing for the day against established nutritional goals.

**Workflows** have improved and there is much less paper. Diet office staff can spend more time with patients and less time reviewing meal orders. To support the new room service process, Sally and her staff revised their menu moving away from a cycle menu and creating a restaurant-style menu that provides a range of options for breakfast lunch and dinner. They utilized more low salt and low fat products suitable for to support a wider range of diets. This change made the production and ordering process easier to manage and improved the overall quality of the food.

The dietitian staff at Mater has a strong sense that they are improving **patient nutrition** but to date, no empirical data has been reviewed. The team has plans to analyse the malnutrition screening data they have been collecting all along to see what impact the change to room service has had on patients' nutritional intake.

### **The Implementation Process**

The project team worked with both CBORD and DM&A to create a plan that would successfully move them to room service. The CBORD Australian team worked closely with the Mater's IT team to prepare for implementation. The major IT projects related to building interfaces that were needed between IPM, their patient management system, and TrendCare a patient acuity tool used by nursing that included the patient's diet order. Both systems needed to interface with NSS. The team worked through the development and testing phases to ensure a successful transition. The call center was set up with phones and computers, and new printers were installed in the kitchen. The Mater food service staff was trained on the software, including operation, reports, and work flow.

DM&A provided on site coaches to help with kitchen design, cooking on demand, workflow, equipment such as carts needed for delivery, timers to ensure that trays go up to the floors on time and customer service training. They provided scripted training for call center and delivery staff, as well as recommending important details such as uniforms for the delivery staff.

Mater was fortunate in that they had recently hired a top restaurant executive chef who was focused on up scaling the menu. Presentation is as important to the success of room service in a hospital as it is in a hotel. Presenting a patient with an organized, attractive tray, with fresh colorful food, is an essential component to raising patient satisfaction scores. Their new executive chef has played an invaluable role in exceeding patient expectations with regard to the food that is served. At CBORD, we continue to see a trend where hospitals are hiring top chefs away from restaurants to work in and improve hospital food.

According to Sally McCray, the support from CBORD and DM&A was critical to the success of the project. "The CBORD Australian team had a diverse range of expertise from IT to Dietetics. They were extremely responsive and followed up with all our concerns." Sally went on to say, "The on-site coaches from DM&A provided invaluable expertise and helped us to kick off room service with a successful go-live."

### **Room Service at Mater**

Today when you are admitted to Mater Private Hospital Brisbane, you will first learn about room service when you view a welcome video. When you reach your room, a nurse will show you a menu and explain how to call in your order. You or your family may order anytime between 6:00 am and 7:00 pm. If you choose a menu item that is not compliant with your diet, or one that will cause you to exceed a nutritional goal, the call center operator will explain why you cannot have what you ordered and offer you compliant alternatives. Your meal will arrive fresh and hot in 45 minutes.

The Mater team is currently implementing Tray Monitor™, CBORD's tray tracking module that provides foodservice staff with a visual display depicting the location and status of trays in the assembly and delivery process. The move to room service with trays being delivered throughout the day creates a need to know who has ordered, where trays are, and when used trays should be picked up. The system provides real-time information to everyone who needs to know tray status communication both within the department and throughout the hospital. Nursing staff can access Tray Monitor's Unit Details view from any web-browser to see when trays will be delivered to the ward and can even review what each patient ordered. Tray Monitor also provides reports that allow management to monitor delivery times, spot bottlenecks, and measure employee productivity.

Mater is the first hospital in Australia to offer true hotel-style room service. Hospital room service continues to grow in popularity and in US hospitals is fast becoming the norm. The reason for the rapid growth is that it delivers results, improving patient satisfaction scores, lowering food waste, and improving patient safety. In the US, patients are choosing a hospital that has excellent food service. The project team believes that the differences in the Australian health system places less of the hospital selection process in the patient's hand, and more with the doctors, but that room service is a competitive point of difference. We at CBORD are pleased to have a partner willing to forge a new path in an effort to providing excellent patient care. We are interested in seeing the results that room service will have on patient nutrition at Mater.