



CASE STUDY

MyDine Implementation at South County Hospital

Prepared by

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Overview

South County Hospital (SCH) is a fast-growing community hospital in Rhode Island seeking to provide the best possible experience to its patients while maintaining its identity as an independent healthcare system. The successful implementation of MyDine™, a technology-enabled in-room patient dining service, is one way that strategic dining partner Unidine is helping SCH to accomplish its goals.

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About

South County Hospital is a 100 bed non-profit general medical and surgical hospital in Wakefield, RI that employs 1,600 staff members. It is one of the few independent hospitals in the area and focuses on acute care and outpatient services. South County's specialty in orthopedics is highly regarded.

SCH has received 5-Star ratings from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in two categories -- in Overall Hospital Quality and in Patient Experience. Only about 450 hospitals across the country have earned 5-Stars in at least one category. SCH has received this prestigious distinction in four out of the past five years.

SCH's Well Beyond program, which encourages personal and community wellness, has won an Exemplary Worksite Healthy Award from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island and the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce for six consecutive years.



South County Hospital has received numerous other awards and recognitions.

- First hospital in Rhode Island to be designated Baby-Friendly
- Maternity Care and Knee and Hip Replacement designated as Blue Distinction Centers
- Participates in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's 5 Million Lives Campaign
- First hospital in the state recognized by the American Heart Association for participation in its Get with the Guidelines program
- Accredited with commendation by the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons, considered to be the gold standard for cancer programs

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Opportunity

South County Hospital prides itself on being one of the last independent health systems in the state of Rhode Island and in the region. Since patients have numerous choices for where to go for their healthcare needs, competition is extremely fierce. New leadership recognizes this and has found ways to encourage growth while maintaining the hospital's independence. At SCH, great emphasis is placed on making sure the patient experience is the best that it can be.

At times, SCH's rapid growth has challenged its existing systems' capabilities. Patient meal ordering was one such system until recently. Guest Services Representatives would manually cross reference patient dietary needs and restrictions with menu offerings. The process was very tedious and time-consuming, and left open the possibility of human error. In addition, the manual order system sometimes meant that orders took longer than desired to reach patients.

These issues caused a decline in year-over-year dining satisfaction scores administered by Press Ganey. In the second quarter of 2020, Press Ganey scores for Top Box overall dining had reached a record low of 45.3%. Something had to be done.

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Solution

Based on the declining patient satisfaction scores and increasing labor and food costs, Unidine knew there was a better way. They presented their proprietary MyDine™ solution to South County Hospital. MyDine is an in-room patient dining service that combines culinary skill, innovative technology, and personalized attention, all working together to optimize the dining experience. Meals are made to order for every patient, tailored to their dietary requirements and personal preferences, and delivered within 45 minutes by specialized Unidine staff. MyDine helps promote healing while providing patients with delight and comfort when they need it most. It also helps increase meal satisfaction, eliminating the issue of late trays.

In a competitive market, SCH viewed MyDine as a differentiator that would help them stand out in a crowd. They recognized the opportunity MyDine provided to reduce labor and food costs and to increase overall patient satisfaction dramatically. It was time to modernize the patient dining experience!

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How MyDine Works

Order Taking:

Unidine's Guest Services Representatives (GSRs) provide personalized attention, assisted by tablet devices that link to information about patients' dietary restrictions and allergies stored in the hospital's electronic medical record. GSRs discuss meal options with patients one-on-one and use their tablets to take orders at bedside, which display in the kitchen in real time. If the tablet alerts that an item is prohibited, the GSR can offer alternatives the patient will enjoy.



Meal Preparation:

Meals are made from scratch à la minute and to order using fresh and locally sourced ingredients. All meals are delivered within 45 minutes to maximize freshness and taste, with extensive quality and dietary checks before being served.

Meal Delivery:

When the meal is ready, the GSR brings it to the patient, and checks back later to make sure the patient is happy. GSRs are based on patient units, close to patients to provide individualized attention and close to nurse managers and dietitians to fully manage the dining needs of their patients. They also make observations such as whether patients ate their entire meal or only a small portion, and pass on concerns to the clinical team.

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Implementation

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Implementing MyDine™ at a hospital is a detailed process that requires financial commitment, as well as substantial coordination and communication. Unidine provides resources and support to ensure a seamless transition. At South County Hospital, the Unidine support team collaborated with technology partners, hospital IT and management staff. After the SCH Capital Committee approved the project, implementation meetings commenced in October 2020 and went on for roughly six months. Unidine drew on its extensive implementation resources and tools, as well as real-life implementation experience, in order to make the program a success. Thorough pre-launch testing ensured that the technology was functioning at an optimal level and that staff were comfortable with the program and the system. SCH's customized MyDine program went live on March 3rd, 2021.

Implementing MyDine at SCH meant reconfiguring the kitchen to maximize efficiency. Enhancements to the kitchen at SCH included reorganizing existing kitchen equipment to match the workflows. The implementation team also added a cold deli prep station, three Kitchen Display Systems monitors to display upcoming meal orders and kitchen printers conveniently located next to each prep area.

When MyDine launched, SCH introduced a new patient menu. In addition, trifold paper menus are now placed in each patient's room prior to check-in, giving the patient the opportunity to review menu options before the Unidine Guest Services Representative takes their meal selections.



Results

In the first six months since MyDine™ launched at South County Hospital on March 3, 2021, patient satisfaction increased significantly. Overall dining satisfaction increased by 3.6%. The mean, or average, rating increased by 5.3% and percentile ranking increased by 8% over the lowest-scoring quarter of 2020, Q2.

% Increase in Press Ganey Top Box Scores

+3.6%

Patient
Satisfaction

+5.3%

Average
Rating

+8%

Percentile
Ranking

David Gauvin, Dining Services Director for Unidine, played a huge role in the implementation of MyDine at SCH. He summarized its impact this way:

"The beauty of MyDine is that it automates all the work that was once done by hand. MyDine has allowed our Guest Services Representatives to redirect their time from putting together and tracking all the patient's menu orders back into patient services, where it should be. MyDine has saved our team about 4 hours a day per Guest Services Representative. That is 50% of their day in savings!"

Patients have also commented on the improved quality of food, and the and amazing overall dining experience. Patient comments included the following:

- "I cannot say enough about the food, everything I had was delicious."
- "Loved the food and the staff was so accommodating to food preferences & needs. Delivery was fast & friendly."
- "Best hospital food ever! I have had some experience with this topic, frankly I was impressed. Lori Beth was wonderful."
- "Food was excellent - portion size & temperature were spot on. Food was Restaurant Quality!"
- "Menu options and meal preparation are really top notch and made my hospital stay more pleasant."

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Why Unidine

Unidine operates in over 400 facilities and is the leading provider of food and dining management services for discerning clients throughout the United States. Since its founding in 2001 by President and CEO Richard B. Schenkel, Unidine's success derives from consistent execution in four key areas - and exclusive focus on food and dining management services, a commitment to seasonal, fresh from scratch cooking, exceptional customer service and a corporate culture enlivened by each team member's passion for culinary and service excellence. Unidine's network of dietitians and culinarians leverage the latest research to support cultural enrichment and wellness strategies for hospitals and behavioral health facilities, and also exceptional service for senior living communities and corporations. For more information visit: <https://www.unidine.com/>

Contact Us

If you would like to learn more, call us at (877-UNI-DINE), email unidine.solutions@unidine.com or visit unidine.com. Whether you are actively considering a change or you are simply interested in keeping up with our offerings in the marketplace, we welcome the opportunity to discuss your current situation and share additional context that will help you build a vision of how your hospital or healthcare system can deliver an exceptional dining experience for patients, staff, visitors and guests.

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