



Customer Satisfaction Scores in Long Term Care: Interns Learn to Use Survey Information to Drive Business

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ABSTRACT

As the population ages, it is anticipated that continuum care communities (CCC) will grow in size and number and employ greater numbers of dietitians. While CCC dietitians are primarily involved in resident nursing home care, in independent areas they are also part of the resident food service customer satisfaction team. Skills in both areas are crucial for effectiveness. In one program, dietetic interns complete food service management training in a CCC with amenities that include five distinct on-site restaurants. In each restaurant residents enjoy an upscale dinner chosen by a Chef de Cuisine, theme lunches prepared by dietetic interns, and/or holiday meals. To assess customer satisfaction an outside consultant sent surveys to all independent-living residents to determine overall dining satisfaction and obtain input on perceived cleanliness, staff friendliness, efficiency, food quality, food temperature, menu variety, and staff supervision. 77% of the surveys were returned completed. Results demonstrated 80+% satisfaction with cleanliness, lunch and breakfast services, and dining room friendliness. Additional results indicated that 75-80% satisfaction with food quality, food and beverage temperatures, menu variety, staff supervision, and general dining experience. The survey highlighted areas of significant improvement from prior surveys and identified areas for further growth. Interns worked with dining services team to utilize these scores to define approaches to enhance service. Future dietitians must understand how to effectively use satisfaction survey results to drive enhanced service as part of the management team.

BACKGROUND

Riderwood Village, located in Silver Spring, Maryland, is one of twenty-two campuses that are part of Erickson Communities. Riderwood is a full-service retirement living that combines a maintenance-free lifestyle with convenient, on-site amenities and stimulating social opportunities that improve both physical and mental health.

Riderwood provides its residents with the ultimate in dining experiences. An Executive Chef and Chef de Cuisines are on staff to plan and prepare exquisite meals. Residents are encouraged to visit each of the five unique restaurants on campus for their dining experience.

Riderwood Village is also the site of University of Maryland Dietetic Internship foodservice rotation. While at Riderwood, the dietetic interns have the opportunity to learn kitchen skills from chefs and how to run a foodservice operation. Lastly, the dietetic interns present a theme meal to the residents at the end of the rotation.



(Left): This American style dining room offers a pleasant and comfortable living room area for residents waiting for a table.



(Right): Seasons serves up American-styled dining, utilizing (the small walls) to create a more private atmosphere.



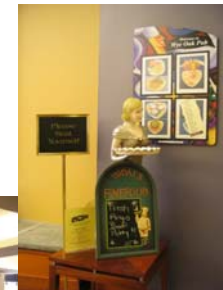
(Above, right): This buffet-styled dining room allows residents to serve up their own combinations and portions.



(Below): This dining room offers the most casual atmosphere with a salad bar, grill, hot tray line, and a la carte items. This is the only dining room without wait staff.
(Left): A Taste of the South themed meal by dietetic interns for food service rotation.



(Below): Exhibition styled dining offers entertainment and excitement for the residents.



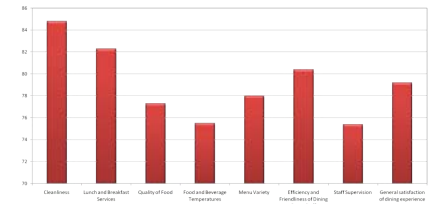
(Above, left): The Wye Oak Pub offers a more casual atmosphere along with bar-style seating, a pool table, and flat screen televisions displaying news or sports programs.

The facility maintains 6 distinct restaurants on campus, including buffet, American, cafeteria, exhibition, and a pub. Residents may dine at any of the 6 restaurants. Cafeteria style, American style, and pub dining are available for lunch. All except for the pub are available for evening meals. One American style maintains a more formal and private atmosphere via the aesthetics of the dining room. Another American style is exhibition style, adding flair and entertainment to residents' dining experiences. The American style restaurants are full service with the exception of a salad bar, an option available for diners in place of the a la carte salad offered at one restaurant. The cafeteria restaurant remains the most diverse, offering carry-out meals, hot line entrees, grill items a la carte, a salad bar, soup a la carte, and fruit and desserts a la carte. The buffet restaurant provides full beverage service. Additionally, a themed upscale elegant dining experience is offered at a subsidized price, produced by one of the four Chefs de Cuisine each quarter. Dietetic interns produce an informal themed cafeteria or buffet style meal each quarter. The variety of options available for residents delivers the comfort of tradition and routine but offers the excitement of a contemporary and innovative dining experience sure to please even the upcoming baby boomers.

RESULTS

Outside consultant surveys were sent to all residents to assess their overall satisfaction with dining services as well as specific evaluation of cleanliness, staff friendliness, efficiency, food quality, food temperature, menu variety, and staff supervision. Of the surveys sent, 77% were completed and returned. Overall satisfaction was higher than the Holleran Benchmark, stemming from the diversity in atmosphere, 5 week cyclical menus, and both modern and traditional styles of service available to all residents. Below are the results of the survey.

Satisfaction Survey Results



CONCLUSION

- Interns gained hands-on experience assisting and implementing the variety of dining options available for residents, and, consequently, witnessing the rise in the overall satisfaction rate making this a potential standard for future excellence.

- From survey results, interns discovered the drive of the Continuum Care Communities, determining improvements that remain to be completed.

- Registered Dietitians can use these results to position themselves as successful food service managers in these areas as more communities become available.



Above: Jinee Burdig and Larayssa England with Chef de Cuisine Jason McCreedy and cook Tyrone Bent before the beginning of the theme meal.