

A combination of standard and customized Aladdin Temp-Rite® products helped a hospital update its inefficient patient meal-service program.

CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS for Seton Medical Center Austin



Tray assembly area configured in efficient POD work stations.

ABOUT SETON MEDICAL CENTER

- **Type of Facility:** Acute-care hospital
- **Beds:** 425 licensed beds
- **Owner:** Seton Healthcare Family operates more than 100 clinical locations across central Texas. Seton is a member of Ascension, the largest non-profit health system in the U.S. and the world's largest Catholic health system, committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all with special attention to persons in poverty and struggling the most.
- **Health System:** Seton Healthcare Family, which operates more than 90 clinical locations across central Texas.
- **Food Management Company:** TouchPoint Support Services, part of Compass Group. TouchPoint currently operates 127 acute- and senior-care facilities nationwide.
- **Patient Dining Programs:** TouchPoint Catering to You and Dining on Call room service

Before the recent renovation at Seton Medical Center, the hospital's trayline and patient meal-delivery system was less than optimal. "This particular trayline was a big oval trayline," says Bob Danhauer, Director of Food and Nutrition at Seton. "I'd never actually seen one like this before. Usually it's a straight shot, where you've got people on both sides. So it required a lot of people to build the trays because you didn't have access from one side to the other."

Steve O'Connor, principal of the L2M Foodservice Design Group of Glen Burnie, Maryland, was brought in to consult on the problem and knew "it was really going to be a challenge.

The existing space just wasn't conducive to a great flow," he said. So the hospital, with input from TouchPoint, made the decision to revamp its setup and service. Rather than having trays sent up to the patient floors on a dumbwaiter and having them served by nurses, it was decided to move to a "room-service" style of patient feeding, delivered by catering staff.

The new style of service includes catering associates, who personally interact with patients several times a day. At the patient bedside, they take orders for meals and then return to serve their patients, just as a restaurant server would. This added touch of personal service creates positive impressions for Seton patients, and

lets them know that foodservice and hospitality are essential to the healing process.

Not only did Seton implement a change in delivery style, but the menu received an overhaul as well. TouchPoint chefs prepare all food from scratch for patients and guests. They source local growers and use organic produce when available; additionally, they prep and cook vegetables right before meal service for maximum freshness and flavor. They also roast their own pork and turkey, smoke their beef in-house, and bake chicken and fish right before meal service begins. In short, the TouchPoint food service team is passionate about serving fresh, delicious meals.

The team also focuses on environmental impacts of the foodservice operation. For example, Compass Group's Imperfectly Delicious Produce (IDP) program "rescues" imperfect fruits and vegetables which otherwise might be discarded. Debbie Graves, Patient Services Manager at Seton, says the IDP program benefits the environment. "Just because a carrot has a kink in it, doesn't mean it isn't delicious," she says. "Since we peel and slice our own produce, we contribute to the environment by using perfectly delicious imperfect-looking items, rather than participate in truckloads of waste."

As might be expected, implementing a new patient delivery service and revised menu led to some operational issues, not the least of which was the inefficient tray-assembly area. Steve

O'Connor designed new tray-assembly areas, including standard and customized equipment configured in POD workstations to better optimize efficiency. The new tray-assembly area takes into account future needs associated with the ever-changing challenges of hospital room service.

A variety of Aladdin equipment, such as air curtain refrigerators, hot food counters, tray dispensers, and customized tray make-up counters enable the hospital to assemble patient trays more efficiently, and Aladdin's Heat On Demand Advantage® system keep hot food hot for delivery to patients.

Seton's foodservice program not only helps improve the patient healing process, it plays an important role in boosting the local economy through food purchases, reduces food waste through the IDP program, improves the quality and taste of its food offerings, and helps protect the environment, too.

"The collaborative effort for this project between TouchPoint,

(Top right) Meals are prepared for individual delivery, room-service style.

(Bottom left) Seton Director of Food and Nutrition Bob Danhauer (fourth from left) and his foodservice team.

(Bottom right) Tray make-up side of POD workstation including Aladdin air curtain refrigerators and custom counters.

Seton, Aladdin and L2M Foodservice Design Group was amazing," said Kim Sprout, Aladdin Product Manager. "The team put in many hours and worked together to determine which equipment would best meet their needs."

Seton Director Danhauer gives high marks to the Aladdin team for being "responsive and creative." From a consultant standpoint, O'Connor called the Aladdin team "really very good to work with. Kimmie [Biggs, CAD Designer] was outstanding."

Most importantly, Seton patients are satisfied with the new meal-delivery system. "Patient satisfaction scores from last year to this year have risen about five percent," says Danhauer. "I'm sure that the equipment, and being able to serve hot food hot, and cold food cold, is a key component. To have this new [tray-assembly] equipment and have it be state-of-the-art, and be able to hold these temperatures is a key to patient satisfaction."

