

*With some help from Aladdin, the team at Froedtert Hospital operates a highly successful room service program.*

# A TEAM EFFORT

**T**he old line about the whole being greater than the sum of its parts may seem like a cliché, but it's certainly applicable to the foodservice operation at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee. A team effort, led by Senior Manager of Food and Nutrition Services Bill Coleman, provides an average of 1,100 to 1,200 top-quality meals delivered room service-style every day.

The 516-bed Froedtert Hospital started its room service program in 2008, when few other hospitals had taken the step. At that time, most hospitals were still using the traditional tray-line system with only a few selections. "You'd choose your meal," Coleman says, "and generally, you'd get the main entrée, starch, salad, soup, juice, milk, coffee and cream. You'd see a lot of waste." Just as importantly, patients were showing their displeasure with the old system through lower patient satisfaction scores. "They wanted to order what they wanted, when they



wanted it and in the amount they wanted.”

In the early days, the hospitals doing room service tended to be smaller facilities. “We’d often hear, ‘You’re too big. It won’t work,’” Coleman says. So the first step in his research was to visit other facilities doing room service, both in and out of the healthcare field. Besides visiting hospitals, Coleman and his team toured a local landmark. “We went to the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee to see how they did room service,” he says. “They showed us their kitchen and their whole program just to [give us] some best practices as to what people were doing outside the healthcare area.”

Another reason for considering the move to room service was the inefficiency and waste inherent in the tray-line system. Coleman estimated that with the one-size-fits-all tray deliveries, nearly half of the food being served was thrown away. “When you look at your scores and see all this food waste coming down, then you have to think, there must be something else we can do to get them to eat more,” he says.

Establishing the room service system was the first part of the solution; the second part was finding the right team members to execute the program. Coleman admits it took a while to find the right type of people to staff the room service program. “It’s all about the customer service experience,” he says. “When I interview folks, I tell them, ‘We’re not just serving food. We’re serving the experience.’”

The upgrade in food quality and service since Froedtert switched to the room delivery system has not gone unnoticed, either inside the hospital or outside. The amount of food waste at Froedtert has dropped dramatically; Coleman estimates his department now averages a consumption rate between 85 and 90 percent of the food that is ordered. As a side note, the local newspaper’s recipe request column has even received requests to reprint two of the hospital’s recipes: one for Mexican chicken soup and one for Froedtert Hospital Chili.

To help keep his food hot and delicious during the delivery process, Coleman turned to the Heat on Demand Advantage system from Aladdin

Temp-Rite. The Heat on Demand Advantage system has the longest holding time in the industry — a fact that’s important, given the size of the Froedtert campus. “We have a lot of distance to travel,” Coleman says. “Elevators are busy, so time and holding temperature are important to us. Ever since we’ve had the room service system, we’ve had Aladdin. In my opinion, Aladdin has the best



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heat support system available for our needs.” And whenever he’s needed service, the Aladdin team has always been ready to respond. “If we have any concerns, they’re right there for us. I’m very pleased with the way Aladdin has taken care of us.”

The Froedtert kitchen also relies on other products from Ali Group companies, like Metro shelving and Victory refrigerators, to produce and store food efficiently.

“Froedtert is focused on providing a positive meal-time experience for each and every patient,” says Thana Moore, Territory Manager for Aladdin. “As their partner, Aladdin takes great pride in knowing that their patient satisfaction scores have risen with their recent upgrade to Heat On Demand Advantage. It has been both exciting and rewarding to see!”

A new building at Froedtert, the Center for Advanced Care, contains two patient floors, which means additional business for Coleman





and his department. While he says that kitchen expansions will soon be necessary, one thing won't change. "We will continue to do room service. I think it's working so well, there'd be no reason to change it," he explains. The key to the continued success, he says, is ensuring he has the team that can execute room service in an efficient, friendly manner. "It's not about me or what I envision or what I do," he says. "It's the entire team that makes this work."

Froedtert Hospital's room service system takes the orders while the kitchen efficiently produces personalized food selections. The Aladdin system helps keep food hot and fresh-tasting.

