

Real-Time Feedback is Helping Lahey Hospital Improve the Patient Experience

Allen's interactive surveys and room services dining menus give patients more control about meal choices and service

How We Did It

Lahey Hospital recognizes the importance of meal quality and service on the patient's overall experience in the hospital. Working with Allen Technologies, Lahey implemented an interactive room services dining capability using Allen's E3 Patient Engagement Solution platform. The touchscreen menus, nutritional information and feedback tools are helping Lahey take their HCAHPS scores well beyond both state and national benchmarks.

Hospital food has long been the brunt of jokes and criticism. In fact, food service is perpetually the lowest scoring item in the Gallup hospital survey database and ranks well below overall patient satisfaction scores in Gallup's hospital surveys.

But patient dissatisfaction with food quality and service is no laughing matter to Allen Technologies' client Lahey Hospital and Medical Center, based in Burlington, Mass. Lahey's Patient Services Manager-Food and Nutrition Services Brandon Doubrava knows the impact that patient meal quality and service can have on a patient's satisfaction with their hospital experience. His experience supports what Iowa State University researchers found in a 2010 study: "Patients care about meal choices, meal times, meal presentation, and overall satisfaction during their hospital stay. Patients should have the opportunity to become involved in their meal planning decisions and have some control over food selection while in the hospital," researchers noted.

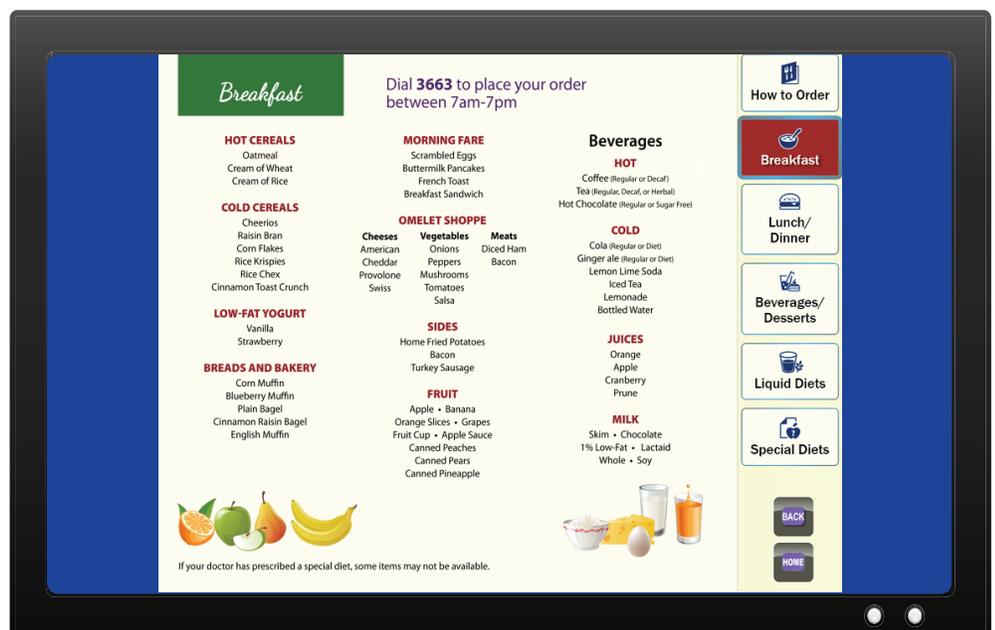
In addition, they found that "immediate feedback from patients regarding hospital food is important to increase the quality of meals served."

"Allen's solution allows us to improve a negative patient experience that we might not otherwise have known about."

A strong proponent of using data to drive performance improvement, Lahey Hospital turned to Allen in 2014 to help improve patient satisfaction around its food service. Although Lahey already was gathering patient satisfaction data more than 30 times per year through its post-discharge HCAHPS surveys, the hospital wanted a way for patients to provide immediate

Lahey Hospital & Medical Center

Lahey Hospital & Medical Center is a physician-led, nonprofit group practice. Based in Burlington, Mass., Lahey encompasses an ambulatory care center serving more than 3,000 patients each day and a 317-bed hospital.



Allen's interactive touchscreens put menus and nutritional information in the hands of patients, at the bedside.

HCAHPS REPORT – Lehey Hospital & Medical Center Burlington, MA

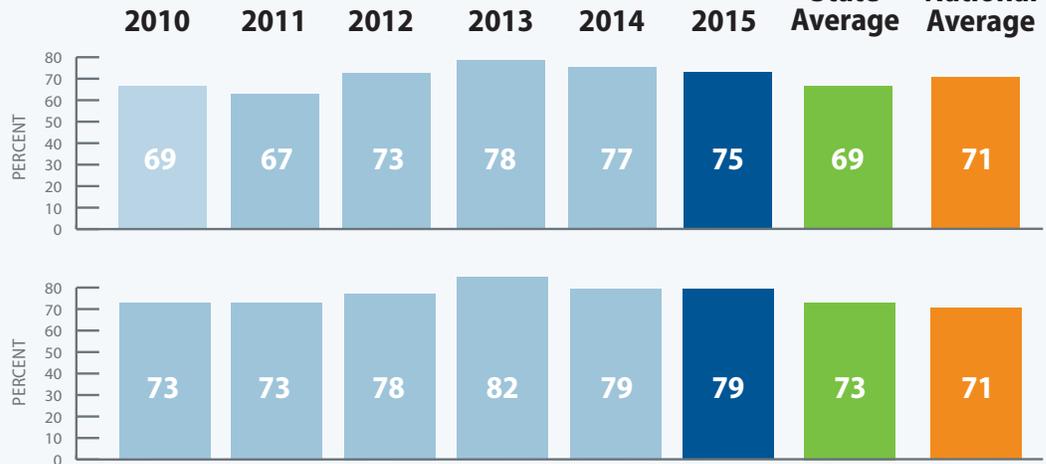


HCAHPS Answer Description

Patients who gave a rating of “9” or “10” (high)

“YES”, patients would definitely recommend the hospital

Answer Percentage by Reporting Year



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feedback while still in the hospital. In addition, the hospital wanted to give patients more control and options for meal ordering.

Allen and Lahey had partnered four years earlier to install Allen’s interactive patient engagement system on touchscreen units at 284 in-patient beds. The Allen system proved an ideal format for adding Room Services Dining menus and feedback tools, and Doubrava turned to the Allen team. “As a manager, I appreciate the technology that Allen delivers. The customer support team was very responsive to our request, and implemented the Room Services Dining menu and patient feedback functionality very quickly,” he says.

Using the Allen E3 Patient Engagement System, Lahey’s Room Services Dining system displays menus, shows nutritional information, and provides hours of operation. “Patients can click the touchscreen to review their meal options, and then call room service to place their order,” says Doubrava. Its touchscreen, on-demand room service puts Lahey Hospital at the forefront of its peers. According to its 2013 nationwide Hospital Census, Food Service Director magazine found that 60 percent of hospitals do not offer an on-demand room service program for patient dining like Lahey.

However, the Lahey team took their vision even a step further. In addition to the touchscreen menu options, patients can provide real-time feedback to the hospital team in three key areas: food quality, food temperature and courtesy of the server. Any “fair” or “poor” responses are emailed immediately to the food services team.

“Before this solution was provided by Allen, I would never have been able to address these patient issues.”

“When we get a survey, it comes to our management team in patient services,” says Doubrava. “A supervisor and I immediately visit the patient, and we will probe a bit to drill down to fully understand why they rated something low.

“The patient is often pleasantly surprised-shocked actually - to see us visit the room, and realize that we do take their feedback seriously,” he adds. “Many times it is something very small,

these aren’t huge issues. We are a high-acuity hospital and the patient may just be having a hard time. Small things, like just my presence there, can have an impact.”

While the hospital monitors its HCAHPS patient survey data closely, it comes after the patient is home and thus too late to address the patient’s concerns. “This immediate patient feedback allows us to interact with the patient in real-time. Before this solution was provided by Allen, I would never have been able to address these patient issues,” says Doubrava.

Addressing those issues and more fully engaging patients may be factors contributing to Lahey’s significant uptick in top-level patient satisfaction scores in recent years. With Medicare payments tied in part to patient satisfaction scores, hospital administrators like Lahey’s are paying closer attention to meal quality, menus and service. While Medicare doesn’t ask for patient evaluation of food specifically, many administrators believe that changes in food services can impact overall patient satisfaction.

Since implementing the Allen interactive patient engagement system on the bedside touchscreens

five years ago, the percentage of patients giving Lahey the highest possible satisfaction rating has jumped 6 percent and today far exceeds both the national and state averages. In addition, the percentage of patients who say they would definitely recommend the hospital has improved from 73 percent to 79 percent in the most recent reporting period – compared to the national and state averages of 71 percent and 73 percent, respectively.

In addition to being alerted to patient concerns, the food services feature generates great feedback on suggested menu changes and on excellent customer service. “When we get “good” or “very

good” ratings, it is nice to share that with our staff,” Doubrava notes. “And when a staff member is mentioned for great service, we automatically nominate that person for employee of the month.”

Patient suggestions through the Allen solution have included recommendations for more customized menus such as for diabetics and low-sodium diets, requests for more nutritional details on menus, and suggestions for new menu items.

In the first six months after the feature was launched, Lahey Hospital received more than 700 responses to questions about food quality, food

temperature or server courtesy. To enhance patient awareness, Doubrava is using tent cards on meal trays and making sure that tray deliverers know about the Allen feature. “With our next paper menu

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order, I want to include instructions for providing patient feedback through the Allen system so we can encourage even more responses,” he says.

Doubrava says that Allen’s Room Services Dining feature and patient feedback are helping his team make a difference in the patients’ experience at Lahey Hospital & Medical Center. “It is a great tool, as it allows the patient to give us feedback at their own discretion. The process is easy and efficient,” he says. “And, it allows my team to improve a negative patient experience that we might not otherwise have known about.”



Patients use the Allen touchscreens to rate Lahey’s food quality, temperature of meals delivered, and food service. Patients’ feedback on the interactive survey has led Lahey to expand its customized menus and add more nutritional details on menu choices.

About Allen Technologies

Allen Technologies, the pioneer of interactive patient solutions for nearly 40 years, transforms the way hospitals engage, educate and entertain patients. Allen Technologies helps hospitals impact patient outcomes, improve patient satisfaction and achieve operational efficiencies. Allen’s multiplatform interactive patient engagement system, delivered via television, tablet and bedside monitor, is a robust patient-centric portal for customized patient education, in-room comfort control, and entertainment. Allen is the leader in interactive patient engagement solutions for smart TVs. Allen’s E3 Patient Engagement Solution integrates seamlessly with electronic medical records and system platforms including HVAC, housekeeping and food service systems. Learn more at www.engagewithallen.com, www.twitter.com/allen_IPS or www.facebook.com/allentechnologies.

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