

## Virginia Mason Medical Center reduces labor and waste costs with Bedside Menu Entry

### Personalized Care

Good old-fashioned bedside service can't be replaced, but it can be improved! CBORD's state-of-the-art handheld system brings high-tech support to patient care. Technicians can talk with patients face-to-face and offer menu choices specifically suited to their dietary needs—no more paper menus or wasted time manually entering meal choices into the primary computer system. Now Bedside Menu Entry (BME) provides an invaluable link between efficiency and customer service.

"BME has helped us put the personal touch at the bedside back into the patients' hospital experience in an era that makes it harder and harder to deliver that service," said Diane Thomas, Director of Food and Nutrition Services. She believes that added measure of attention from a two-to-five-minute visit can make all the difference.

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### More Patient Choices

Another factor that's essential to great customer service is offering patients a choice in meal selection. Before BME, Virginia Mason Medical Center had a "house select" system. Patients were asked a series of food preference questions, and a meal would automatically be chosen for them.

Thomas knows that offering choice is important to making patients feel well served. "The American public is used to having a choice, and they equate that with good customer service," she said. "The BME technology allowed us to move from house select to a choice system without increasing our labor force. We also can visit patients closer to the time they would be receiving their meals—another added service."

### Budget Challenges

While quality patient service remains the focus at Virginia Mason Medical Center, the hospital is bound by budget constraints. BME is the solution to this common situation. It's so



efficient and easy to use that three technicians at the Virginia Mason Medical Center can visit with most of the hospital's patients and take their orders within three to four hours.

"I first saw the BME technology as a way to achieve our patient satisfaction goals without having to increase staff," Thomas explained. The technicians visit patients with handhelds from 7:30 to 10:15 in the morning. In the afternoon they visit with new admits, patients with diet order upgrades, and those who were out for testing in the morning.

### All Things Considered

The CBORD® system has been a boon to Virginia Mason's Food and Nutrition Services department, but as Thomas explains, BME is just one component of a fully automated nutrition services environment. For their entire operation to run smoothly, there must also be an efficient central system. "We've been fully automated with CBORD's Diet Office Management System software since 1993," she explained. "It's a very efficient system for production tallies, and it's reduced paperwork and paper waste tremendously. "We run this office with just three diet technicians," Thomas continued. "We just couldn't do this kind of work using a manual system without increased labor. We know we've saved a great deal of money."

Thomas says the other key to having a well-run diet office is having a knowledgeable and responsible staff. "One thing we've learned is that technology can't replace competent people," she said. "We learned that taking orders at bedside is a great type of service, but even with this wonderful technology, an essential component is having a skilled and caring labor force willing to learn the new technology."

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