

# Cura Hospitality Launches Menu Concierge

## Education Creates Courteous, Knowledgeable Patient Concierges

BY GRACE HOYER

To better serve and understand the dietary needs of hospital patients, Cura Hospitality of Pittsburgh, PA, recently launched Menu Concierge, a spoken menu service where courteous, friendly and educated concierges take patient menu orders at bedside just prior to serving the meal. This personalized service is efficient and better for patients, as their diets and tastes may change from one day to the next, and, overall, provides a more socially appealing environment that's uplifting to patient dining.

The key to Menu Concierge's success is the education and interactive training components that provide the staff with the opportunity to get enthused about their new role. According to Chris Vitas, Cura general manager at St. Clair Hospital in Pittsburgh, the goal is to create courteous as well as knowledgeable concierges who are able to assist patients with dietary and menu-related questions.

Concierges attend initial training conducted by Brandon Smoker, Cura patient services manager and Jacque Baker, Cura director of dining services. "We provide a step-by-step education process that begins with gracious hospitality such as how to greet patients, properly take an order using a palm pilot, serve meals and how to provide follow-up care," says Smoker.

Concierges are also able to view photographs of each of the hospital's new patient menu selections in the kitchen so they know how the food should be plated and presented to the patient. "It's the basics, but studies show that in addition to great

tasting food, patient satisfaction is largely driven by the attentiveness of concierges," adds Smoker, who reports that recent patient satisfaction survey scores dramatically increased for 'courtesy of the person serving the food'.

In addition to gracious hospitality, concierges need to intimately know the menu selections and to be knowledgeable about the nutritional profile of each meal. While Cura's clinicians assess patients' nutritional needs, develop and implement nutrition programs, and evaluate and report the results, clinicians work closely with Menu Concierges. "We want our concierges to be more than just an 'order-taker'. We believe that it's important for our concierges to be hands-on, to know the menu, understand the dietary needs and restrictions of our patients, and to feel confident to answer patients' questions about nutrition information," says Baker.

Since Cura wanted all patients, including those in isolation, to experience this new dining service, concierges are trained on the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) regulations and patient safety such as the proper procedures upon entering a patient's room and the steps of dressing and removing personal protective clothing and equipment. Concierges also attend monthly meetings conducted by Cura management and clinicians that may focus on specific diets, safety-related topics, dining service and menu enhancements.

As an added tool, Cura provides its concierges with pocket cards that help make learning, remembering and referencing the fundamentals of nutrition and



A Cura Hospitality Menu Concierge assists a patient with a dining order

dietary modifications easy and fun. The Cura-developed pocket-size cards feature several nutrient-related topics such as foods that are low in fat, sodium and sugar; fluid restrictions that include foods and liquids that are part of fluid intake; and safety-related procedures.


To complement the Menu Concierge service, a new patient menu was launched at St. Clair which features fresh, made-to-order food selections prepared by Executive Chef Rob Coyne, who joined the Cura team

at St. Clair in the summer of 2008. The new patient menu, which was first offered to the nursing staff to taste-test and offer feedback, was officially approved earlier this year with rave reviews. "Patients are eating better and enjoy new and delicious menu selections such as herb roasted pork loin, cranberry orange salad and Belgian waffles," adds Baker.

For more information about Cura Hospitality, visit [www.curahospitality.com](http://www.curahospitality.com).

We've enriched  
Steve and Linda's

Life

Heartland   
Enriching life.

Home Care • Hospice Care • I.V. Care

We care not only for the mind, body and spirit of patients like Steve,  
but for their family and loved ones, like his daughter Linda.  
Contact us anytime, or ask your physician for a no-obligation referral.

Servicing Southwestern Pennsylvania  
Offices located in Pittsburgh, Cranberry, Irwin and Somerset

800.497.0575 • [www.heartlandhomehealth.com](http://www.heartlandhomehealth.com)