

Why are hospitals and health care systems like HealthEast choosing to offer a room service dining model to inpatients?

- Allowing patients to choose what and when they want to eat stimulates nutritional intake. When patients consume more of the right foods in the right portions, healing is enhanced.
- Empowering patients to select their meals (within medical appropriateness) delivers a more positive experience which also helps their healing process.
- Scheduling patients' desired meals at times when they are actually in their rooms and hungry helps to reduce waste (for example, food being thrown out or reordered because it is cold). Research shows that hospitals using a room service model can save hundreds of thousands of dollars each year by reducing the amount of food that ends up in the garbage and/or needs to be reordered.
- Standardizing work around the meal ordering process helps to improve staff productivity by eliminating duplicate steps which also uses resources more wisely.
- Monitoring and educating patients about making smart nutrition choices prepares them for making healthier decisions once they are discharged from the hospital. Healthier post-discharge lifestyle decisions (such as preparing patients to self-manage their diets) can lead to a decrease in hospital readmissions or clinic visits.
- Educating patients about diet principles helps lead to optimal community health and well-being.

Currently, all but two of local Twin Cities' hospitals use an inpatient room service model and one of those will be going live this summer. The program that HealthEast uses with both Ambassadors and Registered Dietitians is considered gold standard and a best practice nationwide.