Dining Room Management Project

Overview
The Susquehanna Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Facility offers its residents three meals a day with a wide selection of menu choices. Residents have the freedom to personalize each meal and to decide to eat their meals in the social dining room or their own room. A staff of 9 nurses and 3 hospitality associates is responsible for each meal service. The nurses are the only staff with the qualifications to transport residents and feed those who need assistance. Nurses also assist in collecting resident meal preferences and serving both cold and hot food to the residents. The hospitality associates set the dining room, help to collect meal preferences from the residents, and plate and serve the meals. However, there is no established service system or defined staffing roles and responsibilities, which causes the meal service to be chaotic and inefficient. The residents often have to wait a long time before being consulted on their meal preferences, before receiving their meals, and before they can get assistance eating. This results in a negative dining experience for the residents.

Objectives
• Improve customer flow through the system
• Increase meal service efficiency
• Maintain staff and resident satisfaction
• Develop, define, and communicate a standard service system
• Classify and identify individual staff responsibilities during service

Approach
The team developed its final recommendations and conclusions by first evaluating the original system to understand the dynamics and requirements of the dining room and the current resource allocation being used. The team used the current state to identify wastes and areas where standard work could be implemented to improve communication. After identifying the problem areas, the team developed recommendations for resource allocation as well as dining room preparation that would enable the staff to operate more efficiently and care for residents better. The team implemented an initial redesign of the system, evaluated the results, and subsequently implemented its final iteration of the redesign. The team also collected data to measure improvement in efficiencies, as well as surveys to gauge staff and resident satisfaction.

Outcomes
After implementing the recommendations and proposed changes into the system, the team made the following conclusions regarding staffing, facility layout, and system efficiency.
1. Staff responsibilities: There should be 9 total nurses and 4 hospitality associates present during meal preparation and meal service. These nurses and hospitality associates will have specific roles to help facilitate the residents and ensure efficient meal service.
2. Facility Layout: there should be an extension to the kitchen counter window to ensure the entire tray is supported. The cold food is to be moved into the kitchen to reduce walking time.
3. System Efficiency: Implementation of a colored meal ticket system and a white board to outline the daily roles and assignments of the staff. Additionally, cold drinks will be served before residents enter the dining room.
Overall, these recommendations will help ensure a more efficient meal service and will meet the satisfaction of residents and the staff.