



Canberra Health Services Consultation Paper

Food Service Department Room Service Pilot Program

Infrastructure and Health Support Services

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1. Introduction

Infrastructure and Health Support Services (IHSS) is responsible for facilities and asset management, delivery of capital and minor projects, and infrastructure services, support, and operations. Food & Sterilising Services is a branch of IHSS which is responsible for Sterilising Services and Food Services for Canberra Health Services (CHS).

The function of the Food Service Department is to prepare and serve meals and beverages to patients, staff and visitors, as well as the provision of services to other facilities of CHS.

The Food Service Department prepares, cooks and serves an average of approximately 3000 meals daily for CHS and National Capital Private Hospital.

Food Services is organised into the following functional areas:

- Food Services Administration.
- Operation Support Services - Food Preparation and Food Production.
- Patient Services:
 - Meal Plating and Rethermalisation.
 - Meal deliveries to patients.
 - Menu monitors.
- Cafeteria: food, meals and drinks for staff and guests.
- Stores: receipt, dispatch and storage of perishable and non-perishable food supplies.
- External sites: Dhulwa & other Community Centres.

In 2023, CHS approved the business case of a pilot project to trial a new patient meal service model 'room service' for part of the Canberra Hospital campus including the new Critical Services Building, as a proof of concept.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to describe the proposal to commence the Room Service delivery pilot program in August 2024. The paper will describe and outline the changes being proposed, the reasons for the changes and the structure of the proposed team dedicated to the pilot program.

A review of the current food service model highlighted several challenges with the current traditional food service model including:

- high levels of food waste
- reduced flexibility in mealtimes, and
- an aging infrastructure all impacting service efficiencies and the patient experience.

A key focus for the Food Service team is to achieve an improved patient meal intake and experience, deliver on environmental and sustainability targets, effectively mitigate food safety and allergen risks, and to ensure ongoing compliance with National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards.

3. Current model

The Food Service Department is an essential component in the delivery of clinical care to patients. The Food Services operation requires cooperation and integration with numerous departments all impacting service to patients.

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Food Service operations across the Canberra Hospital campus are extensive and complex with a range of menus and food service logistics to meet the varying patient populations. Delivery occurs across an expansive campus with food services operating out of an aging kitchen.

The Canberra Hospital Food Service Department currently uses a cook-chill food service model. The cook-chill system is known to reduce the production costs of both labour and raw materials while allowing uniform workflow and easy quality control. However, the additional blast-chilling and rethermalizing processes affect the food nutrient profile, textures and flavours and limits the menu variety as some recipes are not suitable for a cook-chill system.

Patients at the Canberra Hospital are also required to select and order their meals one day ahead and this poses challenges for variable preferences and appetite. Further, food delivery to patients occurs at three designated mealtimes and three midmeal times and there is limited access to food and meals outside the fixed meal and midmeal periods.

4. Rationale for change

To evaluate whether a food service system fits a hospital's population and need, plate waste is often one of the key performance indicators (KPIs).

In 2021 and 2023, quality improvement projects were conducted by students from the University of Wollongong that included evaluations of plate waste at the Canberra Hospital. The 2021 project found that the average plate waste at the Canberra Hospital was almost double compared standard wastage targets to that found in international studies. In 2023, plate waste was above standard wastage targets and higher for patients who did not receive a meal of their choice.

The projects also identified:

- All patients receive a meal that meets their personal dietary preferences and nutritional requirements assigned by practitioners, however approximately 30% of meals delivered are not selected by the patient.
- The 2023 project observed and monitored two wards being Paediatrics and acute surgical unit for a total of 15 mealtimes that included breakfast, lunch and dinner and comprised of a total of 421 trays. The findings demonstrated a high level of plate waste with an average of least half of the main meals on one of the wards being returned to the kitchen.

The scope of the Room Service pilot program being proposed to commence in August 2024 aims to assist with:

- Improving a food service delivery efficiency with operating practices to patients by offering a self-ordering food system which incorporates on demand room service food options.
- Including a model that will allow CHS Patients the flexibility to order and receive meals between 7am and 7pm seven days a week via a QR code using their own device.
- Ensuring ordering and delivery processes support the right foods and fluids being delivered to the right patient at the right time, enhancing patient food intake and meeting nutritional needs and requirements.

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- Increasing job satisfaction for food service staff in providing a modern on demand service while contributing to a high level of customer service and the positive patient experience.
- Reducing and preventing plate and tray waste associated with uneaten food due to limitations surrounding food delivery times and eradicating pre-ordering of food by patients that have then been discharged at the delivery time or are asleep or are away from the ward for medical procedures at mealtimes.
- Delivering on environmental and sustainability targets, effectively mitigate food safety and allergen risks, and to ensure ongoing compliance with National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards.

5. Proposed pilot program team structure

The creation of the proposed pilot program will provide an opportunity for existing full-time and part-time food service staff members to join the pilot team. It is proposed that an expression of interest (EOI) process will be offered and opened only to the Food Service team in the first instance, for the giving staff members the opportunity to apply to transfer to the pilot program.

The filling of the HSO5 positions will not form part of the recruitment process as it is proposed that these positions be filled by using the existing HSO5 staff currently on the rotating roster line.

The proposed pilot will include room service food delivery to approximately 235 beds in two separate areas at the Canberra Hospital between the hours of 7am to 7pm seven day a week. The proposed structure brings together the existing team and the pilot team reporting through to the existing HSO8 and HSO10 positions for Production and Patient Services.

The final team structure will be monitored and assessed during the proposed pilot program and resource ratios adjusted as necessary to meet current and potential future demands of both the existing team and the pilot team (**See full Organisational Chart – Appendix One**). The pilot positions are marked in green)

Proposed model of the pilot program team:

Chef - Health Service Officer 7 (HSO7)	3 x Full-time positions (two newly created positions).
Expediter - HSO5	2 x Full-time positions (to form part of the existing staff rotation).
Preparation Assistant - HSO4	3 x Full-time positions (transfer from the existing team).
Meal Service Assistant - HSO3	9 x Full-time positions. 9 x Part-time positions (20 hours per week).

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6. Implementation of the future model

Under the Union Encouragement Policy, employees will be given full access to union officials/ delegates and facilities during working hours to discuss the proposed Room service Pilot program on the provision that work requirements are not unreasonable affected.

Table 1: Proposed Structure implementation timeline

Steps	Action	Date
1	Consultation period opens. Consultation document to be provided to impacted staff and Union via briefing.	Tuesday 7 November 2023
2	Consultation period ends	Tuesday 28 November 2023
3	Any provided suggestions from consultations will be reviewed and any changes incorporated into the final paper, presented for information. Where applicable feedback with decision outcomes will be provided.	During December 2023
4	Activate change (commence pilot program).	August 2024

7. Consultation methodology

This proposal outlined in this paper will be circulated to the following:

- All staff within the team;
- Divisional Executives.

Feedback can be provided to Sandra Sturt, Senior Change Manager, via email to Sandra.Sturt@act.gov.au, via the feedback box located in the staff tearoom or via the Union.

In particular, we are seeking responses to the following questions:

- Do you support the proposal to create positions for the Room Services Pilot program?
- Do you have any concerns about the proposal? If yes, what are they?
- Do you have any other feedback you would like to be considered in relation to the proposed Room Service Pilot program?

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8. Consultation timeframe

The consultation process will commence from 7 November 2023 and remain open until 28 November 2023 (3 weeks consultation period).

For any further information relating to the CHS pilot program consultation process, please contact:

- your supervisor directly, or
- Andreas Seibold, Director of Food Service at Andreas.Seibold@act.gov.au
- Sandra Sturt, Senior Change Manager at Sandra.Sturt@act.gov.au