

## Tracking Excellence: Impacting the Patient Experience in Children's Healthcare



### Children's Mercy

"Operating a children's hospital comes with unique challenges and opportunities. We needed a food and nutrition services vendor that understands this segment of healthcare. Recently, we had a bad experience with a food and nutrition services vendor, so we had to find a team that could quickly turn things around with customized menus, technology and processes. We've been blown away by how quickly the Morrison Healthcare team has made an impact on our organization and patients."

-Jodi Holmes, EVP and COO  
at Children's Mercy



### Background

Children deserve the best when it comes to their health. Children's Mercy, a Kansas City, Missouri based healthcare system, is leading the way for compassionate care for the most vulnerable patients. Through their dedication to holistic care, innovation, and education, Children's Mercy is transforming the health and well-being of children across the region. For their success to continue, the health systems must align food and nutrition services with its already high-level of clinical care.

At the Children's Mercy 367-bed hospital, Adele Hall, located in downtown Kansas City, there is a long history of excellence, but recent challenges with food and nutrition services have led to difficulties delivering the level of care its patients and families have grown to expect. Through an RFP process in 2018, Children's Mercy chose a new food and nutrition services contractor, but quality and execution issues soon became apparent. In less than a year, Children's Mercy switched to Morrison Healthcare, where Morrison Healthcare's teams were able to quickly integrate and make quantifiable improvements to the hospital's food and nutrition services operations.



## Challenges

Children's Mercy's Adele Hall had numerous challenges to overcome. In the transition meetings between hospital administration and the Morrison Healthcare team, leadership shared areas for improvement where they had existing issues and did not meet standards, including not properly allocating resources, missing key benchmarks and failing to provide the right technological solutions.



**Resources**—It is critical to have the right resources in place to ensure a successful food and nutrition services program, particularly when transitioning to a new account. Concerns Children's Mercy had included not adequately staffing the department or collaborating with clinical and onsite teams, which meant difficulty in scaling up and meeting patient expectations.



**Delivery Time**—Patients want their food on time and at the proper temperature. When food deliveries are delayed or running late, patients have a poor experience which puts a strain on nursing and other clinical providers. That's why deliver time is a key performance indication in food and nutrition services. Children's Mercy was concerned about not meeting the 45-minute delivery time benchmark established by them.

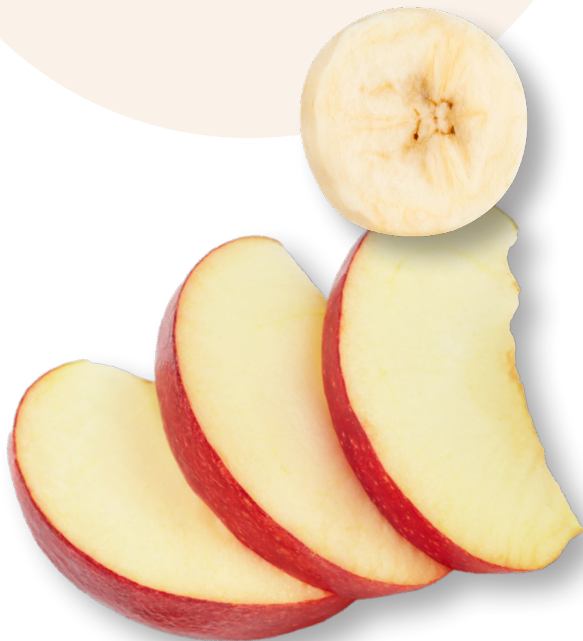


**Safety**—Nothing is more important in a hospital than the safety of patients. That means putting the proper procedures in place to safeguard patients. In numerous situations, the proper safety processes were not put in place, which put patients at risk. That is unacceptable at any healthcare organization, especially one with a stellar reputation like Children's Mercy.



**Menu**—Patients have expectations when it comes to dining, particularly when they are children. Morrison Healthcare finds it is important to customize the food service offerings for the audience and meet the unique needs of juvenile healthcare.

While there were numerous challenges at Children's Mercy's Adele Hall, there is also limitless potential. The administration understands the value of food and nutrition services and was excited to work with Morrison Healthcare to create an unparalleled patient experience. This level of collaboration can lead to excellence and foster healing and wellness for even the smallest patients.





## Quick Integration, New Efficiencies, Quantifiable Results

### Transition

Collaboration is the key to integrating a new food and nutrition services account. The Children's Mercy team understood the importance of working together to create a partnership that drives results for patients. Morrison Healthcare had a dedicated Project Manager from Compass

Group's Strategic Projects team to function as the transition lead and single point of contact for the internal team as well as a liaison to the Children's Mercy Team. Children's Mercy also provided a Project Manager to work closely with the transition team. The collaboration between dedicated Project Managers served as a key factor in the project's improved efficiency and faster integration.

Experience matters. Morrison Healthcare was able to get up to speed quickly and provide dynamic solutions in a matter of days because the team has been in this situation before. Morrison Healthcare and its parent company, Compass Group, have invested in transition as a core competency, putting resources behind a dedicated transition team ensuring each transition is executed flawlessly.

With proven processes and a customizable playbook, Morrison Healthcare was able to deliver on its promises, align with clinical teams and put the hospital's food and nutrition services on track for success.



### People

Healthcare is about people. To provide the best patient care, hospitals need to staff their teams with the best talent. From day one, Morrison Healthcare brought in many of its national leaders and subject matter experts to assist with the integration. With support from across the company and the ability to bring in talent, Morrison Healthcare put the right team in place and scaled up operations quickly.

Putting the team in place is one step, but it is also important to retain that top talent. The food and nutrition services industry is known for high turnover rates, but Morrison Healthcare is combatting that with robust retention strategies and career building opportunities. Leadership came onsite 45 days prior to go-live to answer questions and recruit additional associates.

"We are constantly looking to bring in the best talent and keep a recruitment pipeline open at all times," said Chad Crabtree, regional director of operations for Morrison Healthcare. "We treated them as members of our family. It all comes down to culture. We are proactive with associates. We listen and keep them at the forefront of everything we do."

During the transition, MHC had a retention rate as high as 95%. We have continued focusing on our associates and retention efforts by increasing wages and recognizing our associates.



## Menu

In the clinical world, treating children requires specialization. The same is true for food and nutrition services. The smallest patients have special needs and desires, which includes menus that reflect their needs and preferences. Children's Mercy was concerned about the prior use of an adult menu, which did not align with the hospital's expectations around patient experience.

Through experience, Morrison Healthcare knows what children need. The food and nutrition services teams build customized menus for Children's Mercy, working alongside the clinical nutrition team. In all, 22 different menus were developed in a short time. This provided flexibility and greatly improved the experience for the patients at Children's Mercy Adele Hall.

Safety plays a major role in menu development and the tray building process. Menus are complex in a children's hospital and there are numerous specialized diets for a food and nutrition services department to adhere to. That's why it is critical to implement processes that ensure the right tray goes to the right patient. Morrison Healthcare made major improvements to the safety alert process, which has already paid dividends for patients.

## Technology

It didn't take long for Morrison Healthcare to install new technology solutions at Children's Mercy. On the third day, Morrison implemented its proprietary ordering and delivery tracking programs, MyDining and MyDelivery, which provides enhanced reporting so leaders can pinpoint areas for improvement. This program proved to be crucial for a smooth transition for the Morrison Healthcare FANS team.

In the past, they were using a third-party software that would not interface with the hospital's electronic health record, which meant staff had to manually enter data for hours without safety checks and balances. In addition to being inefficient, it created patient safety concerns daily.

With the implementation of MyDining and MyDelivery, Morrison made an immediate impact on delivery times by receiving real-time data on deliveries, which allows the team to identify focus areas. In a short timeframe, delivery times exceeded expectations dropping below the 45-minute benchmark. Tray delivery time has dipped as low as 22 minutes. Experience, technology and clarity of mission have allowed the Morrison Healthcare team to hit the ground running and make a quantifiable impact on patient care.

## Results

Morrison Healthcare and its onsite teams are not resting on their laurels. There is still work to be done. A full transition takes around 12 months, but the early returns have shown major improvements in all areas of food and nutrition services. It comes down to resources and the transition plan. Morrison Healthcare's teams understand the complexity of food and nutrition services at a children's hospital, which has led to successes in organizational efficiency, staff retention, patient safety and delivery times. Having the right food and nutrition services vendor who understands how to care for the smallest patients makes for a successful transition and fruitful partnership.



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