Promoting Mindful Meal Choices in Plymouth

The Problem
The Community Health Needs Assessment completed for BID-Plymouth’s service area in 2013 showed residents experience 10% higher chronic health issues (cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes) than other Massachusetts residents. Part of BID-P’s mission is to improve the health and well-being of its patients and community, including the hospital staff. The LiveWell program implements/evaluates several employee health and wellness interventions. The development of chronic disease is often nutrition-related thus a goal of LiveWell is to promote the selection of healthy entrees in the cafeteria. If the health-promoting options are chosen often it potentially improves the nutritional status of staff, visitors, outpatients and community.

Aim/Goal
1. Increase the sale of healthy entrees by 10% by January 25, 2016
2. Evaluate impact of educational marketing campaign on entrée selection

The Team
Marcia Richards MEd RD MCHES & Carol Burns RD MS CNSC Nutrition Services
John Coveney & Bill McCarthy, Sodexo Food Service
Deb Schooperle, Senior Marketing Communication Specialist
Cafeteria Staff: Enza Amara, Terri Rebelo, and Sue Webster

The Interventions
- Modified the café five week cycle to include at least one “mindful” entrée.
- Assessed purchase trends and collected anecdotal feedback to establish customer preferences.
- Documented the number of healthy meal options purchased in November-December 2014.
- Created a new five week cycle menu including a daily Healthy Meal Option.
- As of January 2015, the Healthy Meal Option is advertised with the following:
  - Signage at entrée station promoting criteria of less than 550 calories, low in fat and sodium
  - Fifty cent discount at the register making the “healthy choice the easy choice”, creating a financial incentive
  - Available bar codes linking to MyFitnessPal via a smartphone have been included for all items on the menu.
  - Menu items can be selected from iPortal and a nutrient analysis report is generated, as pictured below.
  - Created flyers promoting the launch of the Healthy Option Meal of the Day program.
- During the first week of this project, the dietitian was in the cafeteria educating employees about iPortal and bar code options

The Results/Progress to Date
Healthy Option Meal of the Day was initiated on Feb. 26, 2015. There are three strategies an employee can use to determine the nutrient content of a selected meal. For those using MyFitnessPal to track intake, bar codes are available on the daily menu posted at the entrance of the café. Next is using iPortal to calculate nutrients. Menu items can be selected from iPortal and a nutrient analysis report is generated, as pictured below. A third strategy is to select the daily Healthy Meal Option which is posted at the hot counter. The number of Healthy Meal Options purchased will be tracked and compared with the baseline data.

Lessons Learned
We are in the “launch” phase of this project. Over the next 5 weeks we hope to learn more about the following:

1. Does marketing Healthier Meal Options impact the entrée chosen?
2. Will awareness of nutrient content provided through barcodes and iPortal nutrient reports impact the entrée chosen?

Next Steps
- Evaluate project after 5 week cycle is finished
- Assess before and after totals
- Modify menu based on preferences
- Evaluate use of iPortal and bar codes
- Identify challenges and barriers and success
- being less than 550 calories, low in fat and sodium, and a 50 cent discount is offered if the entire meal is purchased

For more information, contact:
Marcia Richards MEd RD MCHES Community Dietitian
mrichards@jordanhospital.org