



NEWS RELEASE from Halton Healthcare

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Halton Healthcare Hospitals Serve Up More Fresh Local Food

New menu items bring the 'farm to bedside'

Over the past several years Halton Healthcare's Food Services team has been quietly transforming the patient food experience – one meal at a time.

The team has been on the leading edge of change across Ontario's food services industry since introducing the award winning Call to Order room service program at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital (OTMH) in 2011.

Like its name implies, the Call to Order system allows patients to order food by telephone from their hospital room.

“With Call to Order, patients can call any time between the hours of 7am – 6pm and order what they feel like eating. Patients can expect to receive their meals within 45 minutes after they place their order,” says Marianne Katusin, Manager of Food Services at Halton Healthcare. “In addition to increasing patient satisfaction, Call to Order eliminates the need for replacement trays and helps reduce unnecessary food waste.”

Building on the success of Call to Order, which is now available on most inpatient units at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital and Milton District Hospital, Halton Healthcare has been working to introduce a variety of fresh, locally sourced and sustainable food options by partnering with a network of Ontario food manufacturers and producers.

Last summer, Halton Healthcare's Food Services team spent a day in the Gordon Food Services test kitchen, developing (and tasting) new recipe ideas made with fresh, local ingredients in an effort to craft tasty and nutritious meals for their patients.

The results can be found on Halton Healthcare's patient menus.

New menu items include a variety of soups made in house daily and heartier fare such as turkey chili and chicken cacciatore, made with locally sourced meat and vegetables. Items that include locally sourced ingredients are identified by a tractor icon.

“There are so many great reasons to use locally sourced food,” explains Ms. Katusin. “Beyond the fresh taste and added nutritional value, buying local reduces our carbon footprint through shorter delivery distances and decreased packaging waste.”

In 2014, Halton Healthcare received a grant from the Ontario Greenbelt Fund for an innovative project called *Good for You, Locally Grown*, aimed at getting more local food into hospital kitchens across the province. In 2017, the organization was awarded more funding from the Greenbelt Fund, to continue with the second phase of this local project focusing on skills development, the sourcing of more local food products, innovation and product development.

“When we initially reviewed our menus only about 6% of items were made using locally sourced ingredients. Today, 30% of our menu items are made from locally sourced food,” concludes Elma Hrapovich, Director of Support Services at Halton Healthcare. “From fruits and vegetables to meats and cheeses - we continue to challenge ourselves to increase the amount of local food we use by exploring all that Ontario farms have to offer.”

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About Halton Healthcare

Halton Healthcare is a progressive, multi-site healthcare organization comprised of three community hospitals - Georgetown Hospital (GH), Milton District Hospital (MDH) and Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital (OTMH). Supported by 3,800 staff, 1,500 volunteers and 300 physicians, these hospitals provide healthcare services to a growing population of nearly 400,000 residents in the communities of Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville.