



Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Office of Health Care Quality

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Larry Hogan, Governor - Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor - Van T. Mitchell, Secretary

TO: Nursing Home Administrators, Dietitians and Food Service Managers

FROM: Lisa Staley, Office of Food Protection
Margie Heald, Office of Health Care Quality

RE: Mobile Food Carts in Comprehensive Care Facilities

Date: March 30, 2016

This transmittal is to clarify the requirements for comprehensive care facilities implementing the use of a mobile food cart for food delivery to residents.

The goals for the use of mobile food carts is to allow resident's freedom to choose meals, promote meal intake and reduce food waste.

Prior to implementing this type of food service, the facility is required to develop a step by step written procedure to ensure proper food safety, infection control and sanitation procedures are followed.

All policies and procedures for the mobile food cart must be approved by both the Office of Health Care Quality and the facility's local health department prior to implementation. Policies and procedures must address, at least the following:

Food Protection:

- Handwashing must be done prior to starting meal service on each individual unit. *Facility must practice proper no bare hand contact procedures when handling ready to eat foods.* The procedure must include exactly when hand washing will be done and at what location. Use of a hand sanitizer in lieu of proper handwashing is not permitted.
- Handwashing cannot be done in resident rooms. Access to a handwashing sink cannot require the opening of a door. The handwashing sink must be in a central, unobstructed location. Mobile hand sinks are acceptable as long as a written procedure to meet sanitation requirements is developed. The hand sink must be supplied with hot and cold water under pressure. The unit must be supplied with adequate waste containers to hold gray (dirty) water until dumping is done. The written procedure must include the dumping/disposal of the gray water.



- The procedures must identify how many staff members will be assisting with service (e.g. serving food items, pushing the mobile food cart and delivering meals to the residents.)
- The mobile food cart must have proper food protection (e.g., a sneeze guard, on three sides, to protect the food).

Food on the cart must maintain proper temperature control (hot food held at a minimum of 135°F and cold food maintained at 41°F or below). Temperatures must be recorded prior to serving meals on each individual unit indicating proper temperatures. Any corrective actions need to be documented also.

Diets:

The procedure must ensure that diet orders, especially texture, is followed for each resident to ensure their safety.

The facility must develop a menu with appropriate spread sheets, including alternates.

Link for official copy of food safety regulations:

<http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/SearchTitle.aspx?scope=10>