



# DiningRD | CASE STUDY

## NURTURING *Joy* THROUGH FOOD

WITH DINING PROGRAMS FOR SENIOR LIVING

### PROFILE:

Based in Colorado, **Frontline Management** owns, operates, and manages a growing portfolio of all types of Senior Housing and Care Communities. Their focus is operational excellence throughout the full continuum of housing in their CO, KS, SD, OH, AZ and SC facilities. Frontline's core purpose is to excel in providing communities that improve the lives of those they serve.



### SITUATION:

DiningRD has partnered with Frontline since 2015, providing both consulting dietitians and dining software. Their relationship has steadily grown, as Frontline has adopted additional software modules, and began testing of other DiningRD tools for potential roll out. DiningRD's team offers training and presents trends and best practices to Frontline's leadership group annually.

Partnering with DiningRD has provided the leadership team at Frontline tools and resources to nimbly navigate the ever-changing world of federal and state regulation. Some of the most challenging regulations revolve around the requirements to meet nutritional and mealtime preferences of the residents in the community. The menu must produce meals that consider not only nutritional needs but also any ethnic, religious, or cultural food preferences.



*The tools to produce the menu need to be easy to use and menu planning tools need to be easy to adapt to the ever-changing palate of the residents in the community.*



## PROBLEM:

Resident Satisfaction scores that have been measured since Frontline's inception fell dramatically during the COVID pandemic and during the staffing and supply chain shortage era that followed the pandemic. Satisfaction is at the core of the commitment to the residents that reside in a Frontline community and instrumental in building census so important for a community's financial health.

Frontline has high standards for resident satisfaction scores. When they noticed that the scores were not at their goals given the organization's focus on excellence, this was not acceptable. Frontline managers recognize and are committed to the concept that the kitchen is the heart of the home and the dining experience the hub of the resident's social experience each day.

The COVID era for all healthcare communities created staff challenges and new staff members. Team members who knew how to use DiningRD's customized tools and resources had moved on. Because of short staffing, new team members including Dining Managers were not being trained thoroughly when they started. In many locations, the planned menu was not up to date to the current resident requests and preferences, or not printed and displayed, as required. The Dining Managers did not know how to access menus, so they were not using recipes and production sheets and therefore were purchasing incorrect ingredients or preparing foods that were not a quality product. This all resulted in numerous resident food complaints.



## SOLUTION:

DiningRD team members jumped into action, upon being asked to participate in a newly formed Frontline Dining Task Force. Frontline Management and DiningRD took the following steps with the goal to improve the dining experience:

- Held Web-based flexible group and individual re-training meetings on all online resources and customized menus.
- Began monthly monitoring of DiningRD login activity. For locations with no log ins, started actively reaching out to those Dining Managers to schedule additional training on consulting services, menu use, tools & resources, purchasing and inventory systems. These sessions would include the Menu team leader and would initiate a series of quarterly follow ups.
- Added Dining Manager training to corporate level onboarding.
- Scheduled and ran a quarterly Dining Managers Roundtable to keep focus on excellence in Dining. Addressed key topics, shared best practices including skill enhancements in use of DiningRD menu tools and resources.
- Established quarterly monitoring of Pinnacle scores and focused attention on communities performing below the national average by holding web meetings and re-train menu use, production tools, purchasing resources, inventory systems and maximizing the use of the RD consultant.
- Formed a Dining Task Force with key corporate leadership, Dining RD liaisons and Navigator Vendor Representatives. This group focused on process improvements from menu development, to purchasing, to training, to dining room atmosphere that impact the satisfaction in the resident's dining experience.
- Implemented a "scorecard" for Dining RD's dietitians to monitor and record improvements during onsite consultations.
- Established a process for seasonal feedback on menu design with community managers and dedicated menu specialists.



## HEAR IT FROM FRONTLINE:



Thank you for your dedication and support for our Dining Task Force. For the first time, we are seeing that we are rising above the National Average in most of our Dining Operations within our communities.



– Robert Jones, President & COO, Frontline Management



## RESULT:

### PINNACLE RANKING, DINING SATISFACTION

- **Skilled Nursing** – increased from 3.78 to over 4.5 and above the national average in February 2023 for all but one community.
- **Independent/Assisted Living/Memory Care** – increased from 4.0 to over 4.5 companywide in February 2023.

### PINNACLE RANKING, QUALITY OF FOOD & FOOD CHOICES

- **Skilled Nursing** – increased from under 3.75 to over 4.5 in February 2023 the single largest improvement for any department company wide.
- **Independent/Assisted Living/Memory Care** – largest single improvement for any community department company wide to over 4.0 and achieved national average and best in class for menu choices and for all but one community in dining services.

## SUMMARY:

- Reduced resident food complaints.
- Improved Pinnacle scores in many communities (above the national average) and Skilled settings.
- The average improvements were the best they ever seen.



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[DiningRD.com](https://DiningRD.com)