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California Department of Public Health



EDMUND G. BROWN, JR.
Governor

May 24, 2013

AFL 13-11

TO: All Health Care Facilities

SUBJECT: Diet Manuals, Orders, and Menus Must Meet Patient's Nutritional Needs and Disaster Menu Planning

AUTHORITY: Title 22 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Sections 70273(a) and (d), 70741(b), 71243(a) and (d), 71539(b), 72335(a), 72337, 72551(b), 73325(a), 73329, 73549(b), 76363(a), 76367, 76563(b), 76882(a), 76884, 76928(b), 79685(a) and (i)
Title 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Sections 482.28, 482.41(a), 483.35, 483.75(m)

This All Facility Letter (AFL) is being issued to remind facilities that the nutritional needs of patients/residents/clients must be met through menu development in accordance with the physician's diet orders, as delineated in the facility diet manual. In addition to menu planning, the AFL will clarify the intent of disaster menu planning.

Diet manuals establish a common language and practice for physicians and other health care professionals to use when providing nutrition care to patients, residents, and/or clients. The diet manual includes the purpose and principles of each diet, the meal pattern, the foods allowed and not allowed, and the nutritional adequacy and inadequacy of each diet. The facility's diet manual and the diets ordered by the physician should mirror the nutritional care provided by the facility. All diets ordered by the physician must be reflective of the facility's diet manual.

The analysis of the menu is the foundation of meal planning to assure that the nutritional needs of the patient/resident/client are in accordance with the physician order and the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs). The Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) are the most recent set of dietary recommendations established by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine. The DRIs encompass the RDAs and Adequate Intakes (AIs) as the national standard of practice for menu and nutrient analysis. Menu analysis includes all life stages and gender groups as referenced in the DRIs, based on the specific population of each facility.

For menus and diets that do not meet the DRIs, facilities must have an established system that addresses any nutritional inadequacies of the diet. Although the RDA or AI may serve as the basis for such guidance, qualified medical and nutritional personnel should make adaptations for specific situations.

In addition, state regulations require facilities to have detailed written plans and procedures to meet all potential emergencies and disasters. These written procedures should include plans for the availability of adequate basic utilities and supplies, including food and water, with consideration for the special needs of the patients/residents/clients treated at the facilities.

Special needs can be attributed to age (e.g. pediatrics), therapeutic diet (e.g. renal, diabetic), or mechanically altered diets (e.g. mechanically chopped, puree) (CCR Sections 70741(b), 71539(b), 72551(b), 73549(b), 76563(b), 76928(b) and CFR Sections 482.41(a), 483.75(m)). All foods should be evaluated for appropriateness for service to all, including those on prescribed therapeutic and/or mechanically altered diets. Nutritional adequacy related to carbohydrate, fat and biological value protein content is to be evaluated.

Facilities should develop disaster menu plans that can be mobilized in the event of the lack of essential utilities (e.g. gas, electricity, water), that can be easily served by disaster response personnel, and that mirror the nutritional adequacy of the meals routinely served at the facilities.

Facilities are responsible for following all applicable laws. The California Department of Public Health's failure to expressly notify facilities of statutory or regulatory requirements does not relieve facilities of their responsibility for following all state and federal laws and regulations. Facilities should refer to the full text of all applicable regulatory sections.

If you have any questions, please contact your respective Licensing and Certification District Office.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Debby Rogers

Debby Rogers, RN, MS, FAEN
Deputy Director
Center for Health Care Quality