

## Chapter 22

# Five Hills Regional Health Authority—Provision of Nourishing and Safe Food Services in Long-Term Care Facilities

### 1.0 MAIN POINTS

Since our 2012 audit of Five Hills Regional Health Authority's (Five Hills) processes to provide nourishing and safe food services in its owned and affiliated long-term care facilities, Five Hills has made good progress in implementing our 11 recommendations. At March 31, 2015, Five Hills had implemented seven recommendations, and had work underway to implement the remaining four.

Five Hills is working to update its *Nutrition and Food Services Policy and Procedures Manual* and having all modified menus regularly reviewed by a registered dietitian. It also needs to consistently record the temperature of food before serving it to residents and follow its policy to conduct annual risk-based audits or reviews of food services.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Under *The Regional Health Services Act*, Five Hills is responsible for the delivery of health care in its region, including long-term care. *The Housing and Special-Care Homes Regulations* outline standards for food service in long-term care homes.

Our *2012 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 28, concluded that Five Hills could not always ensure that nourishing and safe food services were provided to residents in its long-term care facilities. We made 11 recommendations. This chapter reports the results of our first follow-up of those recommendations.

To conduct this review engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance*. To evaluate Five Hills' progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. Five Hills' management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

We reviewed Five Hills' policy and procedures manuals, meal plans, and other relevant documents. We visited three long-term care facilities and conducted interviews with Five Hills' officials.

### 3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at March 31, 2015, and Five Hills' actions up to that date. We found that Five Hills has made good progress. It has fully implemented seven of our recommendations and made progress on the remaining four.



### 3.1 Menus Comply with Canada's Food Guide

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We recommended that Five Hills Regional Health Authority confirm all long-term care facility menus comply with Canada's Food Guide. (2012 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

**Status** – Implemented

In October 2014, Five Hills implemented a process to ensure compliance of long-term care menus with Canada's Food Guide. A registered dietitian is responsible for reviewing the menus to confirm their compliance with Canada's Food Guide, providing management with detailed reports outlining the findings of the reviews, and providing recommendations to improve the nutritional value of the menus.

During our review, we found that all of its long-term care facility menus were reviewed by a registered dietician to confirm their compliance with Canada's Food Guide.

### 3.2 Review of Manual Underway

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We recommended that Five Hills Regional Health Authority review and update its Nutrition and Food Services Policy and Procedures Manual. (2012 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

**Status** – Partially Implemented

Five Hills is currently reviewing and updating its *Nutrition and Food Services Policy and Procedures Manual*. Management indicated that Five Hills expects this review to be completed by June 2015.

### 3.3 Standard System to Track Dietary Needs in Place

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We recommended that Five Hills Regional Health Authority implement a standard system of tracking individual residents' dietary needs and changes to those needs. (2012 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

**Status** – Implemented

In October 2014, Five Hills implemented a process to consistently track residents' individual dietary needs and any changes to those needs. During our review, we noted that individual dietary needs were identified and tracked in a card filing system in larger facilities and a binder system in smaller facilities. Staff (e.g., nurses, dietitians) completed a diet change form including the date of the diet order change, along with the initials of the person making the change. The forms were provided to kitchen staff to

make the dietary changes and included in the resident dietary needs binder or card filing system.

### 3.4 Guidance Developed for the Review of Dietary Needs of Residents

We recommended that Five Hills Regional Health Authority develop guidance for when a registered dietitian should review dietary needs of residents. (2012 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

**Status** – Implemented

Five Hills has developed guidance for when a registered dietitian is to review dietary needs of residents. The guidance requires nursing staff to complete a nutritional assessment on new residents to assess their nutritional status (i.e., normal nutrition, at risk of malnutrition, or malnourished). A registered dietitian does a complete assessment for any resident who is flagged as at risk of malnutrition or malnourished.

During our review, staff indicated that each resident in each facility had a nutritional assessment completed. We found that a registered dietitian had visited the long-term care facilities every month or two to update the assessments as necessary.

### 3.5 Food Cost Monitored for All Long-Term Care Homes

We recommended that Five Hills Regional Health Authority obtain annual average food cost per day information from its affiliates to confirm that a reasonable amount is being spent on food for residents of long-term care homes. (2012 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

**Status** – Implemented

Five Hills monitors food costs per resident at all of its long-term care homes. Every six months, Five Hills obtains reports of actual revenue and expenses from the dietary departments of its seven owned facilities and three affiliates. This allows Five Hills to confirm that a reasonable amount is being spent on food for residents in all of its long-term care homes.

During our review, we reviewed a report that had information about each facility's average food cost per day.



### 3.6 All Modified Menus Need to be Reviewed

We recommended that Five Hills Regional Health Authority have modified menus regularly reviewed by a registered dietitian to confirm that meals served met nutritional standards. (2012 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

**Status** – Partially Implemented

In 2013, Five Hills implemented a process that requires each facility to document menu substitutions on a substitution list. This list is then submitted on a monthly basis to a registered dietitian for review. If inappropriate substitutions are identified by the dietitian, the dietitian discusses the issue with the responsible cook. Management also reminded staff to adhere to the regional menus and that if changes were required, substitutions must be offered from the same food group (e.g., fruit for a fruit). This new process helps ensure that residents' nutritional requirements are met.

During our review, we found all but one facility (an affiliate) submitted the substitution list to the dietitian as required. As substitutions at one facility were not reviewed by a dietitian, there is a risk that the substitutions made may not meet the nutritional standards (i.e., Canada Food Guide).

### 3.7 Food Temperature Inconsistently Recorded

We recommended that Five Hills Regional Health Authority follow its policy and procedures to serve food at the appropriate temperature and texture. (2012 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

**Status** – Partially Implemented

Five Hills is not consistently following its policy for recording the temperature of food on the appropriate form before serving it to residents. We found that for one facility we visited, the required forms were inconsistently completed. For example, for that facility, we found that the temperature of food was not recorded for approximately half of the days in January 2015.

Consistently monitoring and tracking the temperature of food before it is served to residents is important. It helps to ensure that food is served at the appropriate temperature, and it reduces the risk of food borne illnesses due to bacteria and toxicants.

During our review, we found that Five Hills was following its policy for serving food in its appropriate texture. For example, all pureed food was served individually (i.e., the food was not inappropriately mixed together).

### 3.8 Timely Assistance Provided to Residents

We recommended that Five Hills Regional Health Authority provide timely assistance to residents to ensure all residents are served meals at the appropriate temperature. (2012 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

**Status** – Implemented

In 2014, Five Hills provided training to staff on its dining experience policy including assisting residents during mealtime. During our review, we observed that residents at the facilities we visited were assisted in a timely manner.

### 3.9 Audits and Reviews Not Yet Completed as Required

We recommended that Five Hills Regional Health Authority follow its policy for quality improvement by conducting annual risk-based audits or reviews of food services. (2012 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

**Status** – Partially Implemented

In 2014, Five Hills completed some food service audits. For example, a plate audit was conducted to determine how rapidly food cools once it is plated. It reinforced the standard of only serving residents once they are ready for meal service (e.g., resident is seated). However, by March 2015, Five Hills had not conducted all audits or reviews as required in its *Nutrition and Food Services Policy and Procedures Manual* (e.g., tray service audits, annual quality assurance reports).

Conducting annual risk-based audits or reviews would allow Five Hills to monitor whether staff comply with policies and procedures. This would allow management to address, in a timely manner, any non-compliance issues.

As noted in **Section 3.2**, at March 2015, Five Hills was updating its *Nutrition and Food Services Policy and Procedures Manual*. Management indicated the quality assurance section of the manual setting out the requirements for audits and reviews was being updated.



### 3.10 Surveys Conducted Regularly

We recommended that Five Hills Regional Health Authority periodically survey residents and families of residents in all long-term care homes about food services. (2012 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

**Status** – Implemented

In the fall of 2013 and 2014, Five Hills conducted resident experience surveys on food services. The surveys sought input from residents on items such as the temperature of the food (e.g., were the foods served hot). Five Hills plans to conduct these surveys on a yearly basis.

We found that the surveys were completed for all but one long-term care facility (an affiliated facility). Management at the affiliated facility noted that instead of formal surveys on food services, it captures information about its food services informally through regular discussions with residents and their families. While regular, informal discussions can obtain information about food services, use of a formal process better facilitates sharing the results of those discussions with the Region. Sharing this information would enable Five Hills to ensure it responds to concerns about food services in a timely manner.

### 3.11 Complaints Procedures Developed

We recommended that Five Hills Regional Health Authority implement procedures to document, monitor, and address complaints about long-term care food services from residents and their families in all long-term care homes. (2012 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 12, 2015)

**Status** – Implemented

In February 2015, Five Hills implemented procedures to document, follow up, and monitor food services complaints. It provided each long-term care facility with a standard form to record all concerns and complaints regarding food services (e.g., temperature, quality, presentation). Staff are now required to address the complaint immediately and record the actions taken.

On a quarterly basis, beginning in May 2015, the completed forms are to be sent to the Regional Director for analysis and development of any action plans to improve the food service, as necessary.