



ENHANCING NUTRITIONAL QUALITY THROUGH STANDARDISED MENUS IN COMMUNITY NURSING UNITS: A COLLABORATIVE MENU IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Maria Mckenna Clinical Specialist Dietitian, Irene Mcsweeney Catering Officer, Louise O'Reilly Catering Officer

BACKGROUND

This year long project initiative was developed by older persons management; due to growing recognition of the changing nutritional needs of older adults living in residential care. The focus was on ensuring menus met residents nutritional requirements and food preferences, while remaining within the budgetary and operational capacity of the community nursing unit.

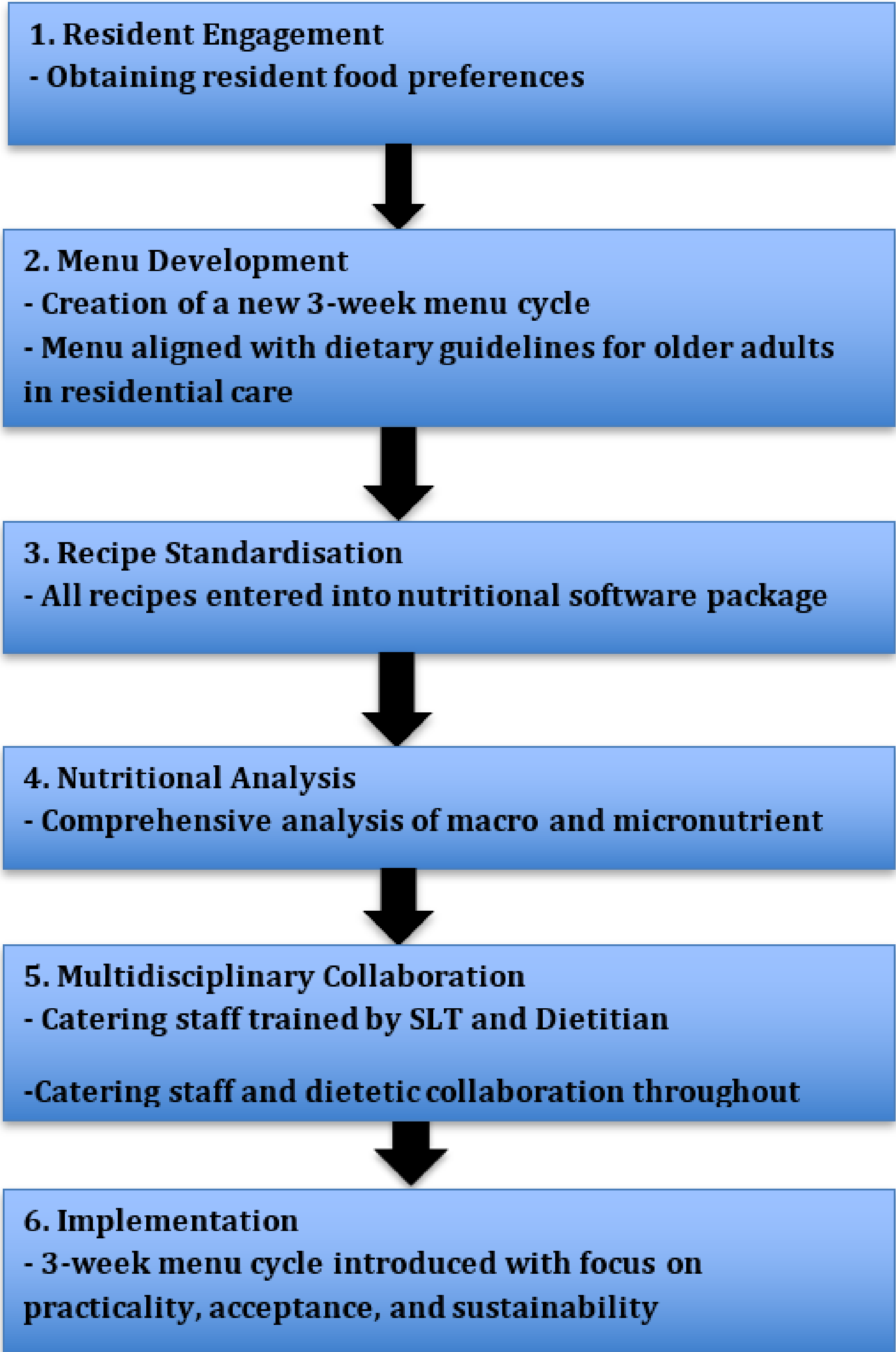
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Standardisation and nutritional improvement of menus across seven HSE community nursing units.
- Full nutritional analysis of a 3-week menu cycle
- Alignment with dietary guidelines, portion sizes & residents preferences for older adults
- Support and improve residents choice and dining experience

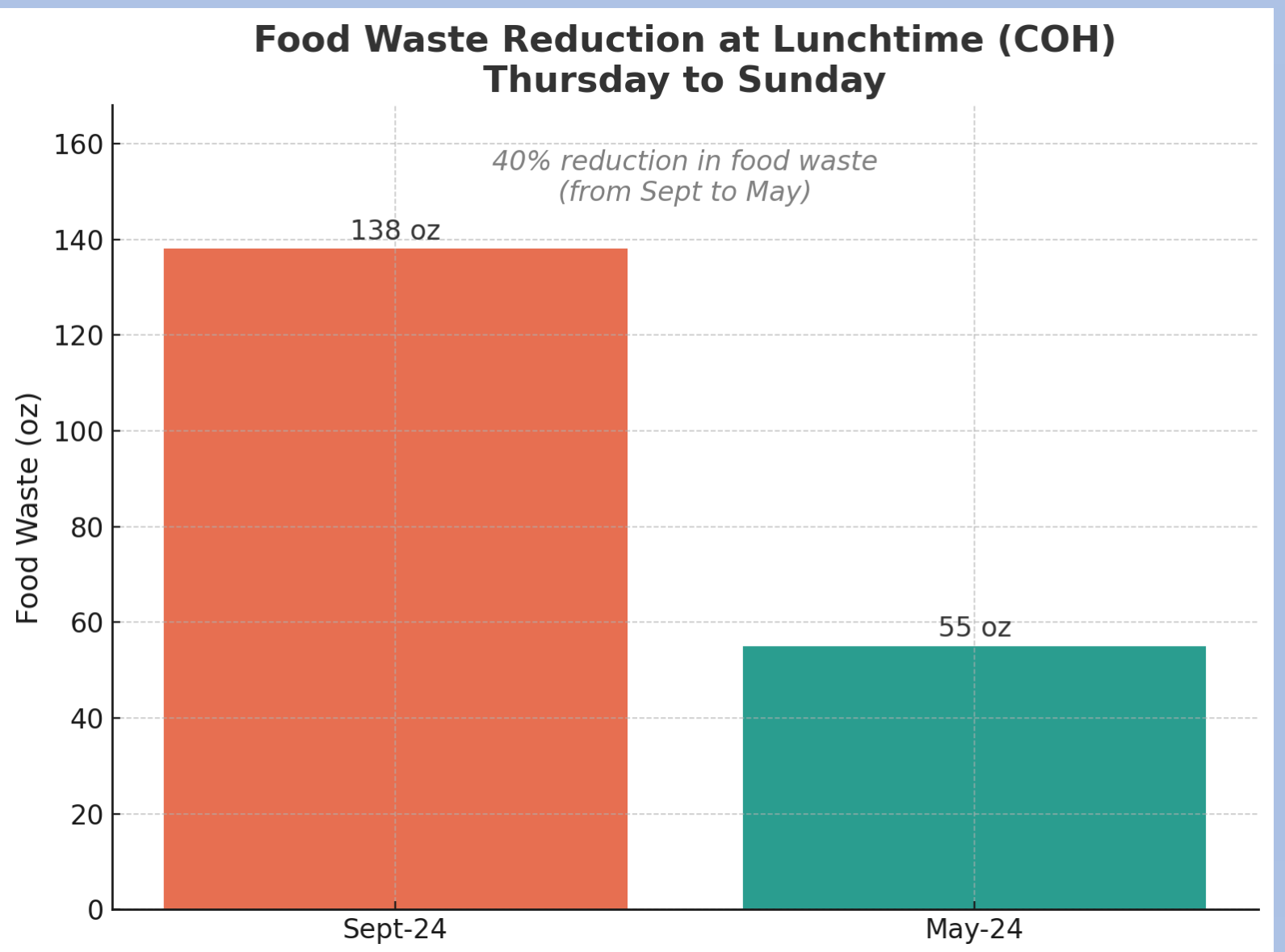
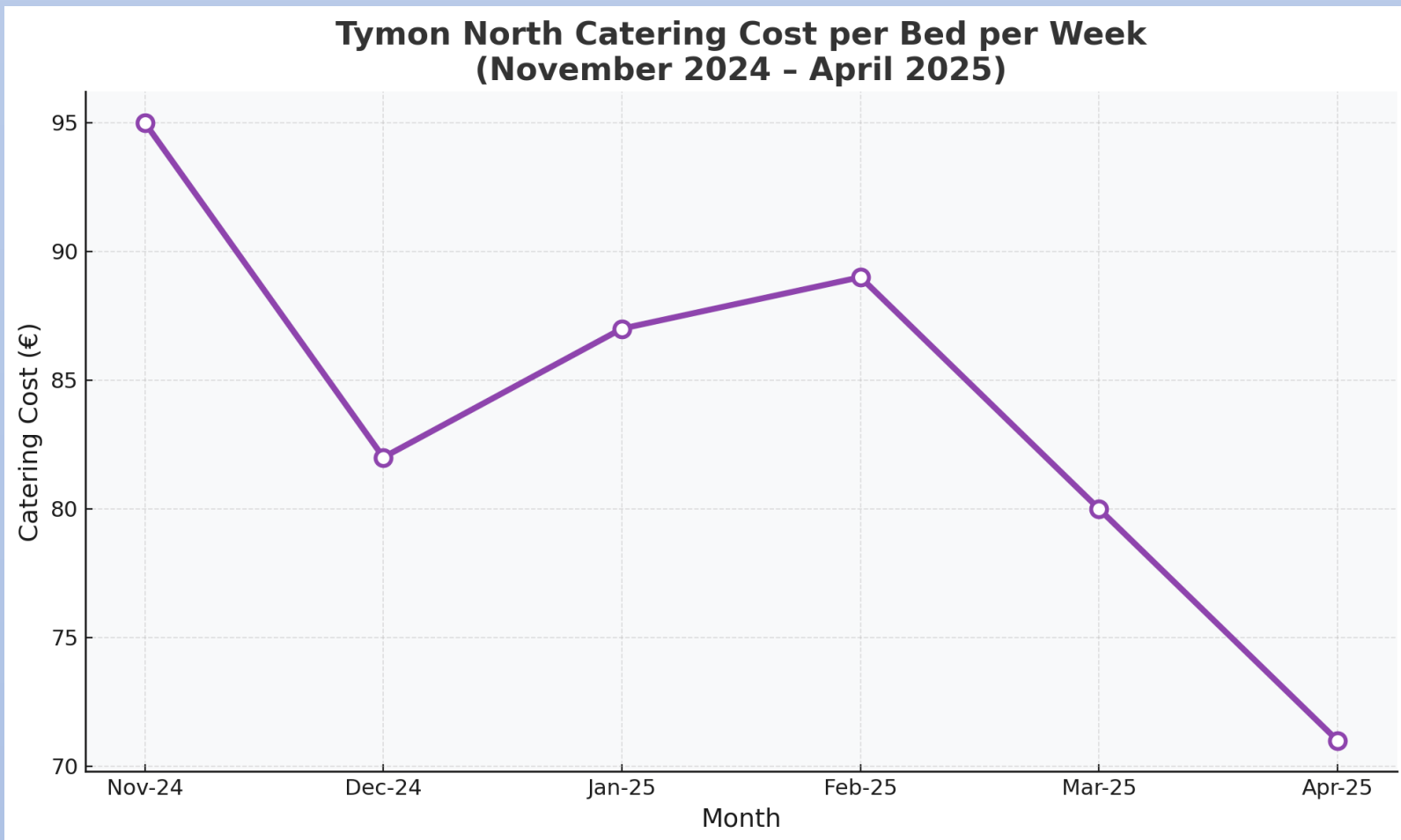
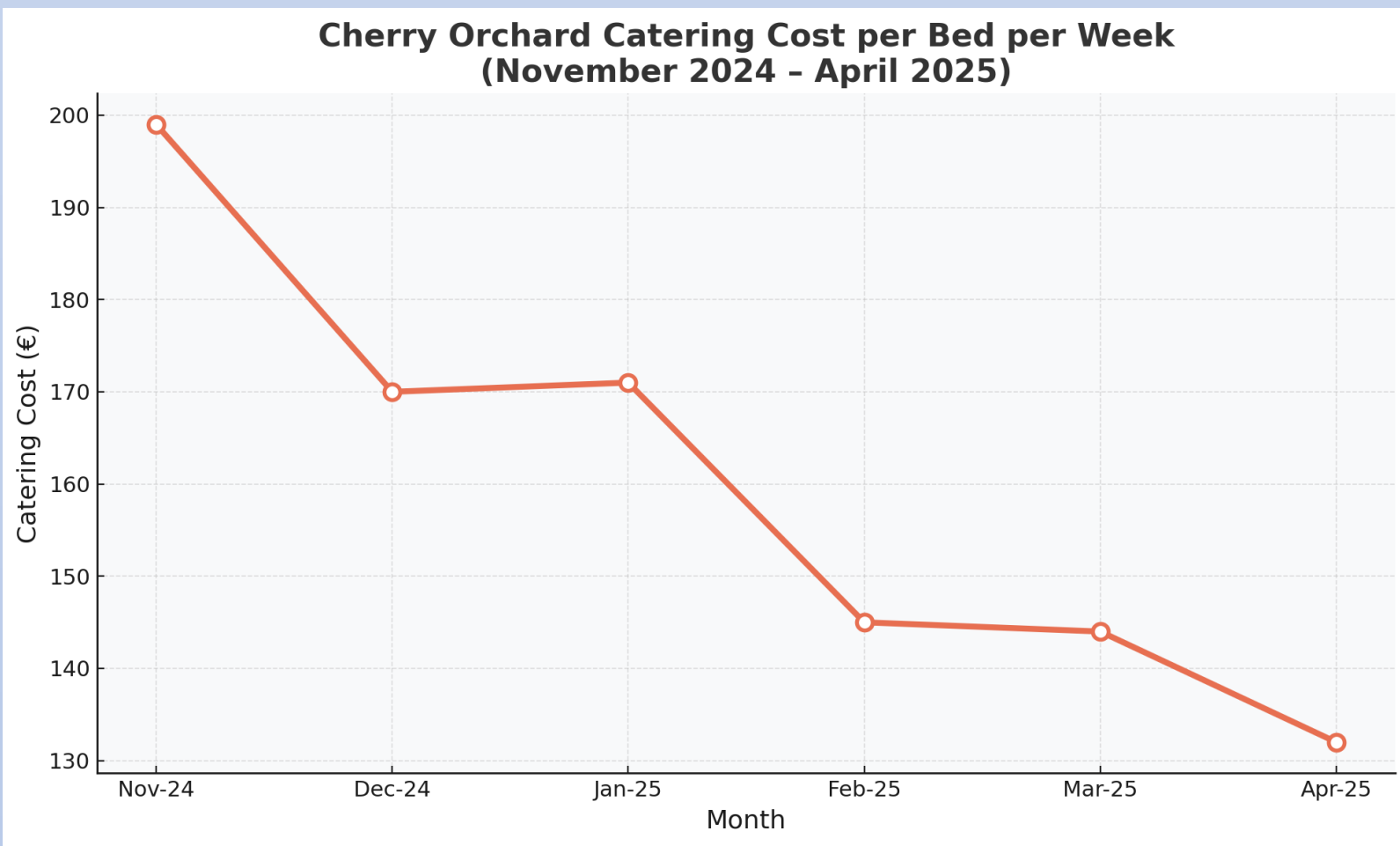
RESULTS & OUTCOMES

- A 3-week menu cycle designed to meet nutritional guidelines
- Nutritional analysis of the standardised menu, covering both macro- and micronutrients, identified : the need for vitamin D supplementation, smaller portion sizes, increased inclusion of fish and egg options, and reduced salt and saturated fat content.
- Resident satisfaction surveys show positive outcomes and mealtime audit results show improved mealtimes.
- Food waste reduction and improved clinical outcomes
- Picture menus designed to support residents choice at meal and snack times
- Staff training enhanced knowledge, improved quality, and ensured safety.
- Catering cost reductions by streamlining ordering and reducing food waste

METHODS



CATERING COST REDUCTION EXAMPLES



CONCLUSIONS

This pioneering HSE project standardised menus across seven Community Nursing Units with full nutritional analysis. It demonstrates the need for a National Food, Nutrition & Hydration policy in residential care. It showcases how inclusive stakeholder involvement, multidisciplinary collaboration, and evidence-based practice can drive person-centred improvements and enhance excellent quality and safety for residents

Acknowledgements: Laura Molloy & Eileen Burke- Older persons management, Claire Ramsay Dietitian manager, Catering officers and Catering staff Anne Knowles Athy, Shirley Stephenson & Irene ward Baltinglass, Geraldine Healy & Stephen Delaney Cherry Orchard, Oliver Donnelly Bellvilla, James Connolly The Meath & Theresa O'Brien Maynooth community nursing units, chefs, catering assistants, Nursing staff, SLT-Louise Gray, Grace Healy Nutrition Student, residents & families .

Contact Information: Maria Mckenna, Clinical Specialist Dietitian: maria.mckenna@hse.ie