



## *Summer Holiday Food Safety*

*By: Judy Morgan, MBA, RD*

Most of our skilled nursing communities will be celebrating the Independence Day holiday with an old fashioned BBQ meal cooked outside, and maybe even served to the residents outside on a shaded patio. Keep in mind, the facility still needs to assure the foods are purchased, stored, prepared, held and served in a safe and sanitary manner to prevent food borne illness and food textures served appropriately per MD orders. Many menus will include hamburgers, chicken, (even hot dogs!), and potato or macaroni salad, fresh fruit, salads and dressings, fruit and cream pies. These are all essentially Potentially Hazardous Foods that are prone to time and temperature abuse especially at outdoor events in the summer heat. Here are some things to look for when planning for these outdoor dining events:

- ✓ Make sure the fresh fruit is purchased from an approved vendor vs. a roadside fruit stop
- ✓ Wash all fresh fruit thoroughly before prepping/serving and use a clean cutting board to prep each different fruit
- ✓ Homemade potato/macaroni salad and cream pies need to be chilled quickly and temps recorded on the cool down temperature log
- ✓ Salads/dressings and PHF desserts need to be kept on ice during the serving time
- ✓ Meat cooked on the BBQ still needs to have the internal temperature checked for proper final cooking temperature: ground meat 155F, chicken 165F, pork 165F
- ✓ Holding temperatures need to be checked and recorded for hot and cold foods served at the outdoor dining event: at least 140F for hot foods and 41F or lower for cold foods
- ✓ Keep hot BBQ meat and beans on a sterno flame in chafing dishes during the serving time and spot check temperatures often to assure safe holding temps
- ✓ Make arrangements to chop, grind or even puree the food to the proper texture per MD orders and reheat as needed to 165F for hot foods prior to serving
- ✓ Check the facility's policy on serving whole hot dogs even for Regular diet orders due to the high choking risk
- ✓ Review the HM Composite Policy and Procedure Manual, Food Service Management section, pages 298-303 meat, poultry, fish/protein salad preparation, pages 314-315 salad and fruit preparation, pages 340-342 food serving temperatures for reference when planning the BBQ meal service.