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BEST PRACTICES: HEALTHCARE SECURITY



JULY 2019



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SECURITY AND SAFETY IN MENTAL HEALTH FACILITIES

How Seattle Children's Hospital copes with rising at-risk population

The growing need to care for people with mental health issues has repercussions across the entire spectrum of hospital and healthcare facility operations. *Security Management* spoke with Jim Sawyer, CPP, director of security at Seattle Children's Hospital, where he has worked for 44 years. The Seattle Children's Hospital opened a 34,000-square-foot Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine Unit (PBMU) in 2015. What follows is a transcript of the conversation lightly edited for length and clarity.

What are the demands facing security directors charged with the security of mental health facilities?

Here at Seattle Children's it demands a lot of attention. In fact, if there's been a sea change the last couple of years; at least for hospitals, it's the number of self-injurious patients we see. Fifteen years ago, I'd get a suicidal or self-injurious patient through the ER once every two or three weeks.

Last night I had 17. In a pediatric hospital especially, people have to take a really hard look at the prevention policies and procedures they have to ensure the safety of this vulnerable population.

How have you addressed this at Seattle Children's Hospital?

One thing we've done is create a new job. We call them "patient watch officers," and 100 percent of their job is to support these self-injurious kids who come in with suicidal or homicidal ideations. It's a security position that is not a call officer. We have 16 of these officers, and they are at the facility 24x7. Depending on load and demand expectations, we will sometimes have four or five in the ER at once. You cannot smoke and mirrors this one. Without changes to how you operate, you cannot support this population and ensure their safety.

How are patient watch officers different from other security personnel?

They have to be very good at assessing body language. They need a core foundation of empathy where they can work and interact with people and assess a situation. The job description is basically being able to be aware, to have empathy, and have the ability to interact with this population, while also having the skills to know how to search someone and de-escalate someone in crisis.

What sort of onboarding or training do you have for these hires?

They all go through NCI training [Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training] and then we have our own training, we call it Code Purple training. These trainings are part of the onboarding process, and there's an annual refresher—an 8-hour in-service that involves both physical and written participation. And we have to certify every year, a process that is controlled and tracked by human resources.

What is involved in your Code Purple training?

Historically, no one has ever gotten in trouble for calling for help too early. We get in trouble when we don't call for help or we call for help too late. Code Purple emphasizes early intervention. We tell our nurses that at the first sign of possible escalation to call it early. We then get two mental health and two security people there so there are five people who can respond. When you intervene early, you can usually de-escalate the situation and everyone goes home a winner. Code Purple is all about perception, early intervention, de-escalation, and safe physical restraint, but the foundation and point of emphasis is just "don't wait."



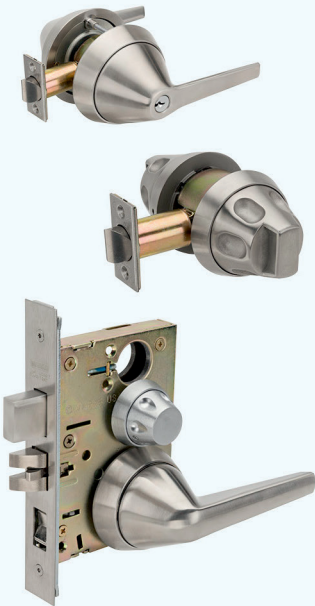
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Detex puts dependable panic hardware in restricted secure areas - pharmacies, fitness centers, records rooms, administrative offices, and any other area where unauthorized entry must be controlled, and authorized entry must be easy, quick and reliable.

If your operation has certain entry doors where access must be limited to one identified entrant at a time, you want to be sure that no one is able to slip through undetected, behind an employee, during or after hours. Your restricted access system may be giving tailgaters an "enter free" pass. These unauthorized people can enter behind employees or members and cause problems ranging from loss of revenue to serious security issues.

You may also need to protect departments inside your facility. Research labs, record offices, server rooms and more must be off-limits

to those who have no business there, and this hardware prevents unauthorized tailgate entry. The Tailgate Detection System is compatible with most access control technologies, is easy to retrofit, and has an integrated door prop alarm for extra security.

Other components can be combined to enhance a restricted access system, such as:

- Panic hardware
- Access control
- Door prop alarms, which will alert staff to a door that has been deliberately propped open.

Panic Hardware

Panic hardware with delayed egress

and latch retraction. An alarm will sound during the 15 second delay to alert staff to unauthorized entry before the door opens.

Access Control

A good access control system will permit, via keypad or card reader, authorized people to enter the building or a secured room.

Door Prop Alarms

These are a low cost, desirable solution to more expensive systems that can be defeated. They alert staff to a door that has been deliberately propped open to permit unauthorized entry. Additionally, a propped open door can waste energy, and a door prop alarm can help save that energy by alerting staff to the open door.

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INTELLIGENT PATIENT VISITOR MANAGEMENT

Balancing Patient Satisfaction with Hospital Security

As competition between healthcare organizations continues to grow, hospitals are placing greater emphasis on patient satisfaction and retention. Meanwhile studies have shown that allowing patients to spend more time with friends and family can improve outcomes by reducing feelings of isolation and anxiety. In turn, this becomes a balancing act between security, safety and the patient experience.

As security risks continue to rise, more hospitals are placing restrictions on visiting hours, visitor counts, and monitoring all visitors coming in and out of the hospital. It's critical that specific units or areas of the hospital are secured and access rights to visitors are managed from the moment they enter the main lobby or entrance of the hospital.

Advanced Security Actually Improves Health and Welfare for All

While visiting family members are proving beneficial to health and patient recovery, the trend is now far greater for security and their staff to take the proper controls and privileges in providing a secure and safe environment for all. The challenge for hospital security professionals is to balance these broad access entry points and security objectives while preserving the safety and privacy of patient, visitors, and medical staff.

By monitoring, tracking, and limiting visitor volume, hospitals demonstrate a commitment to creating and maintaining a secure environment for everyone. Limiting visitor volume, particularly during



cold and flu season, can contribute to reduced infection rates. Monitoring and enforcing visitor watchlists can reduce the number of violent incidents, which overall continues to be a growing problem for hospitals.

Manual Processes as a Source of Vulnerability

Visitor management solutions use paper passes, access cards and other credentials to allow physical access to certain areas within a hospital but managing them can be complicated given the number and variety of credentials that must be issued. Requiring visitors or contractors to manually sign in and out and/or wear badges is difficult to enforce. Additionally, employee badging systems help identify who is authorized to be in high secure areas, but these badges can be easily compromised.

When it comes to hospital security, manual processes are the norm for a number of vital access operations, such as issuing identification badges, managing databases and assigning access privileges for different identity types across multiple physical access control systems. This activity indeed adds up in access vulnerabilities, productivity loss, inefficient resource allocation, and lost time due to error-prone processes.

Integrated Visitor Management Systems Strengthen Overall Hospital Security

As an imperative to overall hospital security and improved patient experience, healthcare organizations must seek out and implement a centralized, streamlined approach to managing identities and monitoring visitors.


An intelligent patient visitor management solution is key to mitigating risk, decreasing incidents, improving overall patient care and the visitor experience for every moment on hospital premises.

Learn more at www.hidglobal.com/ipvm

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