



www.securitytoday.com

SECURITY

today

Technology | Education | Solutions

April 2021 | Vol. 25 No. 3



TRANSFORMING SECURITY

Cloud-based video surveillance will see a rise in investment



THE CHALLENGES OF YESTERDAY ARE NOT THE CHALLENGES OF TOMORROW

Allied Universal® is There for you®,
keeping you secure by staying
one step ahead of tomorrow's
growing and evolving threats.

Because it is when we are
fearless, humanity thrives.

www.aus.com

ALLIEDUNIVERSAL®
There for you.



The Impact of Coronavirus

Hospitals have struggled to meet growing demands placed on healthcare facilities

By Lisa Terry

As coronavirus cases have increased throughout the nation and across the world, healthcare professionals, emergency rooms and intensive care units have all been pushed to the limit in their ability to properly treat patients with the scarcity of resources and fear of the unknown. In the course of the pandemic over the past year, hospitals struggled to meet the new and growing demands placed on facilities for more and better trained security staff.

IMPROVING SECURITY MEASURES

The pandemic compelled hospitals to increase safety and security measures. The role of the security professional has been redefined and prioritized to support more patient care related activities. New safety and security protocols have been established at hospitals in order to accurately adhere to CDC guidelines to keep staff and patients safer.

Patient visitation has been eliminated with few exceptions throughout the country. Facemasks or shields and other personal protection equipment (PPE) are required to enter the facility. Once inside the building, physical distancing of six feet or more between each person is enforced. Additionally, hospitals have established screening processes at entry points, which includes questions regarding symptoms as well as fever detection devices.

The security leader is an important member of the Hospital Incident Command (HICS) team. Security leaders are often tasked with the planning of emergency staffing during the development of an organization's "All Hazards Emergency Operations Plan" that meet the scope and scale of security needs amid a disaster.

Security leaders are encouraged to go through industry-specific training, education and self-development. For security leaders serving as hospital security professionals, this means staying up-to-date on healthcare security publications, participating as an active member in the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety (IAHSS), ASIS International, attending formal healthcare security seminars or educational programs, participating in industry research, and so on.

UPDATING GUIDELINES

At the beginning of the pandemic, the IAHSS Guidelines Council realized that the existing "Communicable Disease Guideline" was insufficient to meet the needs of the current situation. Thus, security professional met and worked to edit the guideline immediately. Within weeks, the updated "Highly Infectious Communicable Disease Response" document was released by the council to guide hospitals in developing a response to the global pandemic. The updated guideline outlines additional, essential security services with mitigation strategies to address the planned changes in protocol.

Large hospital systems determined the need to expand the



KornT/Shutterstock.com

scope of the security professionals to include increased visitor and employee screening, PPE, pharmaceutical and medical equipment storage. These security professionals were expected to continue to respond quickly, de-escalate aggressive behavior and maintain a safe environment with COVID-19 positive patients or patients under investigation.

They also required additional security professionals in new locations. In order to meet the increased safety protocols as well as the regulatory requirements, it was imperative that each of the new security professionals be provided with "Just in Time" training and PPE for the healthcare environment during this crisis situation.

It is imperative for all healthcare security professionals to understand and treat these modifications to safety protocols and hospital operations as long-term changes because these alterations, in the end, provide safer and more efficient patient care.

PREPARING A PLAN

Hospitals have recently been challenged with the task of preparing a plan for configuring storage, tracking, securing and administering the coronavirus vaccine. As coronavirus cases have dramatically increased in the United States, businesses, companies and organizations have been forced to address the need for a dependable, effective plan for continuing operations amidst a pandemic. In order for businesses to return to normal operations, hospitals need to be prepared with a clear vaccine distribution plan that can account for possible risks that would delay vaccination in any stages.

To support the need for transitions to new vaccine procedures and protocols, a group of approximately 20 security leaders were led from various hospitals and health systems in the United States, as well as members of the ASIS International Healthcare Security Council and Community in developing two documents

to assist with the security of vaccine storage and distribution.

A document was created to address considerations in the securing and distribution of the coronavirus vaccine, "Considerations in the Securing and Distribution of the Coronavirus Vaccine." Hospitals recognize the role they play as the vaccine is distributed to facilities throughout the country. A storage plan is provided along with storage requirements specific to the vaccines currently approved by the FDA as well as a call for hospitals to update security plans to include steps in keeping the vaccine safe. As a group, potential risks were taken into account, and considerations were implemented to think about every step of receiving, storing, tracking and distributing the vaccine before it even reaches the facility. Following these guidelines, hospitals will be better prepared in securing the entire vaccination process.

Security has proven to be more essential than ever in the healthcare world as the chaotic, uncertain nature of the coronavirus has created new threats for patients and healthcare workers within the walls of a hospital.

HEALTHCARE SECURITY LESSONS

The pandemic has taught us several lessons when it comes to hospital safety and security. For example, it is critical for hospitals to develop mutual aid relationships, consider contracts for emergency security staffing during disasters, and establish appropriate/regulatory "Just-in-Time" training modules for various disaster scenarios.

Additionally, hospitals should preplan and develop contracts for PPE and other equipment that security may need during a

"The updated guideline outlines additional, essential security services with mitigation strategies to address the planned changes in protocol."

disaster. The security leader provides an excellent partner to the hospital emergency manager in developing a robust "All Hazards Emergency Operations Plan." It is also crucial to take care of the physical and mental health of the team. A strong team creates a dependable foundation for an environment that is prepared for the evolving challenges this pandemic continues to create.

At the start of 2021, and round out a year of responding to the challenges of the coronavirus, security professionals continue to demonstrate the value of comprehensive security services in hospitals. Hospital staff recognize that health systems are being tasked with controlling costs and cutting budgets while maintaining the highest levels of patient care, safety and privacy.

These facts heighten the awareness of the new role played by security services in this ever-evolving healthcare landscape. With proper guidelines, preparation is necessary for success in the process of distributing a vaccine across the country while adhering to the highest level of safety considerations.

Lisa Terry, CHPA, CPP, is the vice president of Vertical Markets-Healthcare, at Allied Universal.



DA™ Dakota Alert

Directional Vehicle Sensor

Know whether a car is entering or leaving your property

www.dakotaalert.com

605-356-2772