



Beaumont Health System Improves Staff Safety with RFID-over-Wi-Fi™

Challenge

In the busy inpatient units and Emergency Departments (ED) at Beaumont Health System, caregivers often encounter verbal and physical threats. Violence against staff is a growing trend throughout the health industry. In a study published in the American Journal of Emergency Medicine in April 2012, Terry Kowalenko, M.D., Chair of Emergency Medicine, Beaumont Health System, and a group of researchers surveyed 213 emergency department workers at six hospitals. Through monthly surveys, the workers reported 827 violent events, including 601 threats of violence and 226 actual assaults over the course of the groundbreaking, 9-month study. The study also found that victims of assault only filed safety reports 42% of the time and filed police reports 5% of the time. Emergency rooms treat patients who are sometimes on medications, using illegal drugs, have experienced a traumatic event or whose family members are experiencing upheaval. All these factors can result in higher rates of violence. To ensure the safety of hospital employees, early interventions and security initiatives are required.



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Solution

Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, a 1,070-bed academic medical center and Level I Trauma Center located in Royal Oak, Michigan, has made staff safety one of its top priorities. With the Ekahau Real-Time Location System (RTLS), employees in the Emergency department and many in the inpatient units simply wear Ekahau's active radio frequency identification (RFID) badges on lanyards. If threatened, caregivers pull down on the badge's fumble-free panic switch and nearby staff and security are instantly notified of the caregiver's location so that they can respond within seconds, not minutes. By adopting Ekahau's wireless panic button solution with built-in location-awareness and proximity-based alerting, the hospital was able to reduce emergency response times to staff duress incidents by giving other nearby caregivers the ability to instantly know where to go to help their colleague, with location details.

Ekahau's safety alert solution eliminates the need for dialing, map look-ups or wired, stationary panic buttons that are typically only located in a few rooms. Security personnel can view badge-holders' locations and receive location alarms via text, displayed on badge LEDs (e.g., 'Nurse Johnson Code Blue Room 22'). Lastly, the Ekahau Forensics Replay™ software feature allows police to view second-by-second badge-holder movements and event replays.

As an additional benefit, Ekahau's RTLS operates without any wired readers or additional hardware that requires special infection control procedures, during installation. Ekahau's active RFID badges cost-effectively operate over the hospital's existing Wi-Fi network, lowering the total cost of RTLS ownership.

Results with Ekahau

Beaumont Health System is a model for other hospitals looking to address the issue of staff duress and violence in the workplace. Ekahau offered instant, on-the-go visibility that helps the hospital keep their employees safe.

The Ekahau safety alert product is a cost-effective solution that leverages the hospital's existing Wi-Fi network to enable proximity-based and location-aware alerting. This shortens staff emergency response times and gives caregivers peace of mind knowing that those who are closest to the emergency and more likely to help in time, are just a badge pull away.

"Our research showed that workplace violence can result in productivity losses and high job stress that impacts an individual's ability to think on the job. However, employers have options. By implementing a variety of security measures, hospitals can keep caregivers safe," adds Dr. Kowalenko.

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