

ACCESS CONTROL & SECURITY SYSTEMS.

Under the direction of director of security Peter Ochinko, the South Broward County, Fla., system of hospitals and care facilities is a security leader among healthcare institutions. A public, non-profit healthcare system that serves its community members' pediatric through geriatric care and research needs...



Quantifying Security Success

Jun 1, 2006 12:00 PM

By Kate Henry

Exactly how many visitors has your facility had this year? Are your personnel and protective devices deployed optimally? How many security and life safety incidents has your department successfully mitigated this month?

Many properties do not know the answers to these questions, but Memorial Healthcare System does. Under the direction of director of security Peter Ochinko, the South Broward County, Fla., system of hospitals and care facilities is a security leader among healthcare institutions. A public, non-profit healthcare system that serves its community members' pediatric through geriatric care and research needs and beyond, last year, Memorial won the esteemed Lindberg Bell award for the excellence of its program from the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety. The dynamic security operation at Memorial is ever-evolving while holding fast to its strong foundation. "The foundation of our security plan at Memorial is access control," says Peter Ochinko, who joined Memorial in his present leadership role after his retirement from 20 years with the Secret Service. When Ochinko assumed the security helm at Memorial, he conducted numerous needs assessments. "My training taught me that to have any measure of security in any facility, you have to have control over who is coming in," he says. Toward that end, the primary access control measure implemented was the FastPass visitor management system from Sisco, West Palm Beach, Fla., and that has since been complemented by numerous enhancements to other security systems in place at Memorial.

"We started using the FastPass system at our main hospital in January 2004 and it has been running full speed since mid-2004," Ochinko says. "We were able to compile our first full calendar year of statistics in December, and we have been firing on all cylinders for all of 2006."

The FastPass system is in place at every public entrance to the healthcare systems' facilities, which are extensive. A public, non-profit healthcare provider serving South Broward County, the system includes Memorial Regional Hospital, DiMaggio Children's Hospital, Memorial Hospital West, Memorial Hospital Miramar, Memorial Hospital Pembroke and Memorial Manor Nursing Home. Ochinko says the system components are straightforward: a laptop computer loaded with the system software, a badge printer and a cylindrical camera. The system then generates a temporary ID badge that is good for one day only and is stamped with the visitor's photo, date and destination. The system also captures driver's license and name and address information, and it then logs a transaction record of all the data; hence, every visit and visitor is documented. Ochinko notes that as Memorial has used the system over the past couple of years, its screening measures have become more stringent. For example, the addition of the visitor's destination to the data is new and enables security personnel to determine at a glance if a visitor is where he or she should be. "If a visitor is spotted out of place, security has instructions to ask if they can help," Ochinko explains.

Security officers administering the system now cross-reference visitors with a patient registration list to confirm that the patient they say they are visiting is in fact registered. And the system itself has added a layer of information. In response to a colleague's request to better control the large number of vendors who traverse Memorial's facilities, Ochinko's team developed a screen on the system exclusively for vendors. With a click of a pulldown menu, vendor appointments and destinations can be tracked as efficiently as visitors, Ochinko explains.

Further, as a public, non-profit healthcare provider dedicated to the community it serves, public reaction to the system was of great significance, Ochinko says. "Our hospital system is driven by patient satisfaction, and there was some concern early on that requiring visitors to provide their information would not be favorably received. Immediately after implementation, it was evident to all that the response from visitors and employees was overwhelmingly positive."

Beyond its power to control visitor and vendor access, the system has proven still more valuable in terms of the incident data it yields and which Ochinko mines and analyzes each month.

"As a corporate director of security, it is important for me to be able to show the CEO, CFO and administrators here at Memorial what their return on investment in security is, and the only way to do that is to compile numbers and statistics," Ochinko explains. The FastPass system enables Ochinko to pull out and analyze a variety of data every month. "For instance," Ochinko describes, "our Memorial Regional Hospital, which has a level-one trauma center and is the largest hospital in the system, processes in excess of 75,000 visitors every single month. In 2005, we processed in our five hospitals just shy of 2 million people." Ochinko says the other set of statistics he compiles are the callouts or security dispatches. Memorial has an automated security dispatch system similar to that of a police operation. Each facility has its own security operations center and a dispatcher on duty at all times. The FastPass system tracks each officer dispatch, whether to respond to an incident, to an alarm, or to an event such as assisting a motorist, to name just a few. "At the end of the month, I'm able to go back into the system and pull those numbers as well — and at Memorial Regional Hospital alone, we average more than 3,000 security callouts a month."

Those large numbers startle many people, Ochinko notes. "The numbers allow us to adjust our security presence and measures appropriately and to maximize return on investment," Ochinko explains.

He further credits the support his department receives from hospital administration. "We could not achieve any of what we have achieved without the support of our CEO and CFO. Memorial's administrators and employees take security seriously."

Ochinko will not share specifics regarding security incidents, but he does say that given that the multi-facility system processes in excess of 175,000 visitors every month, the number of reported thefts and incidents is significantly less than what one might expect on a monthly basis. He shares by way of example: "One of the things we see in this industry is theft of hospital equipment, which is extraordinarily expensive, but we don't see a lot of that here. I attribute that in part to the visitor management system."

Yet the FastPass system is but one arm of Memorial's extensive body of security measures. Each facility at Memorial is overseen by its own security director who reports to Ochinko, and each facility also has its own security operations center, which serves as a hub for the range of alarm and monitoring capabilities housed in each facility.

"We are working toward standardizing our security equipment across the hospital system," Ochinko says. "We have done so for the most part."

Memorial's CCTV system consists of nearly 900 cameras, mainly Panasonic and Samsung, across the five hospitals and satellite facilities. Video from the cameras is recorded on GE digital recorders, and Security Services and Technologies (SST), through its West Palm Beach, Fla., office, is working with Memorial to fully integrate the standalone systems. Access control from Software House includes proximity readers. Infant protection systems provided by RF Technologies and Prosec are in place on the hospital labor and delivery wards to track and protect newborn infants, and Memorial Healthcare System contracts with Wackenhut to provide additional security force presence.

“Our focus and goal early on was to standardize our operation so that the security plan is being administered in the same way in each one of our facilities,” Ochinko says. He says that in his nearly four years with Memorial, the security directors and team members have developed a strong bond and that formal monthly security meetings are now supplemented on a daily basis when team members call on one another to share information, problems and ideas. “We have very open lines of communication here, and that is what we have been working towards,” he notes. “A very large and integral part of our security plan is the employees. We do not believe in focusing exclusively on technology,” he adds. “It's not just about alarms and cameras — you have to have good people, and there is no substitute for a vigilant security officer.”

Deployment of technology measures and personnel is complementary throughout Memorial's facilities. On labor and delivery wards, for instance, not only are there infant tracking systems, but security officers are posted there at all times. Given the visitor management system through which visitors have already been cleared, there have been at least three distinct checkpoints for visitors to that particular destination.

To date, each hospital has had its own individualized security systems, but with help from SST and Memorial's IT department, a system-wide integration of all the systems is well under way. “Our alarms, our cameras, our proximity readers, the visitor management system — everything — is being integrated to work more efficiently,” Ochinko explains. “Instead of the ‘stovepipe scenario,’ where each individual system works on its own, we want them to all speak to each other. So say someone is attempting to exit the hospital through a delayed egress door to which they do not have access privileges, the camera goes on when that person actually makes the attempt, it captures the event and simultaneously notifies the security director via cell phone, pager or laptop and simultaneously alarms the security operations center and the dispatcher.”

The goal is to enhance efficiency and speed so the security director with oversight knows about an incident immediately and can take appropriate action. The integrated systems will also yield incident reports that can be mined and evaluated on a daily basis.

“My goal is to have complete control over this facility, and that is always an ongoing challenge,” Ochinko says. “We are using the data to deploy our personnel more effectively, and we are always looking for technology that will do the job smarter and more efficiently. The integration of systems will allow us to do more with less.”



Distributed By:

Security Identification Systems Corporation
3595 Fiscal Court
West Palm Beach, Florida 33404
561 691-0050 Fax 691-0180
Toll Free 877 747-2643
www.siscocorp.com