



HIGH-LEVEL APPROACH TO PATIENT AND STAFF SECURITY

Security professionals who work in Canadian hospitals are keenly aware that their environments are some of the most active and dynamic public places. With many entrances, visitors, vendors, staff and patients, the job of protecting people and property is a constant challenge.

Patients may have a tendency to be violent or self-harm, have addictions, or suffer from psychological conditions that require quality care. There will even be those whose disputes with others require them to be isolated or protected from unwanted visitors.

A multitude of situations and scenarios can have a huge impact on hospital life if not managed appropriately. Expecting medical teams to keep a watchful eye on patients, as well as deal with any behaviour that becomes unacceptable, while still going about their normal duties, is clearly not the best response. Yet that's the environment in which some healthcare professionals work.

The scale of the problem, as far as North America is concerned, has been highlighted by an ongoing survey of more than 7,000 emergency room nurses. Conducted online in the United States by the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA), figures released in November 2011 show that over half of nurses (53.4 per cent) reported experiencing verbal abuse in a seven-day period, and more than one in ten (12.9 per cent) had suffered physical violence.

Growing recognition of this situation, as well as new legislation, is causing healthcare businesses to examine how they can improve the safety of their workplace for medical staff and create a better environment for patients and visitors.

In Canada, Lakeridge Health Corporation's approach to this problem in the past was to enlist the help of law enforcement agents to watch patients who had a propensity to these behaviours. But using off-duty police officers was proving to be an expensive solution and so it began exploring a more cost-effective alternative with its long-time security provider, G4S.

Together, they have pioneered a solution that has improved staff safety and enabled Lakeridge Health's medical teams to focus their attention on patient care and give the responsibility of dealing with difficult situations to security professionals. As a result, G4S's new Elite Protection Professional™ (EPP) – Healthcare Program is now available at all of Lakeridge Health's Ontario facilities and similar schemes are being introduced or considered by G4S's other healthcare customers across Canada.



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Lakeridge Health is east-central Ontario's largest hospital group, with thousands of patients and visitors every year. G4S has been providing comprehensive security solutions in this unique, dynamic environment for many years. Of particular note are the security professionals that can be found in Lakeridge's emergency department and psychiatric units.

There, G4S Elite Protection Professionals™ (EPPs) – Healthcare in their distinctive black uniforms are making a positive contribution to lowering the stress levels of those who work, visit or are carried through Lakeridge's doors. A collaborative response devised and implemented by James Ramsey, manager for Security, Emergency Preparedness and Worksafe Initiatives at Lakeridge Health, and Scott Jupp, G4S Canada's director of healthcare services, the EPP program ensures that Lakeridge Health is well-prepared to handle any situation which might arise.

Patient and staff safety and general care has always been important to Lakeridge Health. Lakeridge Health is committed to ensuring that its facilities are environments that promote healing and an enhanced quality of life. As a complex of three acute care hospitals, a specialty hospital, and numerous satellite service locations, Lakeridge provides a broad range of primary, secondary, tertiary and post-acute services. This means that Lakeridge and its staff must provide care for some individuals who cannot be left unsupervised, for fear that they may do harm to themselves or other patients.

In the past, the corporation controlled these situations by paying for the presence of registered nurses and, for more threatening situations, off-duty police officers. While that was effective, it presented significant operational challenges. A more flexible, cost-effective solution, tailor-made for the specific needs of a healthcare environment, was required.

G4S had been a valued provider of security services at Lakeridge Healthcare facilities for many years, and had already decided to broaden the scope of its security solutions. In response to the changing needs of the healthcare system, talks between Ramsey and Jupp led to a pilot scheme of EPPs being trialed.

“We started it as a temporary eight-hour shift, seven days a week, in our mental health program,” Ramsey explains. “We've since established it as a permanent part of that program and we have also expanded it to our emergency department on a 24/7 basis, as well as ensuring availability to each department within all four of our hospitals. The staff feel much safer and more secure; they experience a greater level of comfort with G4S EPPs around. The same is true of our



(Staged photo - not actual patient)

patients because, frankly, if someone's acting up or being disruptive, it scares other patients. If we can assist in de-escalating that quicker, then it's a win-win situation for everyone."

The development of an ambitious G4S program focused on the creation of EPPs through an expanded level of training and qualifications has made all this possible. EPPs provide exemplary service and support to patients and staff, present an authoritative and mature demeanour, and are well-trained to address any potentially violent or crisis situation the moment it begins to emerge.

"We developed the types of training programs and curriculums that would be applicable to the security professionals working in a healthcare environment," Scott Jupp explains. "Training includes life space crisis intervention – an advanced, interactive therapeutic strategy designed to turn crisis situations into learning opportunities – expandable baton training, weapons defense, resistance management, effective communications, crisis management, subject restraint training, all three levels of the International Association of Healthcare Security and Safety (IAHSS) security certifications and mental health and addiction training."

This training is specific to healthcare and is provided by a number of training companies and corporations, including Stay Safe Instructional Programs, the Crisis Prevention Institute, the International Association of Healthcare Security and Safety, and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

The success of the G4S program has undoubtedly contributed to Lakeridge Health's elevation from silver to

gold status in the prestigious 2011 Quality Healthcare Workplace Awards, presented in November 2011. Those nominated are evaluated against a comprehensive model created by the Ontario Hospital Association that identifies issues related to patient safety, work environment and other criteria.

With more than 4,000 staff and physicians, a multitude of volunteers, and 1,200 patients arriving each day to avail themselves of the many services available, safety and security need to be among Lakeridge Health's highest priorities. It is no surprise, therefore, that they are an integral part of its seven-point Strategic Plan for 2011–16. As president and CEO Kevin Empey explains: "Excellent care for patients starts with opportunities, safety and support for colleagues."

It is a philosophy that resonates with G4S, which is proud to be contributing to the success of Lakeridge Health's groundbreaking approach to healthcare security.

Securing Your World

The rapidly-changing dynamics of the healthcare system are creating new and unique security challenges. Hospitals and healthcare facilities are some of the most active public places in Canada, and include high-value equipment, accessibility to drugs, many entrances and ease of movement around the building and premises.

The challenges of protecting patients, employees and property while maintaining privacy and continuity of care in an open environment demand a partner with the experience and ability to create customized security programs that fit unique budgets, layouts, and security needs.

G4S is Canada's leading security solutions company, offering integrated security services to clients in a wide range of industries. For our clients in the healthcare sector, we have developed an exclusive package of service offerings that fully integrates all aspects of the security program, including security personnel services with highly-specialized, sector-specific training and customized secure technology solutions.

With G4S Canada as your security partner, you can rest assured that we will deliver a full, end-to-end security solution that meets your specific needs. We provide hospital and healthcare facilities across the country with integrated security systems, technology and services to support facilities, mitigate risk and safety concerns, and maintain compliance within a caring and supportive environment.

Let us help you to see the opportunities that exist in the challenge of securing your world.



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