

Health is the new security threat

Create healthier, safer facilities with OpenBlue

The COVID-19 pandemic has made us all aware that health concerns and security concerns are no longer divergent issues. No one understands that better than the Veterans Health Administration, the largest integrated healthcare system in the United States.

VA facilities are entrusted with keeping nine million patients and residents, more than 300,000 staff and tens of thousands of visitors safe and secure if a new, highly contagious disease is introduced to its facilities.

VA facilities were among the earliest and hardest hit when COVID-19 struck in early 2020 – and by year's end, coronavirus was ranked the third leading cause of death in the country. As they continue to battle the pandemic, healthcare facilities of all kinds are taking a fresh look at how they approach security in this new reality. This paper offers some guidance and discusses several best practices you can employ today to help create healthier – and therefore safer – environments for patients and staff.





Tips

- Ensure all other secondary access points are locked and alarmed.
- Use thermal cameras or handheld thermometers to perform quick, contactless temperature scans.
- Have security team members distribute masks and enforce their use.
- Use the CDC COVID-19 screening recommendations to check if each visitor has experienced common symptoms in the previous 48 hours.

Access control is #1

In the post-COVID world, your number one way to protect the health and safety of people in your facilities is through effective access control. For VA facilities, that means compliance with the mandates outlined in the government-wide HSPD-12 guidelines, as well as the VA-specific 0730 handbook and CFM Physical Security and Resiliency Design Manual.

By strictly limiting building access to a single entrance, you can screen and instruct each person entering the building. Your first responsibility is to keep infected people from coming into contact with anyone. By performing a remote temperature scan of each visitor, you can quickly identify people with elevated temperatures who may be infected. While not all infected people are symptomatic, the FDA estimates that non-contact temperature scans can catch close to half of the people with viral infections.

The temperature scan also provides you with an opportunity to distribute a mask and ask a set of health screening

questions of each person as they arrive. By the time that person has passed the temperature scan, answered the health questions and donned a mask, you have already taken significant steps to minimize the risk of viral spread. This more stringent level of access control – involving people, process and technology – has the added advantage of enabling your security team to more thoroughly evaluate building visitors who may also be security risks.

Direct and monitor traffic flow

Once visitors have passed the temperature screening and donned their masks, ensure that they are properly identified, guided to their destinations, following social distancing guidelines and prevented from gaining unauthorized access to restricted areas.

Directing traffic flow is all about communication. It can be as simple as posting additional signage and applying floor decals to indicate traffic direction and reinforce social distancing guidelines.

Tips

- Visitor screening will enable you to capture identity and contact information if needed later for contact tracing, as well as tracking visitors' movements through the facility and recording their time of exit.
- Add ample signage and floor decals to guide visitors directly and promptly to their destinations, maintain social distancing guidelines and prevent unauthorized access to restricted areas.
- Monitor and analyze traffic flows via video surveillance. Rework routing if necessary to reduce crowding and maintain better social distance.



Use your existing security systems to assist contact tracing

Contact tracing is an essential tool to help limit the spread of a disease outbreak. However, it can also be labor- and time-intensive. Fortunately, your video surveillance and Visitor Management System can save substantial time and effort.

Tips

- A Visitor Management System can capture a person's image and contact information for contract tracing follow-up.
- Video surveillance system footage can reveal who else an infected person came into contact with while in the facility.
- A real-time location system (RTLS) can help you find personnel or assets quickly and easily.

Limit patient contact while providing high-quality care

Limiting close contact with infected people is essential to keeping patients, staff and visitors safe and controlling disease outbreaks. At the same time, regular patient monitoring is vital to delivering high-quality care. Solutions are available to help you avoid unnecessary contact while still providing the care your patients deserve.

For example, a solution that integrates video, intercom and analytics capabilities can enable staff to monitor contagious patients remotely. Analytics can notify staff immediately of patients in distress, enabling quick audio response via intercom and signaling the need for in-person assistance. This type of solution can also help VA facilities manage surges in admission during a disease outbreak, work around shortages of nurses and doctors, relieve staff stress from overwork and conserve PPE supplies during shortages.

Tips

- Ensure 24/7, HIPAA-compliant patient monitoring through advanced video and intercom solutions to limit exposure.
- Use advanced analytics to obtain previously unavailable details without constant in-room observation by doctors and nurses.
- Gain the flexibility to create an ad-hoc negative pressure isolation room compliant with OSHA and CDC-TB guidelines by deploying a clean air filtration system.



Exploit opportunities to improve efficiency and reduce costs

Making your VA healthcare facility safer and healthier does not have to be costly. In fact, your updated security strategy can drive overall cost down over time by automating previously manual processes and reducing resource requirements. And, of course, prevention is much more affordable than remediation.

Tips

- Restricting building access to a single main entrance may enable you to redeploy security personnel from other access points to support new access control measures.
- Leverage existing video surveillance assets to monitor, analyze and (if necessary) revamp traffic flows to better support social distancing guidelines.
- Provide a duress and mass notification system to notify all patients and staff if a health concern or notification is issued within the VA.
- Use remote patient monitoring to reduce staffing requirements, relieve overworked staff and reduce the risk of staff infection and ensuing shortages of care providers.

Provide care and security

In the post-COVID world, you need to take a more expansive view of security, treating public health requirements with the same focus you give to physical security and safety requirements. Johnson Controls can help.

Our solutions are in a majority of VA Medical Centers, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics and other facilities across the country. We're recognized by federal, state and local governments as a provider of essential products. We understand HIPAA compliance and how to maintain it. Our OpenBlue connected solutions offer a blueprint for how VA Medical Centers can create healthier, safer environments for patients and staff.

From remote temperature sensors and air filtration systems to intelligent access control and mass communication systems, we can partner with you to provide integrated solutions that secure your facilities and equipment, protect people and reduce the burden on your staff.

To learn more about how Johnson Controls can help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of your VA healthcare facility, call us at **1-888-329-3559** or visit info.jci.com/475-cu

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