Safeguarding Stony Brook University Hospital

HALO'S Commitment to Health & Safety

The healthcare industry is experiencing an alarming escalation of violence, including an increase in threats against healthcare workers. As a result, it is looking for ways to be proactive and protect its staff and patients. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the rate of injuries from violent attacks against medical professionals grew by 63% from 2011 to 2018 and hospital safety directors say that aggression against staff escalated as the COVID-19 pandemic intensified in 2020.

A nationwide survey conducted by National Nurses United (NNU), the nation's largest union and professional association of registered nurses, found that the majority of nurses have experienced workplace violence and nearly half have seen a rise in rates in the past year. A recent NNU report from 2023 gathered data from nearly 1,000 nurses working in 48 states and the District of Columbia revealed that 6 in 10 RNs report having changed or left their profession or considered leaving their job due to workplace violence.

Prevention is key in fighting the war against violence. To combat these trends, hospitals are looking for proactive ways to protect hospital staff, patients and visitors. New security technologies — including video cameras, access control and smart sensors — can help hospital administrators and security teams keep people safe.

Stony Brook University Hospital implements smart sensors for safety

Located on Long Island, N.Y, Stony Brook University Hospital (SBUH) is one of the top hospitals in the nation and ranked as one of the best in the U.S. by Money Magazine. The hospital has four major locations spanning all of Suffolk County, 8,700 staff members, 624 beds, and sees an average of 1,000 emergency room visitors daily. It has more than 1,400 physicians in nearly 150 specialties, a 350-bed skilled nursing facility for veterans and 216 community-based ambulatory healthcare locations.

With a myriad of people coming in and out of its emergency room entrance, SBUH's Public Safety team wanted a way to help keep staff, patients and visitors safe with the ability to automatically detect aggressive behavior and violent situations, including gunshots. They also wanted to monitor the ambulance triage area so they could be alerted of any security issues immediately.

They selected the HALO IoT Smart Sensor from IPVideo, a Motorola Solutions Company, to meet these security needs. IPVideo's security partner A+ Technology & Security Solutions, an expert in technology convergence, school safety/security and safe city initiatives, introduced SBUH's security team to the HALO IoT Smart Sensor.

"After working with SBUH over the last 10 years, I was so excited to show them the HALO IoT Smart Sensor when it was released," said Jeffrey Sweeney, general manager at A+ Technology & Security. "I knew it had the potential to improve their facilities in so many ways and help bridge security gaps of not receiving immediate alerts when aggressive behavior was happening at the hospital."

SBUH's Public Safety team experienced the versatility of HALO and how it provides multi-functional safety, health and vape detection. The device delivers comprehensive safety and security awareness with an array of sensors

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David Scarzella
Chief of Police and Assistant VP of Healthcare Safety for Stony Brook Medicine

that detect aggression, gunshots, motion, occupancy, and keyword alerts. It's ideal for monitoring a hospital's many privacy areas since it does not use a camera, it does not record audio, nor does it capture any personally identifiable information. In early 2022, SBUH installed two HALO IoT Smart Sensors in their emergency room – one in the emergency room entrance and one at the ambulance triage area.

"We are the first hospital in the country to deploy HALO in an emergency room," said David Scarzella, Chief of Police and Assistant VP of Healthcare Safety for Stony Brook Medicine. "My advice for other hospitals looking to improve safety is to make sure all your security systems are integrated together on one centralized platform and be 100% in."

HALO's gunshot detection is more than a noise sensor. If a weapon is fired, it can pinpoint the location of the event and automatically alert the hospital's security team who can take immediate action to help mitigate risks. First responders can also be notified of the exact location to help coordinate an emergency response.

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HALO Smart Sensor comes to the rescue

When testing HALO's gunshot detection capabilities, the smart sensor also identified unhealthy air quality in the office space used by the Access Control department. After the results were verified for accuracy, the department relocated to a different workspace and the air quality issues were addressed.

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Lawrence M. Zacarese
VP for Enterprise Risk Management and Chief Security Officer
for Stony Brook University and Medicine

"With the successful deployment of HALO in SBUH's emergency room, three additional HALO IoT Smart Sensors were added in the emergency room at our eastern location, Stony Brook Southampton Hospital, in 2024," said Lawrence M. Zacarese, VP for Enterprise Risk Management and Chief Security Officer for Stony Brook University and Medicine. "Integration is the name of the game when it comes to physical security. It's all about integration."

SBUH takes security seriously and has a security post set up at the hospital. All HALO alerts are sent directly to the public safety team in real-time via text and email. SBUH's security team pays close attention to security notifications and addresses them immediately.

"The HALO Smart Sensor is a truly cost-effective solution that is easily implemented and helps us do our jobs more efficiently," said Scarzella.

In addition to hospitals, HALO is helping the world around us become safer and healthier. Schools throughout the nation are using HALO to detect vaping in areas such as bathrooms and locker rooms and also using it to detect gunshots. The versatility of HALO has made it an important tool for security while maintaining individual privacy. Security teams can implement these smart sensors throughout their facilities and receive alerts 24/7 to help prevent incidents.

A Future Prescription for Health and Safety at SBUH

The future looks brighter for healthcare workers as hospitals like SBUH lead the way with innovative technology solutions. Future plans at the hospital include using the HALO emergency keyword detection to send alerts to the security team who use Motorola Solutions' radios to respond quickly to incidents or emergencies. In an emergency, an individual could say the word "help," and the security team would be immediately notified. The hospital also plans on renovating their main lobby and exploring other HALO functions including air quality monitoring, people counting and the HALO LED ring for emergency lighting.

Today, hospitals have a variety of resources available to help safeguard their facilities, and SBUH is demonstrating how sensor technology can be an important part of safety protocols. It's imperative to identify security risks early with the right technology in place and train staff on violence prevention. Together, HALO and SBUH are helping to improve safety and security outcomes for patients and staff alike.

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