



Pre-Construction Strategic Planning for Healthcare Facility Visitor Management and Security

MetroHealth Prioritizes Visitor Experience and Safety Ahead of Construction:
Planning for the Right Visitor Management Solution Before Opening Day

FROST & SULLIVAN VIRTUAL CASE STUDY

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Introduction

The ongoing increase of workplace violence in healthcare and the continuous flow of unauthorized visitors to healthcare facilities have cemented the necessity for advanced visitor management adoption.

Visitor management, until recently, has been regarded as an afterthought for existing healthcare facilities and adjacent medical office buildings (MOBs), doctor's offices, and clinics.

Because of incremental success in implementing stronger and more intuitive visitor management solutions during the global COVID-19 pandemic, it has now become a requirement in a robust hospital security program.





Emerging Digital Collaboration of Hospital Visitor Management, Security, and Hospital Workflow Systems

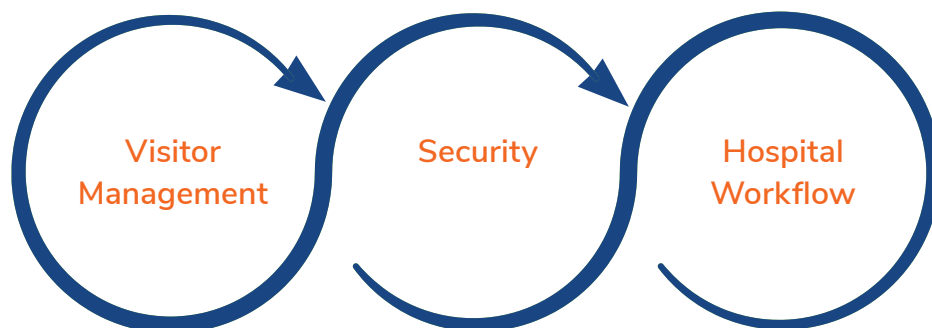
Industry Insights

The need to track all visitors to healthcare facilities is growing exponentially.

Healthcare leaders are applying what they learned during the COVID-19 onslaught and are instituting visitor management and control into the design and construction phases of new hospital planning. Innovation is accelerating in all industries, and embracing massive digital transformation of all processes has almost eliminated historic hospital log-book visitor management techniques. The biggest healthcare visitor management evolution is the move from a traditional visitor sign-in process to an on-premises digital solution that embraces popular cloud-based systems.

However, there are several challenges for existing infrastructure, even when adopting proven new technology and creating a seamless visitor experience, such as with electronic logbooks. Hospital leaders recognize this as a need to integrate visitor control management into patient and staff workflow design (as well as to physical engineering regarding entrance and egress of all personnel) during new hospital construction. Strategically aligning *visitor management, security, and hospital workflow* into a seamless strategic intent plan for new healthcare facilities is being widely implemented, and case studies are reporting positive results.

Visitor management systems screen and track visitors, including those visiting critical areas after hours. According to HID Global (a secure identity products manufacturer), visitor management systems should allow for real-time patient integration using HL7 international standards to ensure no visitor reaches the wrong location or attempts to visit a patient who has been discharged. Systems should also allow vendors to pre-register temporary employees with access control systems to enable the most efficient badging.





Making the Case for Incorporating a Visitor Management Solution into Construction Planning—Industry Survey Results

Industry survey results indicate broad acceptance of visitor management and security as a top 3 priority when planning new construction, and all surveyed hospitals said visitor management is now part of patient workflow. Hospital leadership, patient experience directors, and security leadership want to have proven systems and processes in place on opening day, not as add-ons after care begins at a new site.

“We are making investments in access control and cameras throughout the enterprise,” said Gordon Howie¹, “several regions in the Midwest have upgraded card access software for integration across sites and expanded card access to all data and information technology rooms. This improves security features and allows automated granting or denial of access. Monitoring of access broadly is another nice benefit.”

Howie notes that today’s smart camera technology options can help identify possible issues quicker, making them a worthwhile upgrade. Mayo is among those investing in smart camera technology to ensure the security of patients, staff, and visitors. “These investments allow better overall security without adding a lot of staff,” Howie said.



1 Gordon Howie, MSPM, CHFM, CHC Regional Director of Facilities and Construction at Mayo Clinic Health System



MetroHealth Case Study

Founded in 1837 in Cleveland, Ohio, the MetroHealth System operates four hospitals, four emergency departments, more than 20 health centers, and 40 additional sites. In 2022, it conducted more than 1.4 million patient visits across its various sites.

In April 2019, MetroHealth began constructing its new main campus hospital, The Glick Center. The \$946 million facility combines cutting-edge technology and modern design to create spaces that promote comfort and healing. Planning for this effort began in 2014, and enhanced patient safety and security features were included in early design plans and architectural drawings. These plans incorporated digital identification badges that can be coded to allow visitors access only to the floor of an approved destination.

MetroHealth leaders were unwilling to compromise on security and visitor control, insisting that security, patient, staff safety, and visitor control be a top priority in the early developmental stages of construction. This priority remained throughout the construction of the new acute-care hospital and 200 days prior to the opening The Glick Center, staff began testing visitor management solutions in their existing facility. Realizing the overwhelming challenge, the hospital's patient experience leaders met with the chief of security to discuss the need to share responsibilities and ownership of certain pieces of a comprehensive facility visitor control and security solution.



Image by Nic Lehoux

The first step was to find sophisticated visitor management software that could capture a growing list of databases and required access parameters that met both security and patient experience expectations. MetroHealth chose HID² to meet this need and began experimenting with ideas and solutions at its existing location. This quickly established the patient experience team's need to own visitor management, transferring control and oversight to the patient experience team as visitor management had evolved beyond the realm and capability of hospital security staffing and expertise.

2 HID is an American manufacturer of secure identity products headquartered in Austin, Texas. The company is an independent brand of [Assa Abloy](#), a Swedish door and access control conglomerate.



The HID platform proved to be easy to use with minimal onboarding challenges. Installation was seamless, and software functionality was intuitive and mastered by users in hours. As a result, the patient experience team was comfortable using HID and had a live visitor management desk operating 24/7 when the new facility opened.

During the extended learning and testing phase with HID's solution, patient experience leadership realized they required heightened coordination with the MetroHealth Security Department. This new partnership yielded an added ability to install metal detectors at all entrance points and coincided with the visitor registration effort. This new tool was a capability not recognized at any other MetroHealth facility until the opening of The Glick Center.

Before going live, MetroHealth staff conducted a "hostile visitor" exercise where live patients (role players) created immediate and threatening scenarios at the various entrances. As a result of this well-planned and executed exercise, patient experience and security teams were forced to immediately communicate and intervene to reduce the threat and take control of the situation.

Final plans stipulated that every person in the building must have a badge, with no exception. This enabled Glick Center staff to locate where badges had been last swiped and use that information to locate facility visitors. This quickly morphed into an ability to know where visitors, patients, and employees should be or had been most recently. Staff also realized they could control vendor access by issuing badges that qualify each vendor into one of fifteen different predetermined vendor access configurations. The software then allows MetroHealth to send API³ messages to vendors when their allotted visitation times expire and direct them to return their credentials to the access desk.

“The HID team has been awesome to work with. They’re very responsive to us. They’ve got experts. Whenever we need an expert, they get us aligned with one. Their implementation team was so nice. We were really impressed with the whole organization. It went well!”

—Source: Senior MetroHealth Executive

3 API: application programming interface—a set of functions and procedures allowing the creation of applications that access the features or data of an operating system, application, or other service



Lastly, because the patient experience team collaborates closely with providers, The Glick Center team brought the HID visitor management software in alignment with MetroHealth’s electronic medical record (EMR) platform, EPIC. Establishing digital interoperability between visitor management and EMR platforms enabled security, clinicians, nurses, and social workers to track who visits patients in real time. This enables officials to immediately see how often individuals visit and gives them an added ability to screen visitors through law enforcement lists to ensure domestic violence offenders did not gain access to their victims.



Conclusion

A hospital construction plan that considers visitor management reaps myriad rewards. HID’s cloud-based visitor management system features interoperability with digital access control systems for a comprehensive and scalable security solution.

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