Lockdown capabilities are an important aspect of safety and security for hospitals, doctor’s offices and medical facilities.

Hospitals and healthcare institutions increasingly face a reality of workplace violence, attacks on patients, and threats to doctors and other support staff. When these types of conflicts arise, there is an urgent need to lock the facility down quickly. Security professionals and their teams need access control options that allow lock downs to occur at the touch of a button.

Lockdown capabilities are an important aspect of safety and security for hospitals, doctor’s offices and medical facilities, says Mitchell Kane, President, Vanderbilt, a provider of security products and systems encompassing access control, intruder detection, CCTV and integrated security management.

Security Management Systems

Implementing an enterprise-wide Security Management System takes the necessary steps to ensure certain locations within these facilities remain protected from intruders and unwanted
visitors, says Kane. The features that define an SMS include the ability to lock down portions of a hospital or doctor’s office during non-office hours, or to lock rooms that might store valuable patient data and medical files.

“The features that define an SMS include the ability to lock down portions of a hospital or doctor’s office during non-office hours.”

Having a system in place that allows security officials to communicate these rules quickly and efficiently, through an easy-to-use interface, is a key to adhering to the rules and regulations that govern healthcare facilities. Going further, it helps to have these programs on a Web-based platform, which streamlines the process and allows changes to be made by security directors wherever there is internet access, says Kane.

Mobility Is Crucial

Mobility is also a critical factor in the event of an emergency. Having a mobile application to help grant access, freeze access or change permissions instantaneously is important to this vertical market, along with the ability of security teams and professionals to be able to stay on the move throughout a facility, says Kane. Mobile applications allow security officers to control systems remotely without client software in place, a capability that can give healthcare facilities and hospitals the flexibility to provide access as needs change – and to respond at a moment’s notice.

Vanderbilt’s products range from single-user systems to highly customisable applications that fit the needs of leading multi-national corporations. Vanderbilt serves enterprise-level businesses and organizations, such as hospitals and healthcare facilities, with the access control and integrated systems they need to protect assets.
It is important that security teams and professionals are able to stay on the move throughout a facility

Mass Notification Possibilities

The need for mass notification – another aspect of responding in an emergency – is also growing in the healthcare environment, says Sam Auciello, Business Development, Pasek Corp., an integrator company that serves the healthcare vertical. Various systems can communicate through the fire alarm public address (PA) system to notify people in an emergency, or, alternately, to use email notification, text messaging, pagers, smart phones and/or personal computers (PCs). In lockdown situations, access control systems provide an emergency button with various triggers in the system – a hospital can lockdown specific units or the entire facility.

Flexible Lockdown Capabilities

Access control systems offering lockdown capabilities have demonstrated their usefulness in the hospital environment. For example, Henry County Health Center in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, installed Threat Level Manager, a feature of AMAG’s Symmetry access control system, to provide a lockdown capability in the event of an emergency. The health center can increase its security based on the threat level defined by them. For example, the Obstetrics and Gynecology department can lock down the entire hospital in the event of a security breach. Active shooter incidents would receive the same response.

After a three-phase building upgrade, the Henry County Health Center upgraded to AMAG’s
Symmetry Professional access control system to provide the flexibility to add people to groups and grant access. Exterior doors are locked automatically at 10 p.m., and Emergency Room doors are secure throughout the night with ER staff manually granting access to individuals needing medical care. Readers placed outside of elevator doors opening to the surgery center provide increased access control pharmacies and biohazard areas are more secure because the health center limits who enters these areas.

Henry County Health Center in Iowa installed AMAG’s Threat Level Manager to provide emergency lockdown capability

Responding To Specific Threats

AMAG sees a trend toward hospitals taking more specific lockdown preventative measures as a result of active shooter and other disruptive threats. AMAG’s Symmetry Threat Level Manager system allows a preconfigured response to be activated immediately that can assist greatly with the operations side of HIPAA [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act] privacy regulations.

Henry County Health Center also installed many AMAG Symmetry EN-1DBC Power-over-Ethernet Controllers, which provide a fast, affordable option. Network-based door controllers installed as edge devices close to the doors have proven to be popular for healthcare security system upgrades, according to AMAG. They come online automatically.
Integrated Solution

AMAG Technology manufactures access control, video management and identity management solutions. Hospitals and healthcare facilities install the Symmetry access control system and Symmetry CompleteView Video Management to manage and control access and provide HIPAA compliance throughout their buildings and campuses.

Symmetry’s role as a complete physical security management system is to bring together all the different technologies into one integrated solution for the hospital. Symmetry has a lot of different mechanisms, including XML software development kits (SDKs), which allow all the different components from nearly 100 manufacturers to come together. One of the fastest growing trends is the addition of low-cost and easy-to-install electronic locks to pharmaceutical closets, labs, server racks and rooms of all types.

Read Part 7 of our Security in Healthcare series here

Author Profile

Larry Anderson
An experienced journalist and long-time presence in the US security industry, Larry is SecurityInformed.com's eyes and ears in the fast-changing security marketplace, attending industry and corporate events, interviewing security leaders and contributing original editorial content to the site. He leads SecurityInformed's team of dedicated editorial and content professionals, guiding the "editorial roadmap" to ensure the site provides the most relevant content for security professionals.
The unfortunate reality in today’s world is that everyday places in our communities that were once thought of as safe – hospitals – have a continuous need for security, to update their system...
Healthcare Security Systems: Funding Remains Biggest Obstacle To Insta...

Part 5 of our Security in Healthcare series
It’s difficult for hospital security directors to provide a quantifie...