

# Staff Duress: Using Technology to Balance Security Concerns with Need for Accessible Care

Nurses are often at the front line of violence in hospitals. As a result staff duress is of increasing concern at hospitals today. Even when there is no physical injury, staff anxiety can prompt emotional symptoms.

In the face of these rising statistics, and based on personal experience, Wilson Health has pushed to improve safety and security for its staff, looking for better solutions that can protect both nursing and ancillary team members.

The hospital wanted to balance security concerns against its broader mandate to provide accessible care to the surrounding communities.

While some healthcare facilities have gone so far as to employ private security in dealing with violence, Wilson Health turned to the newest technologies, implementing a “wireless workflow solution” that allows staff to quickly call for help during high-risk situations.

A 90-bed regional health center in Ohio, Wilson Health encompasses acute care and same-day surgery beds, along with a birthing center serving the adjoining communities. With continually expanding demands upon its care delivery, alongside concern over staff safety, Wilson Health chose to explore the newest technologies for answers.

## OLDER TECHNOLOGIES

“We wanted to do better and decided changes had to be introduced as a priority for staff. The way we were managing violence had to catch up with the daily reality being faced by our nurses and health-care staff,” said Alys Fleckenstein, Manager of Acute Care and CCU.



In addressing staff duress, Wilson Health also choose to address concerns over the limitations of an older nurse call technology, Fleckenstein said. Wilson Health, she said, was using an older nurse call system that was unable to grow with the hospital’s evolving needs.

The hospital’s location technology also had limitations, she added. We were using a badge solution that communicated the need for assistance, but that location only became visible at a dedicated communication board, and didn’t widely communicate a call for help,” according to Fleckenstein.

“The previous system had a lag time of up to 10 minutes on staff location data, so staff may have already left that room when you needed them, and it was difficult to find specific staff based on location information,” she added.

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Alys Fleckenstein, Manager Acute Care & CCU, Wilson Health



“More efficient hand-offs have greatly improved our clinical and surgeon satisfaction... as staff know they can quickly get assistance when needed.”

Carol Johnston, Manager Same Day Surgery /PACU, Wilson Health

As a result, we couldn't use reports for productivity improvements because we couldn't trust the data.”

### GAINING IMMEDIATE BENEFITS

Adam Hempker, Biomed engineer at Wilson Health, said the hospital selected the Responder® 5 clinical workflow and communication system “because this technology supported a desire to have a solution that would be able to effectively integrate with other systems, and also be able to expand for future needs.”

Including the Responder All Touch® interface as a part of the solution allowed a mobile workflow integration with the locator system. The Responder All Touch solution let Wilson Health integrate the latest nurse call technology with the staff duress feature of the location solution, allowing staff to visually locate the need for assistance by illuminating corridor lights with a specific color pattern. This visual ‘point of need’ indicator adds a more immediate dimension of communication that augments the display of the alert on whiteboards and the nurse console in the nurses station.

### SOLUTIONS BEYOND STAFF DURESS

Moving from the older nurse call system to the Responder solution in 2017 helped Wilson Health effectively address more than ‘staff duress’ concerns, Fleckenstein added. The technology allows staff using Responder integrations to request immediate staff assistance involving potential safety issues with patients.

According to Fleckenstein, this latest technology delivers multiple levels of emergency calls using

an integration of staff locator badges and the Responder system.

“When it’s not a code situation but assistance is still needed quickly, the Responder AllTouch integration receives a badge button press for assistance and immediately lights the corridor light to alert staff. These situations can arise anywhere. When the staff is trying to keep a patient from falling, or can’t leave the patient to get to the patient station, this feature summons the help needed and helps ensure minimal to no harm to the patient,” Fleckenstein said

Wilson Health also is using the new nurse call system and integrations in PACU, noted Carol Johnston, manager of Same Day Surgery /PACU.

“Surgery volume has increased exponentially over the years,” said Johnston, “and we oftentimes use our PACU bays for Same Day Surgery patients. With the implementation of the new nurse call system, our Same Day Surgery patients in the PACU are now able to alert their nurse via the nurse call system. Nurse call systems aren’t typically located in hospital PACU’s, of course, but due to our usage/ crossover for Same Day Surgery patients when our normal rooms are at occupancy, this helps us care for our patients more effectively and responsively.”

### WORKFLOW/COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENTS

“Responder also gave us immediate and significant benefits in productivity,” Johnston said. “Communication and hand-off workflows have been greatly enhanced, with the greatest benefit being better efficiencies. OR and PACU staff are saving innumerable steps because they

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Adam Hempker, Biomed Engineer, Wilson Health



don't have to go looking in individual rooms to find a nurse to give hand-off reports.

The Responder whiteboard quickly tells us where each staff member is located.”

“These more efficient hand-offs have greatly improved our clinical and surgeon satisfaction. The badge integration for staff duress helps here too, as staff know they can quickly get assistance when needed,” she said.

Visual alerts communicate what staff level is in each room, using Responder integrations that show presence via the corridor lights outside the patient rooms.

The Responder integration also cancels patient calls when staff enters the room — logging the response time for reports and letting the Wilson Health staff immediately focus on the patient's needs rather than pushing buttons to cancel.

The time-in-room and productivity reports help Wilson Health balance staff workloads and improve the efficiency of care delivery, resulting in better patient and staff satisfaction.

Family members can also be reassured with reports that accurately report what happened in a particular room each shift, Fleckenstein added.

### SCALABLE SOLUTION

In choosing Responder solutions, Wilson Health was also choosing a technology that could grow with their ever-expanding needs, as well as deliver local support and service.

“As we continue to grow at Wilson Health, it's important to have a scalable nurse call solution that will evolve with us. We needed a system that was reliable, and met both the patient and staff needs more efficiently,” said Linda Maurer, Wilson Health's Chief Nursing Officer.

The Responder technology solutions include capabilities that can help Wilson Health address scalability and future needs for the foreseeable future. These considerable benefits for both patients and the care team combine real-time communications between both clinical and non-clinical systems, helping streamline workflows while improving efficiencies and care — with each event captured for documentation and reporting. All Touch Integration connects key communication channels in the hospital to deliver information directly to the point of care.

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## WILSON HEALTH

### About Wilson Health

Wilson Health is an independent, locally owned and operated health network located in Shelby County, Ohio. The central hub of Wilson Health is the Hospital, founded in 1930. Located in Sidney, Ohio the full-service hospital offers a wide array of inpatient, outpatient, and specialty services. Wilson Health is licensed for 90 beds and has a medical staff of over 150 physicians.



### About Rauland

Rauland, a division of AMETEK Inc., is a respected global leader in the design and delivery of advanced communications, workflow and life-safety solutions for hospitals worldwide, with installations in more than 4,000 hospitals in 40 countries.



### About Responder®

Responder® communication and nurse call systems help staff deliver the best possible patient care, with fast, direct patient-to-staff and staff-to-staff communication, flexible integrations, intelligent call routing and real-time reporting.



### About SoundCom Systems

SoundCom solves complex communications challenges at healthcare facilities, with state-of-the-art solutions that improve staff-to-patient and staff-to-staff communication, streamline workflow processes, increase satisfaction, and enhance operational productivity.



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