Ensuring a safe environment is critical to health system’s continued growth

The new North Patient Tower at Northeast Georgia Health System’s (NGHS) Medical Center is an impressive example of the system’s efforts to provide exceptional healthcare to the people of Northeast Georgia for decades to come. The state-of-the-art facility features numerous healthcare best practice elements and is the origin of the system’s fully integrated security management solution designed and installed by Johnson Controls. At the hub of the solution is the Johnson Controls P2000 security management system, which sets a new standard for ensuring a safe environment at Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) and is installed within various facilities.

The 557-inpatient, 261-skilled nursing bed health system serves nearly 700,000 people in Northeast Georgia, offering a full range of healthcare services through its Joint Commission accredited Medical Center. Additional facilities include three urgent care centers, a mental health and substance abuse treatment center, two outpatient imaging centers, and physical occupational and speech therapy clinics. NGHS also plans to build an additional hospital in Braselton, Georgia.
The new tower’s configuration allows for a second tower to be built alongside, and a conceptual design for a connecting medical office building has already been developed. "The potential expansion of our organization in the future is huge," says Andrew Corsaro, director of security for NGHS. "When Johnson Controls demonstrated the capabilities the P2000 system would provide us at the new tower, we quickly saw the potential for it to expand to the whole organization, and the ability to integrate multiple systems now and as we grow."

**A fully integrated security management solution**

One goal of NGHS is to reinforce the importance of security and increase the awareness of it among employees, while creating a safe environment for patients and visitors. To help achieve this goal, Johnson Controls engineered a fully integrated enterprise security management solution that utilizes the health system’s existing IT infrastructure to provide an unobtrusive and dynamic security system throughout the main NGMC campus and in some of the many NGHS satellite locations.

At the foundation of the solution is the Johnson Controls P2000 security management system. The system allows NGHS personnel to configure and manage access control devices, conduct badge-holder maintenance as security access parameters change, and to monitor alarms and output control devices in real time. The P2000’s open architecture enables integration with multiple systems, which further improves security for NGHS.

**Efficient, accurate database management**

Integration with the NGHS human resources database minimizes data input and streamlines operations by automatically reflecting database changes in the P2000 system. Integration with badging equipment also minimizes data entry and allows a system-wide check of photo IDs, and revocation of cardholder access when appropriate. A single data entry point also means there is less chance for human error.

**Secure and simple visitor access**

An EasyLobby® visitor management system installed by Johnson Controls is the main application used by NGHS to process visitor badges. The EasyLobby system allows personnel to process visitors with minimal delay and inconvenience by scanning the required form of identification, which is instantly checked against various databases and a badge is issued for approved visitors. An online component automatically adds pre-registered vendors, if approved. This speeds up the vendor badge process while verifying proper credentials. The system also allows NGHS to control how many visitors are approved to enter certain areas or rooms.

**Full-view video surveillance**

Johnson Controls installed and integrated a video surveillance system comprised of nearly 250 new and existing third-party cameras and the Johnson Controls...
Digital Vision Network (DVN) 5000 digital video recording system. The DVN 5000 system has built-in analytics, which allow security personnel to specify what represents suspicious behavior so security can be alerted and the situation reviewed in real time.

Digital audio/video recordings can be archived and viewed later or are available in real time at any authorized NGHS computer, security stations and the central command center on the main campus where Johnson Controls installed video monitors. Johnson Controls was also responsible for installation of the fiber optic and power-cabling infrastructure from all points to the command center.

**Added safety where it counts**

A wireless panic system ensures extra safety at the Laurelwood mental health facility. Wireless pendants worn by patients, who are at risk of falling, allow them to call for help. Similarly, staff members wearing a second type of pendant can call for emergency support should an uncontrollable situation occur. The pendant will also send an alarm if it is forcibly removed from staff. Because the system is integrated with the DVN and P2000 systems, cameras can be trained on the location of an event in real time, and access and egress controlled as situations warrant.

“Johnson Controls brought us a turnkey security solution that replaced our old systems and is expandable to meet future needs. Because all of the systems are integrated and ride on our existing network, we can manage them in multiple facilities more efficiently and do it from a single location.”

**Jim Wise**

Security Systems Coordinator
Northeast Georgia Health System

By modifying the P2000 application, they gave us the ability to enter values for user-defined fields. Users then select the values from dropdown boxes instead of manually keying them in, greatly improving database accuracy and consistency,” explains Jim Wise, security systems coordinator for NGHS.

**Integrated building controls, fire alarms provide comfort and safety**

There are numerous elements that go into building a new facility. Creating a safe and secure environment at the North Patient Tower didn’t stop with security. The building also features the Johnson Controls Metasys® building management system, which was already in use at the existing NGHS facilities. The Metasys system allows building operators to more accurately monitor and control HVAC systems and equipment system-wide from a single location or remotely via the Internet. This not only ensures patient and staff comfort, it also optimizes equipment performance and saves energy.

Integrated with the Metasys system is a Johnson Controls IFC2-3030 fire control system. The IFC system, including alarms, smoke detectors and other peripheral devices is used at the main campus and some outlying NGHS facilities. Because the system is integrated with Metasys at the main campus, HVAC equipment can be automatically shut off or turned on, as appropriate, in the event of an alarm to help control the spread of a fire or exhaust smoke. Integration with the P2000 system allows for doors to be automatically unlocked for emergency entry or exit during a fire.

The DVN 5000 system has built-in analytics, which allow personnel to specify what represents suspicious behavior.
Solution improves efficiency, flexibility, risk management

"Because all of these systems are integrated and ride on our existing network, we can manage them in multiple facilities more efficiently and do it from a single location at our new command center. Trained officers are able to use the system to proactively monitor our facilities and parking lots, which increases security while reducing the need to hire additional officers as we expand," states Wise.

"The systems are also valuable in crime prevention and detection, the investigation of security related incidents, and in managing risk in situations where litigation may come into play. Using cameras and archived video we can deter theft in parking lots, weapons from being brought into our buildings, keep hospital property from walking out the door, and provide proof of our contact with patients and visitors to authorities if required to," says Corsaro. "And because of Johnson Controls SiteManager software, our security team can also access the systems from other authorized workstations throughout our facilities while at work in another location, which provides more flexibility," adds Wise.

"I’ve gotten very positive feedback on these security systems. We know there’s an expectation from every patient and person who walks in our doors that they’re going to be kept safe while in our facility. Having this technology in place really does provide an added sense of security and helps meet that expectation.”

Andrew Corsaro
Director of Security
Northeast Georgia Health System

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