



IAHSS Survey Reveals Healthcare Statistics

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Glendale Heights, IL, August 18, 2010 --(PR.com)-- IAHSS Survey: Sharp Increase in Violent Crimes in Hospitals Reported From 2004 to 2009

A new survey of healthcare security executives by the International Association for Healthcare Security & Safety (IAHSS) reveals increases in reported violent crimes in hospitals in 2009 compared to similar crimes reported in a survey five years ago.

IAHSS is a non-profit organization with 1900 members representing over 800 hospitals and healthcare facilities. The new research study was conducted in 2010 to collect information on trends in crime since a similar IAHSS survey on crime was completed in 2004. The survey included identical questions and definitions of crime taken from the Department of Justice's Uniform Crime Index for 11 crime categories. Some 212 healthcare security executives, a cross-section of the membership, participated in the 2010 study, results of which are published in the Summer 2010 issue of the IAHSS Journal of Healthcare Protection Management (Vol. 26, No.2).

The total number of crimes reported by 212 healthcare facilities in the 10 categories of crime for 2009 was 14,986 (70.7 per hospital) compared to the 7,764 crimes (40.4 per hospital) reported in 2004 by 192 facilities. On a per hospital basis, this represents a 75% increase over the five-year period, returning to the crime levels reported between 1995 and 1998. An 11th category, kidnapping, was not reported in 2004. Five incidents in this category were reported in 2009.

Although overall crime in hospitals increased by 75% in 2009 compared to 2004, the survey reported that in four categories of violent crime (rape/sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault) it increased by 200%. In a fifth category, homicide, three murders were reported, one more than in 2004.

In the five non-violent crime categories, which account for 76% of all hospital crime (burglary, larceny, arson, vandalism, and motor vehicle theft), the survey reported a 54% increase in crime incidents compared to 2004. Only in one of the categories, motor vehicle theft, did the number of reported crime incidents go down--by 5%.

Hospitals are not hotbeds of crime, but they are not safe havens, either. They reflect crime conditions that exist in the community along with in-hospital conditions that increase the already high stress levels of patients, families, and caregivers confronting serious illness or injury.

Some of the factors or stress conditions leading to increased violence in hospitals include:

--increased gang activity



- increased numbers of psychiatric patients seeking treatment in emergency departments because of closings of psychiatric facilities.
- ED overcrowding leading to long waiting times
- The growing use of alcohol and drugs by younger persons
- Open access that allows uninvited visitors and weapons in the hospital without detection
- Use of community hospitals to treat violent prisoners and by police to take those arrested for alcohol offenses for testing prior to formally charging them.
- increased unemployment }

New Facts About Healthcare Security Professionals

The survey, funded by the IAHSS Foundation, also added new questions to establish baseline data on current and emerging trends in crime-related and other major security issues that challenge security professionals. As a part of gathering information about healthcare security professionals, a number of basic demographic and descriptive questions were asked about who security professionals are, what they do, and whom they report to.

--The vast majority of security leaders of hospital and healthcare facilities reported they are designated as either Security Directors or Managers (92%). Most security leaders report to a Senior Vice President of the healthcare organization (46%) while fifteen percent report to a CEO/COO/CFO, twenty percent report to another senior hospital administrator and nineteen percent report to other administrators such as Director of Operations.

--While there is some variability, security leaders have five primary areas of responsibility. They are: 1) providing security (100%); 2) access control (92%); 3) Parking (84%); 4) Patient, staff, and visitor safety (74%); and, 5) Visitor control (72%).

--Slightly less than half of the hospitals reporting (48%) had full-time equivalent security forces of 11 to 30. Some 23% employed 10 or less. From 30 to over 150 FTEs were reported employed by 29%.

-- The majority of hospitals (53%) reported using proprietary security services. Some 19% used contract services, and 25% used a combination of the two.

--Some 80 percent of healthcare facilities participating in this study do not have sworn police power, although they may have citizens' arrest power.

--Less than 3% of hospitals reported that they did not have to call police for assistance in 2009. Some 14% reported they made 100 or more calls. Most (83%) reported making from one to 100 calls.

--Handcuffs (82%), pepper spray (40%), and batons (37%) are the security equipment carried most by hospital security forces, according to the IAHSS survey. Other equipment includes vests (32%), guns (20%), Tasers© (15%), and shields (8%)



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