



MedStar Harbor Hospital Chooses Sonitor Sense™ Real Time Locating Technology to Ensure Staff Safety in High-Risk Environments

MedStar Harbor Hospital, part of MedStar Health, serving patients in and around Baltimore, Maryland, partnered with Comm-Tronics, a regional healthcare communication solutions provider to deploy Sonitor Sense™ Real Time Location System in their behavioral health unit. In this environment, associates come into direct contact with high-risk patients and, therefore, the safety of both associates and patients is of paramount concern. To protect those at risk, MedStar Harbor Hospital sought a technology that would allow associates to alert key members of hospital administration and security instantly, quietly and reliably in the event they were put at risk.

"Staff who work in behavioral health are 20% more likely to have workplace injuries than workers in other healthcare specialties. Having the ability to push a button on a badge attached to staff is huge. It has proven to be extremely helpful. It's now mandatory for our staff to wear the badges when on their units. Staff have become dependent on the technology to ensure their safety. They know that they can call for help even if they can't talk or even move. With the press of a very discreet button on a wearable tag, the exact location of the staff in trouble is known instantly and help is dispatched within seconds. The RTLS technology has been a game changer for our behavioral health departments."

– Amanda Davis MSN, RN

Comm-Tronics and Sonitor designed and deployed an RTLS system integrated with West-Com's nurse call system for MedStar Harbor Hospital. Hospital associates are assigned a wearable Sonitor SmartTag™ which provides easy and discreet access to help with the press of a button on the tag. If at any point an associate is uncomfortable with their situation, they simply push the duress button on their SmartTag. The button push initiates an alert signal that is sent through the nurse call system to administrative associates as well as security personnel. This alert not only notifies recipients of the situation but also the location of the associate requesting assistance. The Sonitor Sense RTLS solution has proven to be so reliable that MedStar Harbor Hospital has mandated that associates wear the SmartTags in all behavioral health units.

"Armed with the ability to push a button on a wearable badge is major when a staff member is in danger. Staff can immediately be located even if they can't talk! We moved from a culture of resistance to adoption of this technology very quickly based on safety. It has been quite a change around here. Staff went from not knowing where their wearable tag was to refusing to work without it! Safety is everything."

– Amanda Davis MSN, RN

Prior to installing the Sonitor Sense solution, MedStar Harbor Hospital associates needed to locate and activate stationary e-call buttons on the walls to call for help. When associates felt threatened, they had to quickly identify and reach for a fixed button in the rooms or hallways. The issue with fixed distress buttons is obvious: they could not always be reached in time and activation would often escalate a stressful situation. Additionally, when these buttons were pushed, first responders could identify the location of the activated button, but not always the precise location of the participants. In safety situations, seconds count. MedStar Harbor Hospital needed a more reliable, accurate, dynamic solution to guarantee the safety of associates and patients.

In the high-stress environment that is behavioral health, discretion can sometimes be imperative when attempting to de-escalate a dangerous situation. When a caregiver is wearing a badge with a discreet, but easily accessible, tactile button that can be pushed without further agitating a patient who may be in crisis, it's a game-changer for improved associate and patient safety.

