

# Trinitas Regional Medical Center



## STAFF ASSIST CASE STUDY

Trinitas Regional Medical Center is a major center for comprehensive health services for those who live and work in central New Jersey. As the only hospital in a busy urban area, leaders at Trinitas understood the risks of violence against nurses. They selected Midmark RTLS\* (real-time locating system) Staff Assist to better protect caregivers and create a safer work environment.

### KEEPING CLINICIANS SAFE IN HIGH-RISK CARE AREAS

Workplace violence is a serious occupational risk within healthcare. Caregivers are increasingly vulnerable to workplace violence, particularly those who work with combative patients in behavioral health units, emergency departments or isolated areas of a hospital. Workplace violence against nurses is at staggering levels. According to a 2014 survey published by the American Nurses Association, 21% of nurses reported being physically assaulted, while 50% reported verbal abuse.<sup>1</sup>

When John Dougherty became director of security at Trinitas, one of his top concerns was the safety of staff in higher risk areas, such as the Emergency Department. Would they be able to summon immediate help when faced with a combative patient or visitor? Delays in assisting staff members in need could potentially lead to injuries and days lost from work.

### INSTALLATION HIGHLIGHTS:

#### RTLS Applications

- Staff Assist

#### Real Data, Real Improvements

Despite a 39% increase in assaults on staff, post-implementation results reveal:

- 93.5% decrease in number of days lost from work
- 89% decrease in associated cost of wages

When Trinitas received a Homeland Security Grant in 2012, Dougherty petitioned to use the funding for a solution that could create a safer work environment for caregivers.

Dougherty selected Staff Assist, a solution driven by RTLS technology and installed by Maffey's Security Group, the local Midmark RTLS Certified System Integrator and Trinitas' security vendor of more than 50 years. The solution provides caregivers with badges that transmit real-time location information. When nurses, physicians and other hospital staff feel threatened, they simply press the badge button. Automatically, a message is sent to security detailing who they are and where they are, so help can be sent immediately to their location. The Trinitas Emergency Department was the first unit to implement Staff Assist. It was quickly followed by the locked inpatient psychiatric unit and the outpatient psychiatric unit.

"Many of our staff work in areas where they are sometimes alone with volatile patients. Previously, if a nurse needed help, she wouldn't be able to get it right way. By pushing the badge button, not only does it alert other people, but the alert message also shows the nurse's location."

**John Dougherty**  
Director of Security

Staff location information is monitored at a central area within the unit, in addition to a house-wide security command center. Risk assessments, coupled with incident reporting from employee records, are used to monitor levels of workplace violence throughout the Trinitas campus. Spikes in reported incidents have led the Trinitas team to target additional areas for Staff Assist expansion.

In 2015, a grant from the Trinitas Hospital Foundation enabled the expansion of Staff Assist to the Medical-Surgical staff. The foundation awarded a second grant in 2016 to fund expansion into the Child and Adolescent Unit on Newpoint Campus.

Today, more than 350 staff members wear RTLS badges. When the badge button is pressed, it immediately signals an alert, triggering response protocols based on the treatment area from which it was initiated. Improving response times often lessens the severity of physical assaults.

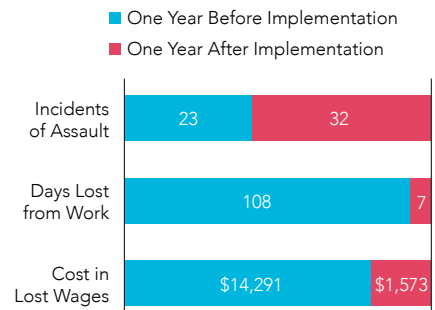
Denise Loneker, RN, CEN, nurse manager in Trinitas' Emergency Department appreciates the security Staff Assist provides. "Before, I had nothing to alert my coworkers if I was in trouble, but now I have this badge. It improves morale in the ED, knowing that help is just a button-push away."

At the suggestion of The Joint Commission, the hospital conducted a review of assault data, comparing data from the year before they implemented RTLS to the year after. Although assaults increased by 39% during the 12-month period after

Staff Assist was installed, the number of days lost from work decreased by 101 days.

The associated decrease in the cost of wages equated to \$12,718, an 89% decrease. These results are published in The Joint Commission's Leading Practice Library, in a report titled "Workforce Violence in Healthcare Not Always Preventable: A Plan for Mitigation."<sup>2</sup>

"Many staff members report that they feel safer and more confident that they can press the button on the RTLS badge and get immediate help," says Dougherty. "Although we can't prevent workplace violence, a system like Staff Assist can lessen the aftermath of these incidents."



"Our administration is actively working to create a safe place to work. This brings peace of mind to our staff. It's one of the best things we've done to get staff help where it is needed."

\*Midmark RTLS Solutions, Inc., f/k/a Versus Technology, Inc., is a wholly owned subsidiary of Midmark Corporation. In May of 2016, Midmark Corporation acquired Versus Technology, Inc.

1 "American Nurses Association Health Risk Appraisal Preliminary Findings October 2013-October 2014." American Nurses Association. [https://www.nursingworld.org/~4aeceb/globalassets/practiceandpolicy/work-environment/health--safety/ana-healthriskappraisalsummary\\_2013-2016.pdf](https://www.nursingworld.org/~4aeceb/globalassets/practiceandpolicy/work-environment/health--safety/ana-healthriskappraisalsummary_2013-2016.pdf).

2 Leading Practice Library. The Joint Commission. July 20, 2016. [http://www.jointcommission.org/leading\\_practice\\_library](http://www.jointcommission.org/leading_practice_library).