

MORE THAN A MORAL OBLIGATION, STAFF SAFETY RETURNS AN ROI

Healthcare leaders must understand the financial impact that violence has on their organizations' bottom line

The Rate of Violence is Alarming

Violence against healthcare workers is a significant issue

Healthcare workers around the world are more likely to experience a non-fatal related injury compared to workers in all other private industries with those in the US as high as five-times more likely. Direct care providers, specifically our nurses, are most prone to violence. According to Press Ganey, two nurses are assaulted every hour in the United States.

20%

The percentage of nurses who reported they feel safe at work

In a survey conducted by the American Nurses Association (ANA), only 20% of nurses reported that they feel safe at work. Over half (64%) of nurses across all license types shared they have been subjected to verbal abuse by a patient or family member, according to the Nurse.com 2024 Nurse Salary and Work-Life Report.

64%

The percentage of nurses, across all license types, who have been subjected to verbal abuse by a patient or family member

A survey conducted by the National Nurses United, identified that 81.6% of nurses said they experienced workplace violence in 2023. A Press Ganey report on safety culture in healthcare found that a third of registered nurses report experiencing violence "occasionally" or "frequently" from patients or their family members while at work.

The Emergency Nurses Association survey of five hundred members identified that 56% of respondents said they had been physically or verbally assaulted or faced threats of violence in the 30 days prior. Ten percent of respondents said they are considering exiting the profession due to workplace violence. Based on research from OSHA, the problem is much worse than the above statistics indicate because only 20% of violent incidents that occur are reported to the healthcare organization.

56%

Nurses who reported they have been physically or verbally assaulted or faced threats of violence within the last 30 days

20%

Only 20% of these violent incidents are actually reported to healthcare organizations

Violent Incidents and Associated Costs

Healthcare has always been and will continue to be an industry that depends on data and evidence-based practices. Healthcare organizations conduct thorough evaluations before purchasing new technology or solutions or investing in programs. Part of that review is the anticipated outcomes and the savings or revenue generation.

Direct Costs of Violence



Violence against healthcare providers impacts on staffs' perception of safety, recruitment, retention, productivity, and certainly the organization's bottom line. According to the AHA workplace violence cost hospitals and health systems approximately \$2.7 billion annually.

They estimated that proactive and reactive violence response efforts

cost U.S. hospitals and health systems approximately \$2.7 billion. This includes \$280 million related to preparedness and prevention to address community violence, \$852 million in unreimbursed medical care for victims of violence, \$1.1 billion in security and training costs to prevent violence within hospitals, and an additional \$429 million in medical care, staffing, indemnity, and other costs as a result of violence against hospital employees.

They also estimated that in-facility violence costs \$428.5 million, including \$234.2 million for staff turnover, \$42.3 million in medical care and indemnity (compensation for lost wages made to employees who were injured on the job) for employee victims of violence, and \$90.7 million in disability and absenteeism costs.

Indirect Costs of Violence

The cost of violence can also be measured through staff absenteeism because of violence and post-traumatic stress. It has been reported that 13% of all staff call outs are due to violence. Victims of violence experienced an average of 112.8 hours per year of sick, disability, and leave time, excluding long term and short-term disability.

This was 60.4 more hours per year than their non-violence-related victim counterparts. It is estimated that absenteeism related to workplace violence cost hospitals \$53.7 million per year. Victims of violence experienced, on average, 7.1 long-term and 15.2 short-term disability days. It is estimated that disability related to workplace violence cost hospitals \$90.7 million.



How to Measure the Costs



Leaders use data to make business decisions and determine where they will invest their time, energy, and money. Healthcare leaders must understand the financial impact that violence has on their organizations' bottom line.

Organizations can utilize data from their workers' compensation insurance to determine the cost of an employee injury. If organizations do not have access to good data concerning the direct and indirect cost of employee injuries, they can use the Occupational Safety and Health Organization's Safety Pays Individual Injury Estimator ([Estimated Costs of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses and Estimated Impact on a Company's Profitability Worksheet | OSHA.gov | Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#)). The program uses a company's profit margin, the average costs of an injury or illness, and an indirect cost multiplier to project the amount of sales a company would need to generate to cover those costs. The program is intended as a tool to raise awareness of how occupational injuries and illnesses can impact a company's profitability, not to provide a detailed analysis of occupational injury and illness costs.

Invest in Staff Safety - A Smart Business Decision

Prioritizing staff safety will attract and retain staff

Investing in workforce safety is a smart business decision and is paramount to helping to recruit and retain our staff. Because healthcare professionals are in big demand, they can choose to work for an organization that invests and maintains their safety. I will share a story that may help persuade non-believers. I was recently at a hospital that had a competitor less than three miles away. The hospital down the road recently invested in wearable duress buttons for their Emergency Department staff and had a security officer assigned to the ED 24/7. Several Emergency Department nurses left their employer to work for an organization down the road that provided them with a higher level of safety and security. The hospital down the road used their investment into staff safety and security as a competitive advantage to recruit highly sought after experienced Emergency Department nurses. The 2024 NSI National Health Care Retention & RN Staffing Report found that the average cost of turnover for one staff RN is approximately \$56,300. The cost to recruit and replace these two experienced nurses will easily cost the organization over \$100,000.



Contusion causing incidents resulted in:

DIRECT COSTS:

\$27,630

INDIRECT COSTS:

\$30,393

TOTAL INCOME TO COVER THESE COSTS:

\$1.93M

A simple calculation using the OSHA Safety Pays Injury Estimator will demonstrate the value of investing in staff safety. If we use the average operating margin of 3% and assume that the organization experienced an injury that caused a contusion to a staff member. The direct cost is estimated to be \$27,630 and the indirect cost is estimated to be \$30,393, with a combined total estimate of \$58,023. The income or sales required to cover the total cost is \$1,934,100.00. Preventing this one employee from suffering a contusion while performing their duties would represent meaningful cost savings.

Conclusion

Prior to making any investments, leaders do their research to understand the market conditions, the cost and the expected revenue, savings or cost avoidance. Knowing that nurse shortages are among health system CEOs' top concerns and knowing that 80% of nurses do not feel safe at work and that 10% of nurses are considering leaving the profession, healthcare leaders must prioritize nurses' safety. Investing in staff safety and security improves an organization's reputation with perspective employees and the community that they serve. By investing in solutions that improve staff safety and security, organizations can avoid the costs associated with staff injuries, and staff recruitment and replacement.

Taking steps to improve nurses' safety and security will have a return on investment by delivering measurable improvement in nurses' safety and security, retention of nurses, nurse satisfaction and engagement and the bottom line.

[Contact us](#) for a free ROI analysis and the benefits that an AiRISTA RTLS solution can bring to your healthcare team.

Meet the Author

Paul Sarnese

The owner of Secured & Prepared Consulting, LLC, Paul is a Certified Healthcare Protection Administrator and the Past President for the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety. He has published over thirty articles and has been a keynote speaker nationally and internationally.



Paul Sarnese
CHPA, MAS, MSE, CAPM



www.securedandprepared.com



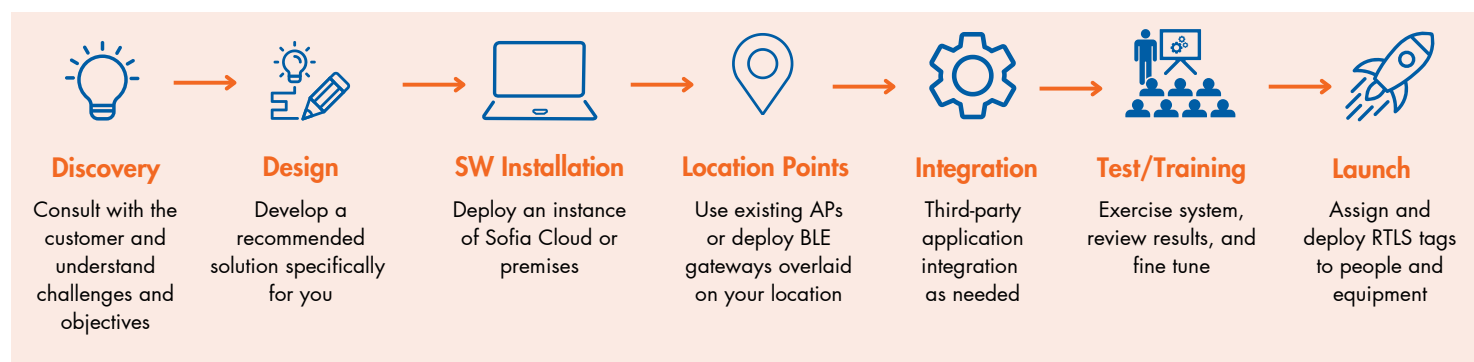
Accolades

AiRISTA is proud to be recognized by Gartner for being in the “Leaders” quadrant in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Report available upon request.

Project Process

AiRISTA and our partners provide a consultative sales process to ensure success criteria are well understood and requirements will be met. The process includes the following major steps.



CONTACT US

Find out what AiRISTA can do for your organization by getting in touch for a consultation.

salesinfo@airista.com | [1-844-816-7127](tel:1-844-816-7127)

airistaflow.com

AiRISTA