For discussion
on 18 May 2015

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON HEALTH SERVICES

Security Management in the Hospitals of the Hospital Authority

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the arrangements adopted by the Hospital Authority (HA) for ensuring security in HA hospitals.

BACKGROUND

2.   Hospital security is of paramount importance in a healthcare facility and is one of the prime management concerns in HA.   Through adopting a comprehensive security management system, HA aims to –

(a)   minimize security risk in HA operations and services; and
(b)   prevent criminal activities and adverse incidents from happening in HA premises.

3.   In devising the security management measures of HA hospitals, it should be noted that members of the general public particularly patients should have reasonable access to HA facilities which provide round-the-clock service.   It is important to ensure that the security measures imposed will not create any undue obstacles to the patients' right to access healthcare services or to the efficient delivery of clinical services.   To strike a balance between protecting the security of patients and facilitating their access to healthcare services, HA has devised a multi-pronged security management strategy comprising the following major elements –

(a)   Establishing a robust governance and organisational structure;
(b)   Installing suitable security facilities; and
(c)   Maintaining sound security services and management.

Governance and Organizational Structure

4.   HA has established a robust two-tiered governance structure in respect of security management.   At the cluster frontline level, the Cluster General Managers (Administrative Services) (CGM(AS)s) are responsible for maintaining the day-to-day general security management, investigating security incidents and prioritizing improvement measures as appropriate. Each hospital has to provide a report on security management on a half-yearly basis to its Hospital Governing Committee.

5.   At the corporate level, the Committee on Hospital Security is responsible for reviewing policies, strategic plans and priorities on improvement measures concerning the overall security arrangement in HA. The committee, chaired by Chief Manager (Patient Safety & Risk Management) and comprising representatives from relevant departments in HA Head Office (HAHO) and CGM(AS)s in clusters, also monitors compliance against recommended practices and standards to enhance general hospital security.   Working groups on specific areas of major security concern will be formed under the committee as necessary to review security incidents, initiate corporate wide enhancement measures and monitor implementation progress.   Annual reporting on hospital security management is made to the Supporting Services Development Committee under the HA Board.

Security Facilities

6.   HA has installed risk-commensurate security facilities at appropriate locations of the premises having regard to the criticality and vulnerability of the locations concerned. Examples of the facilities installed are –

(a) *Central Security Control Room with CCTV System*
The Central Security Control Room with CCTV system serves to monitor the activities in HA premises to protect the properties of HA and the safety of patients and staff;

(b) *Access Control System*
(i) The Access Control System is an electronic locking system that restricts access to certain areas of the hospitals such as ward areas based on a person's identity

to protect HA properties and the safety of patients and staff. It is a computer-based network system that monitors and controls access through granting of access right to the cards. All events could therefore be logged for future retrieval and investigation as necessary.

(ii) As a general rule, access right is assigned on a "need-to-access" basis in order to ensure that no person can get access to places where his/her access is not needed or allowed.

(iii) Verification procedures are in place to guide the issue and replacement of access card.

(iv) All staff are required to wear staff ID card all the time in hospitals. Staff's photo, name, rank and department are displayed on the staff ID card for easy identification.

(v) All staff are required to wear proper uniform whilst at work in hospitals. To ensure the safe-keeping of uniforms, the uniform store rooms are locked while unattended and access to these rooms is restricted to staff only.

(c) *Other Security Installations*

(i) Carpark Management System and Intercom serves to facilitate carpark access and vehicular control; and

(ii) Panic alarm and intruder alarm system serves to detect anyone who intrudes on the restricted areas (such as the central store room, pharmacy and Shroff Office).

Security Services and Management

7. Installation of the security facilities alone would not be sufficient to ensure the security in HA. It is necessary to put in place sound management in clusters with competent security personnel to ensure the provision of quality security services.

Training of Security Staff

8. The competence of security personnel is crucial to quality security management. All security staff must possess valid permits issued by the Police and have undergone relevant training with certificate recognized by the Security and Guarding Services Industry Authority upon

appointment. In order to equip the security personnel with the skills and knowledge required for discharging their daily duties, HA conducts induction training for all new comers and on-the-job refresher training for all incumbents on regular basis and when required.

Security Guidelines and Procedures

9. HAHO developes specific security guidelines and procedures ranging from the design and installations of security facilities to the handling of different types of security incidents in place. CGM(AS) ensures that the guidelines and procedures are followed properly. Individual clusters, having regard to their respective characteristics in relation to hospital environment and in-house policy, tailor-made detailed checklists and work instructions to suit operational need in accordance with relevant HAHO guidelines.

Staff Education and Awareness

10. It is important to enhance the awareness and knowledge among staff, contractors, service partners, etc. through information sharing, education, drill and training in order to provide a safe working environment. Cluster based crime prevention talks organized by Crime Prevention Bureau of the Police are held annually to increase staff awareness. HA also invites the Police to visit and inspect hospital environment to assess the risk areas relating to criminal act annually.

Risks Management and Performance Compliance

11. HA conducts the risk assessment exercise to identify risks that may lead to significant security events involving loss of lives, personal injury, substantial financial loss or events that may attract major public concern. Clusters submit risk assessment report with detailed risks mitigation plans of each hospital every year.

12. To facilitate the monitoring of compliance, hospitals submit compliance report to the HA Committee on Hospital Security annually for review. HA has also developed different checklists on, say, thefts and loss of property to ensure that the recommended practices/mitigation measures of all the significant security areas are implemented.

Periodic Audit on Security Matters

13.　　　As an integral part of the overall governance framework, HA establishes the Group Internal Audit (GIA) to conduct independent audit.　It provides independent assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the control employed to mitigate risk in key business processes and to enhance risk management control.　Hospital security service, as one of the key business processes and prime management concerns in HA, is audited by GIA from time to time.　In 2013-14, GIA conducted three security-related audits in the areas of physical security management, legal compliance and fire safety management.　Subsequent to the audits, GIA has recommended various improvement measures.　These include, for example, facilitating the sharing of security good practices, and improving the adequacy of the hospital security systems by regular review.　The findings and recommendations have been followed up by parties concerned and the results had been reported in the Committee on Hospital Security and Supporting Services Development Committee under the HA Board.

Mechanism for Incidents Handling

14.　　　While HA has strived to ensure the quality of security management in hospitals, there remains the possibility of the occurrence of occasional individual security incidents.　In order to ensure that incidents are communicated to relevant stakeholders and prompt and appropriate follow-up actions are taken, HA sets up the Advanced Incident Reporting System for the reporting of hospital incidents.　When a security incident occurs, the hospital concerned will conduct root cause analysis and propose recommendations on improvements.　Police will be invited to provide professional advice on the proposed preventive measures.　HA will also arrange to share the lessons learnt from the incidents in both cluster and corporate level with a view to preventing recurrences of similar incident.

CONCLUSION

15.　　　HA will keep security situation in hospitals under review and continue to pay every effort to strive for better protection of all hospital premises.

Food and Health Bureau
Hospital Authority
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