

Case Study | Redefining Security in Healthcare

Inova stops 1,000+ forbidden items from entering the behavioral health department with help from Metrasens.



Inova Health System

FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA

FACILITY STATS

20,000 team members, 1,952 licensed hospital beds.

APPLICATION

Behavioral Health: Emergency department and pre-admittance screening.

CASE STUDY AT A GLANCE

Patients in the Behavioral Health department were being caught days after admission with razors, lighters, needles, and other self-harm or prohibited items. This put patients at risk and made staff feel unsafe. Metrasens detection systems were introduced pre-admission, offering touchless, thorough screenings to identify prohibited items while also ensuring a non-threatening, non-triggering experience for patients. In 2022 alone, Inova's screening processes revealed over 1,000 forbidden items. Identification of risk items during the pre-admission process has had a positive impact on safety at Inova and has been well-received by patients, families, staff, and hospital leadership alike.



A COMMON PROBLEM: HOW TO BE BOTH THOROUGH AND RESPECTFUL WHEN SCREENING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PATIENTS?

As a leading healthcare institution, Inova wanted to provide incredible care to their behavioral health patients but faced a recurring problem common in the behavioral health setting: patients admitted to the department would later be found with razors, needles, or other small metal items that could be used for self-harm or potential violence against staff—objects patients had snuck into the rooms hidden in undergarments, shoes, or even inside the body.

Inova previously relied on a conventional screening process that consisted of a physical examination of personal belongings, as well as the use of metal detecting hand wands—a more “traditional” screening method, however, one that was found to be ineffective at detecting often concealed items that are a common problem in behavioral health, like vapes, lighters, razors, and needles. Additionally, the use of hand wands was found to be too invasive and triggering, particularly for patients who have experienced trauma.

The ineffectiveness of the previous search procedure left nursing and clinical care staff unsettled, as they were the staff finding the prohibited items post admissions. To address the challenges they were facing, Inova recognized the need for a more comprehensive and sensitive screening process that would enhance the safety and well-being of their behavioral health patients and provide reassurance to their nursing and clinical care staff. They sought a solution that would not only improve detection capability but also maintain the dignity of the patients, particularly those who have experienced trauma.



"We take the safety of our medical staff seriously, and it's crucial for us to ensure that they feel secure in their workplace. Being able to prevent harmful items from entering our behavioral health department gives our staff the confidence they need to provide exceptional care to their patients without worrying about their safety."

Rodney Miller
AVP Security | Inova Health System



RESPECTFUL AND EFFECTIVE PATIENT SCREENING WITH METRASENS.

After extensive research and evaluation, Inova implemented Metrasens detection systems in two places: at the Emergency Department before patients were admitted to Behavioral Health and within the department as part of the pre-admission process.

To complete the screening process, patients simply step in front of the detection system and perform a continuous 360-degree turn. This process is touchless and uncomplicated, allowing the patient to be thoroughly screened for concealed risk items while maintaining a safe and respectful distance. To reduce potential triggers, the audible alarm on the system is set at a low level, while the illuminating visual alert signal is used by staff to identify any prohibited items. This simple, touchless process was very easy to learn for staff and easy to implement in a short period of time. Inova's new approach combined Metrasens' advanced technology with a compassionate and patient-centered approach that fosters a sense of trust and collaboration between patients and staff, promoting a more positive therapeutic relationship.

"Metrasens detection systems are an ideal fit for behavioral health environments. Our systems have the ability to screen patients and identify potential threats without causing any disturbances. In fact, they enhance the overall experience of behavioral health patients by offering a touchless and seamless screening process", shared Brian Solverson, Metrasens Director of Sales for Healthcare Security.

A SAFE AND SECURE SPACE FOR PATIENTS AND STAFF

Metrasens screenings have revealed even the smallest items in bras, headscarves, and personal belongings, including vapes, needles, and razors—items that were once able to slip through admissions unnoticed. In 2022 alone, Inova's screening processes revealed over 1,000 prohibited items, including razors, clippers, scissors, tweezers, nail clippers, knives, and pepper spray.

Patients are told about the Metrasens detection capabilities, and sometimes before even being screened, patients divest prohibited items, adding the benefit of a visual deterrent as well as a comprehensive detection system.

Knowing patients have been thoroughly screened, the staff feels safe to deliver excellent care with more confidence and less hesitation. And most importantly, Metrasens detection systems have uncovered items that were routinely being found after admission—preventing incidents and helping patients to heal.

Emphasizing the importance of providing peace of mind to healthcare workers, Solverson said, "Ensuring the safety and well-being of Inova's healthcare staff is crucial in their quest for creating a supportive and effective work environment. By implementing comprehensive security measures, Inova can alleviate concerns and allow their dedicated professionals to focus on providing exceptional care to patients."



“Metrasens offers a friendly approach to security, which is important—especially to patients who have been through trauma. We invite them to come and do a quick spin, and it catches everything it was meant to catch. You can’t beat the science.”

Rodney Miller
AVP Security | Inova Health System

Inova's decision to implement a more thorough and dignified screening process within its behavioral health department has had a transformative impact on patient safety, staff morale, and the overall treatment environment. By combining advanced technology with compassion and sensitivity, Inova has successfully addressed the recurring problem of concealed items and set a new standard for behavioral healthcare institutions, ensuring that patients receive exceptional care in a safe and respectful manner.





About Inova Health System

Inova is Northern Virginia's leading nonprofit healthcare provider—a network of five hospitals, primary and specialty care practices, emergency and urgent care centers, outpatient services, and destination institutes. The network provides more than two million patient visits each year.

About Metrasens

Metrasens is a world-leading provider of advanced detection technologies that, combined with tailored solutions, address the deficiencies in conventional screening methods. Metrasens takes science from the laboratory and uses it to create revolutionary products that are effective, flexible, easy to use, and exceed the needs of our customers.

