



Case Study



Windsor Regional Hospital, the First Canadian Hospital to Deploy Evolv, Screens Thousands of Patients

Windsor Regional Hospital

LOCATION: Windsor and Essex Counties
in Ontario, Canada

FOUNDED: 1928

POPULATION SERVED: Over 500,000

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS: 2

BEDS: 600+

EMPLOYEES: 4,300+

PROFESSIONAL STAFF: 550

VOLUNTEERS: 400

MEDICAL SCHOOL STUDENTS/RESIDENT

PHYSICIANS: 150+

WEBSITE: www.wrh.on.ca

Solution Snapshot

Goals

- Help enhance the Emergency Department environments for staff, patients, and visitors
- Find an alternative to walkthrough metal detectors that would not delay patient care or be intrusive
- Enable security screening of all patients, regardless of mobility
- Leverage traffic flow and detection analytics to demonstrate the impact of security screening to executive management and the Board of Directors
- Engage with vendor that would answer questions transparently

Solution

People

- The Evolv Solutions Engineer and Convergent teams helped WRH configure two Emergency Department locations for deployment
- The Evolv team trained WRH on Evolv Insights and how to optimize system usage

Process

- Hands-on training from Evolv and Convergent team prior to go-live date
- Ongoing management and support by Convergent team

Technology

- The Evolv Safer Experience System™
- 2 Evolv Express® single-lane systems
- Evolv Insights®

Outcomes



Garnered recognition as first Canadian hospital system to deploy Evolv



Helped provide seamless security screening for **diverse patient and visitor populations** at downtown and suburban hospitals



Helped reduce Emergency Department staff vacancy rate from 30% to 2.7%



Screened nearly 100,000 patients, family members, and visitors at two Emergency Departments



Reduced delays or lines at entrances to Emergency Departments



Generated overwhelmingly positive response from Emergency Department staff and patients



Spike in Healthcare Violence Prompts Search for New Security Layer

Windsor Regional Hospital serves over a half million patients on an annual basis.

The Emergency Departments at Windsor Regional Hospital's Metropolitan and Ouellette campuses see almost 100,000 patients annually.

Delivering great care while ensuring the safety and security of those patients, along with that of visitors and staff, is a top priority for WRH. The populations served by each hospital are quite diverse, and the hospitals provide care to all who pass through their doors.

"Since deploying Evolv, the number of metal objects that we've detected run into the tens of thousands. We were almost in shock at the number of weapons we found. It was the equivalent of having a Damocles sword hanging over our heads but most of us were unaware of how large the threat was."

Dr. David Ng, Interim Chief, Emergency Departments, Windsor Regional Hospital

"Anyone who needs care and comes to our facilities, we see in our Emergency Departments," says Dr. David Ng, an emergency room physician and the Interim Chief of WRH's Emergency Departments. Working in the Emergency Department requires a real passion to take care of patients, and our team aspires to use their skills and training to improve people's lives."

To focus on patient care, physicians, nurses, and hospital staff should feel as safe as possible at work. Before the pandemic struck, WRH began a search to upgrade its safety and security systems and processes. "Workplace violence has become a growing concern over the past decade," says David Musyj, the President and CEO at Windsor Regional Hospital. "During and after the pandemic, we saw a heightening of people's emotions. Isolation during the pandemic negatively impacted people's behavior and conduct. Unfortunately, this translated into a rise in violence towards hospital staff."

The Hospital Security Landscape Is Changing

This changing landscape promoted WRH to embark on a search for enhanced security.

"Violence in healthcare isn't just happening in Canada, but everywhere," Musyj says. "Our initial focus was our Emergency Departments, where we saw an increase in knives and firearms creeping into both. We began adding more layers of security and our search brought us to security screening at the entrances to both Emergency Departments."

Dr. Ng observed a similar coalescence of issues: "The number of patients we see has grown significantly, increasing overcrowding in our Emergency Departments and creating long wait times. There is a growing sense of anger and frustration. We've also seen an epidemic of opioids and other substances such as alcohol, along with increased homelessness. These factors all combine to create a sense of unpredictability in the Emergency Departments."

WRH actually looked at implementing traditional walkthrough metal detectors before the pandemic. "But we ultimately determined they aren't a good fit for our hospital environment," Musyj says. "People may need to stop, empty their pockets, take off their belts, go through the metal detector, and quite often need to go through an additional security check. It would simply take too long for someone needing urgent care to get into one of our Emergency Departments. Many patients likely would not tolerate this experience, and we would not either."

Once the pandemic receded, the WRH team began looking at security screening technologies again. "Incidents with guns and knives were increasing, and we needed to find a better option," Musyj says. Dr. Ng elaborates: "These were the instances we knew about. Often, we were not aware their threat was in our environment because we didn't have the security systems in place to detect them. Plus, in the instances where weapons were found, our nurses were the actual ones disarming the patients or family members." One incident sticks out in Dr. Ng's mind, where a patient had bullets for his firearm fall out of his pocket and onto the floor while receiving treatment.

In response, Michael Broderick, the Manager of Safety and Security at Windsor Regional Hospital, led a risk assessment for Emergency Department staff, focused on workplace violence. "That assessment pointed us to the need for a solution that would screen people upon ingress without impeding their entry," he explains. "The risk assessment identified around 60 other issues, many of which we implemented. As we were considering our options for security screening, we had two separate incidents in a 10-day period that accelerated our search for a solution, instances where weapons were brandished and a threat was very real."

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David Musyj, President and CEO, Windsor Regional Hospital



Discovering Evolv

WRH's search brought them to Evolv, and the team was immediately excited about its potential.

"We were blown away immediately at what we heard and then eventually what we saw with Evolv," Musyj notes. "Evolv helps reduce delays getting into our Emergency Departments. People can walk in normal stride into an Emergency Department."

WRH also liked Evolv from an operational standpoint. "With Evolv, we didn't need to add more security staff with the Evolv systems," Musyj says. "When our staff, including those on the front line, visually saw how the Express worked and tested it, everyone was immediately on board in getting it implemented. This made a big difference in convincing our board of directors that Evolv was the right fit for us."

"The number of patients we see has grown significantly, increasing overcrowding in our Emergency Departments and creating long wait times. There is a growing sense of anger and frustration. We've also seen an epidemic of opioids and other substances such as alcohol, along with increased homelessness. These factors all combine to create a sense of unpredictability in the Emergency Departments."

*Dr. David Ng, Interim Chief, Emergency Departments,
Windsor Regional Hospital*

Hands-On Testing and Vetting

For hands-on evaluation of the Evolv Express system, the WRH team simply had to cross over the Detroit River and U.S.–Canadian border to the City of Detroit.

"We didn't want to be the first to use the technology and took solace in the fact that numerous hospitals in the U.S. had successfully deployed Evolv systems in their environments," says Musyj. "The mayor of Detroit was very gracious and our frontline security staff were able to do a lot of due diligence observing the Evolv Express systems in action within the city. They came back across the river and they were amazed. Frankly, my most nervous time during the month between selecting Evolv and waiting for it to be implemented."

Broderick and other members of the hospital's Joint Health and Safety Committee Safety and Security team shared this opinion after returning from a trip to see the Evolv Express system in Detroit. "Initially, there was a bit of shock that we would be the first Canadian hospital to deploy this technology. While we might make some mistakes, we could bundle our experiences and best practices together for other Canadian hospitals that followed in our footsteps. The Safety and Security team was excited because the technology would not only help protect patients and staff but themselves as well. They are the ones who get called when a situation escalates and they walk into that situation not knowing if the individual might have a weapon."

When Evolv engaged with WRH, Evolv Partner Convergent, which has worked with WRH on a series of different security initiatives, was brought into the conversations. "Convergent is a great company," Broderick says. "Our relationship with Convergent goes back a number of years, as they implemented and manage our access control and security camera systems. For this project, the Evolv and Convergent teams worked together with us to ensure our questions were answered."

The transparency of Evolv throughout the sales process is something WRH welcomed. "Evolv was beyond transparent, as they made it very clear to what the technology can and cannot detect," Musyj notes. "They were also upfront about what the Express system was designed to detect and what it wouldn't detect."

Broderick reports a similar experience. "Throughout the evaluation process, we asked Evolv numerous questions—everything from the product, to the application, to training," he says. "Every answer we got from Evolv was genuine and authentic. We weren't getting sugarcoated answers. No system is going to detect everything, though we believe Evolv is the closest thing to it on the market."

A Relationship Built on Transparency

Windsor Regional Hospital operates under a simple model: CARE. **C**ompassion. **A**ccountability. **R**espect. **E**xcellence.

These are the same four principles they expect from any partner. When evaluating Evolv, transparency was paramount to the effectiveness of the relationship, along with Evolv's willingness to be held accountable to what the system is stated to do and not do.

David Musyj recalls the initial conversations about the Evolv and the level of security disclosed during the research and sales process. "Evolv was beyond transparent, and they made it very clear to us, again and again, that they are another layer to your security. It's not going to detect 100% of the items. Nothing does. There's no technology in the world that does that. But it'll detect a lot and it will help create a safer environment." He continues, "At no time did anyone from Evolv say, 'This is 100% effective. This is going to solve all your problems. You can get rid of all your other security measures.' No, they said this was another layer."

David Musyj, President and CEO, Windsor Regional Hospital.

Musyj reflected on this post-deployment, "Everything Evolv told us is happening 110% accurately. It's like reading a playbook—they said this is what is probably going to happen, and it actually happened how they said."

Deployment Apprehension Evaporated Almost Immediately

For the deployment of the Evolv Express systems, the Convergent team trained the WRH Safety and Security team on how to setup, operate, tear down, and store each system.

They were onsite, along with members of the Evolv team before the systems went live at both Emergency Departments in October 2023. WRH also reviewed the systems with the Emergency Department Staff, wanting to make sure they knew what was happening each step of the way, and how this would impact their experience at work, as well as the patients'. "The entire deployment process was outstanding," observes Lisa Gawdynuk, Emergency Department Operations Manager at WRH's Met Campus. "It was amazing to see the equipment arrive on site and then go through the training process with the Evolv and Convergent teams."

This deployment included hands-on training with the WRH team on managing the Flow Control and Threat Resolution roles. Training on the Evolv Tablet itself was key—how to tag items, access on-the-spot-training, view stats, and more. "We got fabulous support throughout the implementation process," Broderick notes. "We worked with our security guards and the teams from Evolv and Convergent to train them on how best to tag items. This also gave us more insights on the populations coming to our Emergency Departments."

When it came to turning on the Evolv Express systems, Broderick admits the team had some apprehension—but it didn't last. "As soon as the systems were turned on and we started screening patients and visitors entering the emergency rooms, that apprehension disappeared," he says. "I stood in front of the system for a long time to listen to the comments of patients and visitors. Their response was overwhelmingly positive. They really liked that they didn't need to divest everything in their pockets and bags for entry. But at the same time, I also heard a lot of comments on how they felt safer."

Broderick relates an experience of a nurse when Evolv went live. "She actually did her own research, by watching YouTube videos and conducting online searches," he says. "She felt Evolv was too good to be true. When the Express went live at her Emergency Department, she stood to the side and watched the flow and how the security guards managed the system. It took her about five minutes of watching and she was sold, indicating it takes a load off their minds so they can focus on providing care to patients rather than worrying about weapons."

"Prior to the security enhancements we made over the past couple of years... we had a 30% vacancy rate for nurses in our ED... We're now down to a 2.7%. **This is a huge success!**"

Lisa Gawdynuk, Operations Manager for the Met Campus, Emergency Department, Windsor Regional Hospital



Leveraging Evolv Insights® Analytics

As part of the onboarding process, the Convergent team worked with the WRH Safety and Security team to ensure they were trained on how to use Evolv Insights analytics.

"We can access Evolv Insights® through the MyEvolv Portal and on the app," Broderick says. "We generate statistics to show our frontline staff how they are doing and what items are causing nuisance alarms. We also show analytics to our Health and Safety Committee and board of directors on what we're finding and keeping out of our Emergency Departments."

Over time, Broderick notes the reports from Evolv Insights showed a decline in weapons being detected—highlighting the system's potential as a deterrent. "The word is out in the community and people now understand that they cannot carry a weapon into our Emergency Departments and they are leaving them at home or in their vehicles," he relates. "We have also shared these insights with our different stakeholders to demonstrate how what we're doing with Evolv is helping reduce threats. This is a very positive story that we like to tell."

"The Evolv team warned us that we were going to detect some items that we didn't know were making their way into our Emergency Departments and would be shocked. We discovered very quickly that they were right. Since deploying Evolv, we have found over a thousand knives and some firearms as well."

David Musyj, President and CEO, Windsor Regional Hospital





WHR Was Surprised by Weapons Detection Numbers

On the day the Evolv systems went live, the WRH team was interested to see what the screening would detect.

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Dr. Ng was a bit in shock with the number of items detected. "Since deploying Evolv, the number of metal objects that we've detected run into the tens of thousands," he says. "We were almost in shock at the number of weapons we found. It was the equivalent of having a Damocles sword hanging over our heads but most of us were unaware of how large the threat was."

Broderick elaborates on the weapons found. "Most of the weapons we're detecting are smaller knives. But there are instances in the screening process where we've also found objects such as larger knives, brass knuckles, and makeshift batons. These are for personal protection in many instances with some of our patients having no fixed address and a place to store those weapons."



More Smooth Screening of Patients, Family Members, and Visitors

The screening experience of Evolv is a huge plus for WRH.

"With Evolv, we are able to screen incoming people for weapons without slowing them down," Broderick explains. "They don't always need to divest anything from their pockets. They didn't always have to open up their bags. It is a seamless process."

"We cannot delay care for anyone coming into our Emergency Departments," Lisa Gawdynuk, Operations Manager for the Met Campus Emergency Department, states. "Traditional metal detectors were eliminated from consideration very early because they could have done so. Evolv helps allow us to remove any delays without compromising security."

The WRH also appreciates the Express' ability to accommodate wheelchairs through the entry lane. "For individuals with special needs, they can pass through the Evolv Express lane in a wheelchair," Musyj observes.

"Evolv plays a huge role in helping us to feel more comfortable and confident at work, knowing there is a reduced chance we will be injured by someone brandishing a weapon. It is absolutely wonderful that we finally have security screening for weapons in our Emergency Departments."

Anne Haskell, Registered Nurse, Emergency Department, Windsor Regional Hospital

Staff Response to Evolv Is Enthusiastic

Safety and security have been a top concern for WRH Emergency Department staff for a long time—but more and more recently.

“Staff in our Emergency Departments have been talking about the need for enhanced security screening, and it is great that we finally have something in place,” notes Anne Haskell, a Registered Nurse who works in one of WRH’s Emergency Departments.

We have worked on safety and security as our communities changed over the past few years,” Musyj adds. “As our hospital environment, and Emergency Departments especially, became quite volatile and aggressive, we have worked hard to ensure we had multiple safety strategies in place to protect our staff. Evolv adds another layer to our safety strategy. And in my opinion, it’s probably one of the most important layers to safety we’ve ever implemented at Windsor Regional Hospital.”

“When some of our patients or visitors come our Emergency Departments, they may be having the worst day of their life. People’s emotions run high. People do stupid things. Evolv helps us prevent bad things from happening.”

Angela Lang, Registered Nurse, Emergency Department, Windsor Regional Hospital

Gawdynuk echoes this, noting that the layers Musyj has implemented are fully integrated and a welcome addition to the daily goings on in the Emergency Department. “Safety is very important to us—for our staff, our patients, and visitors,” she says. “For example, we have safety huddles with the Emergency Department staff at the start of every shift. The last thing you want someone worry about is their personal safety when they come to a hospital.”

The response to Evolv from Emergency Department staff has been very positive. “Evolv plays a huge role in helping us to feel more comfortable and confident at work, knowing there is a smaller chance we will be injured by someone brandishing a weapon or experience something unpredictable,” Haskell comments. “It is absolutely wonderful that we finally have security screening for weapons in our Emergency Departments.”

Angela Lang, a Registered Nurse in another of WRH’s Emergency Departments, indicates Evolv elicits similar feelings for her. “When some of our patients or visitors come to our Emergency Departments, they may be having the worst day of their life,” she explains. “People’s emotions run high. People do stupid things. Evolv helps us prevent bad things from happening.”



Putting the Focus Back on Patient Care

These feelings of safety help enable the WRH Emergency Department staff to focus on patient care.

"When we go into a room to provide care to a patient, we know everyone has passed through the Evolv Express for screening," reports Lang. "Some of them are having the worst day of their life. We cannot have them go through something where they'd always need to empty everything from their pockets and bags. But that isn't needed with Evolv. It makes me feel safer at work by giving us one more layer of security. With Evolv screening everyone coming into the Emergency Department, we know people probably aren't carrying firearms or large knives on them when we initiate care for them or their loved ones. I feel very proud to work here and appreciate the lengths to which our management team goes to help ensure our safety and the safety of our patients."

"Evolv helps enable us to concentrate on our work and providing care for our patients, knowing firearms and large knives were screened for and are probably not present," Dr. Ng explains. "This is especially important when caring for certain populations who are high or intoxicated or suffer from different forms of psychosis."

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*Angela Lang, Registered Nurse, Emergency
Department, Windsor Regional Hospital*

Haskell agrees with her colleagues. "People's emotions are running high and people do stupid things," she says. "However, in the event of an escalation, we know there's a reduced chance someone is going to reach into their pocket and pull out a firearm or large knife because they were screened by Evolv. It is nice to be able to focus on patient care as opposed to the safety of the patient, visitors, family members. It is one less thing that you have to think about before providing care. Patient and staff safety is not something we worry about now with Evolv in place."

Jenna Lee, another WRH Emergency Department nurse, expressed similar feelings. "I feel very honored to be part of a hospital that is taking extra steps to protect its staff and patients," she notes. "In the past, we didn't know what we would encounter when coming to work. Evolv makes it much easier for us to do so. It helps lift that uncertainty. I absolutely feel safer knowing that every single person that I come in contact with has been screened."

Safety and Security Impacts Staff Retention

This positive response from Emergency Department staff was immediately translated into tangible outcomes for WRH.

"Prior to the security enhancements we made over the past couple of years, including the rollout of the Evolv systems, we had a 30% vacancy rate for nurses in our ED," Gawdynuk reports. "Part of this reason related to concerns about safety when working in an Emergency Department. We're now down to a 2.7%. This is a huge success!"

"I feel very honored to be part of a hospital that is taking extra steps to protect its staff and patients. In the past, we didn't know what we would encounter when coming to work. Evolv makes it much easier for us to do so. It lifts that uncertainty. I absolutely feel safer knowing that every single person that I come in contact with has no weapons on them."

Jenna Lee, Registered Nurse, Emergency Department, Windsor Regional Hospital





Patient Response Parallels Positive Staff Response

The response from patients to Evolv has been overwhelmingly positive as well.

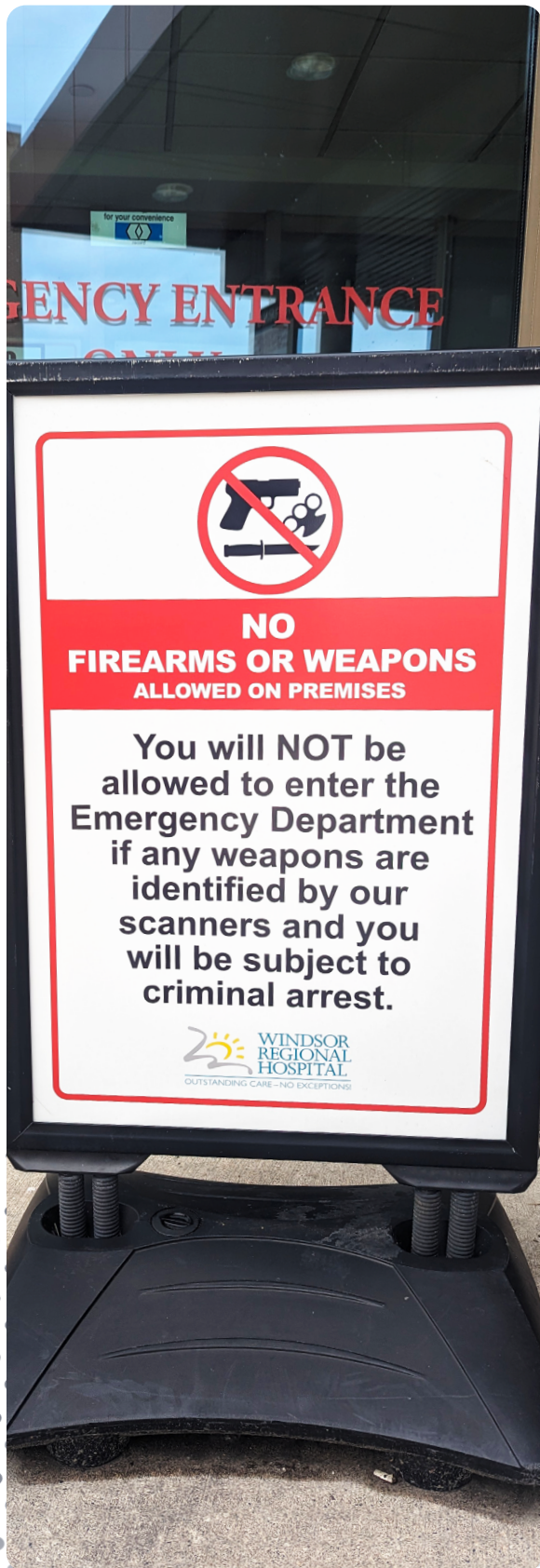
"Patients and family members may have heightened anxiety and stress when coming to a hospital and especially an Emergency Department," Jenna Lee says. "Evolv helps mitigate this anxiety and stress." Musyj adds, "They may have comfort knowing the person sitting to them in the Emergency Department went through the very same security screening. Evolv may help our patients and our staff feel safer knowing an added layer of security is present."

"Having Evolv systems in place makes our patients feel safe, and our staff feels safe and able to deliver the care our patients need rather than worrying about their safety. We are very proud to be the first hospital Emergency Department in Canada to implement Evolv."

Kuljeet Kalsi, Operations Manager for the Ouellette Campus, Emergency Department, Windsor Regional Hospital

Many patients and family members in the Emergency Department are appreciative of WRH's efforts to keep them safer. "We weren't certain what their response would be," Gawdynuk relates. "We've gotten no negative feedback. They appreciate that we're helping protect them and their loved ones. They can sit down beside someone else and know they have also just passed through Evolv security screening."

Jenna Lee, the Emergency Department nurse said, "When a potential threat is detected, the red box on the Evolv tablet shows the security guard exactly where they need to look on the person's body or bag," she explains. "The patient doesn't need to take everything out of their pockets and bags and go through an intrusive security search. Evolv is much friendlier than our prior process."



First Canadian Hospital to Deploy Evolv Brings Positive Notice

The WRH management team and staff working in the Emergency Departments are overwhelmingly complimentary of Evolv and their experience.

Kuljeet Kalsi, an Operations Manager for the Ouellette Campus Emergency Department, sums up the experience as follows: "The safety of our patients, staff, and visitors is paramount at WRH. We want to ensure that our patients are coming to a safe environment to be healed. Having Evolv in place can help our patients and staff feel safer knowing an added layer of security is in place, and be able to deliver the care our patients need rather than worrying about their safety. We are very proud to be the first hospital and Emergency Department in Canada to implement."

"[Patients] can have comfort knowing the person sitting to them in the Emergency Department went through the very same security screening. Evolv may help our patients and our staff feel safer knowing an added layer of security is present."

David Musyj, President and CEO, Windsor Regional Hospital

Contact us to learn more.

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