

Leveraging Proven Strategies to Mitigate Workplace Violence in Healthcare

An IAHS and CENTEGIX Webinar Summary Featuring:



Adrian Arriaga, MBA,
CHPA, HSEM, Children's
Healthcare of Atlanta



Chief Jeri Williams,
former Phoenix Chief
of Police



Dr. Rocky Sams, Chief
Development Officer,
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Andrea Greco, SVP
Healthcare Safety,
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Forum Summary

As violence in healthcare rises, leaders must look beyond their own walls for proven safety strategies — just as it has for patient experience, lean processes, and high-reliability practices. This session explored how other high-risk industries have implemented proactive, layered approaches to reduce risk and better protect their staff.

Building a Proactive Culture of Safety

The panel agreed that healthcare organizations must be willing to evolve their safety approach to meet today's growing challenges.

They emphasized that **proactively empowering employees with tools, training, and clear expectations** helps create more engaged and responsive teams. Recognizing employees who appropriately use safety protocols or de-escalation strategies can also reinforce positive behaviors and strengthen organizational culture.

But Chief Williams cautioned that **policies alone are not enough** to create meaningful change.

"Culture eats policy for lunch. You have to create a culture where safety is just seamless — where it's something I'm always cognizant of because I know that's going to create better outcomes for me and the people I serve."

- Chief Jeri Williams

The panel also discussed the importance of **maintaining regular communication and collaboration with external partners**, including law enforcement and emergency management teams. Building these relationships before a crisis occurs helps improve coordination and response effectiveness during emergencies.

"We have to challenge ourselves to evolve. There's a lot of opportunity for us to create safer environments through that growth."

- Adrian Arriaga

Leveraging Data and Risk Assessments

Another key theme throughout the webinar was the growing importance of data-driven decision-making in violence prevention.

Arriaga encouraged leaders to move beyond "gut feeling" approaches and instead rely on **objective assessments and intelligence-based strategies** to identify vulnerabilities and prioritize investments.

Speakers discussed several ways organizations can **strengthen preparedness**, including:

- Behavioral threat assessment and management teams
- Incident reporting and trend analysis
- Watch lists and person-of-interest monitoring
- EMR-based violence alerts and trigger documentation
- Monitoring community and organizational threats

Dr. Sams added that many industries are shifting toward using information proactively rather than responding solely after incidents occur. This proactive intelligence gathering can help organizations **identify warning signs earlier** and intervene before situations escalate into violence.

“Do we have information that can inform what we do before something happens? This is what helps mitigate risk more successfully and yield better outcomes.”

- Dr. Rocky Sams

The Role of Training and Technology

Training was repeatedly identified as one of the most critical components of an effective prevention strategy.

Chief Williams encouraged organizations to **create regular training cadences** so employees know exactly how to respond during high-stress situations. “The first time you practice something should not be during an emergency,” she said.

Panelists acknowledged that many healthcare organizations rely on annual computer-based learning modules, but cautioned that training must be meaningful, engaging, and reinforced consistently to be effective.

The discussion also highlighted the role technology plays in accelerating response and supporting staff confidence. Speakers emphasized that **safety solutions should be easy to use, reliable, scalable, and consistent** across facilities.

Chief Williams noted that **wearable duress badges help remove barriers** during emergencies because staff always have them accessible. “When you’re faced with a fight-or-flight situation, that phone may not be with you, but your badge is always on,” she shared.

Dr. Sams added that consistency is equally important. Staff should not have to stop and think about what to do during an emergency. “Consistency creates comfort, confidence, and a better outcome,” Sams explained.



ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

- ✓ Plan and Prepare Proactively
- ✓ Build Cross-Functional Teams
- ✓ Strengthen Community Partnerships
- ✓ Invest in Reliable, Scalable Tech
- ✓ Prioritize Meaningful Training
- ✓ Use Data to Guide Decisions
- ✓ Empower Every Employee

“I don’t think you can ever do enough training...And if you’re going to do it, don’t do it just to check a box. Make it valuable training.”

- Adrian Arriaga



To watch the full webinar on demand, [click here.](#)