



RoamAlert[®]
Wander Prevention

Roam Report

A newsletter on wander prevention

Volume 3: Q2 2008

Upgrading from WatchMate to RoamAlert

Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital makes the leap

We all expect that equipment will eventually become out of date, to be replaced by something better. This is no less true of wander prevention systems than any other technology. There have been a number of improvements over the last several years, both in terms of reliability and features.

Xmark has been pleased to help many of its own customers upgrade to the latest generation of wander prevention represented by the RoamAlert system.

Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital, located in Worcester, Massachusetts is one such facility. This 110-bed acute rehabilitation hospital installed Xmark's WatchMate system in the mid-1990s, and used it successfully for many years.

The hospital provides care to patients of all ages requiring rehabilitation from a wide range of causes, including brain injury and strokes. It also offers a Geriatric Evaluation & Management Program to assess an individual's physical and cognitive changes, and recommend a care plan.

Among this very diverse patient population, there is always a handful at risk of wandering. These individuals are accommodated on either the second or third floor of the three-floor facility.

After several years of using the WatchMate system, the facility began to find that it was getting difficult to properly adjust the coverage area of the door monitors. According to Matt Akulonis, Northeast Regional Director of Support Operations for HealthSouth Corporation, "The equipment was becoming obsolete, and it was time to upgrade."

The RoamAlert system was not an automatic choice. The facility took the time to review its options, and selected



Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital in Worcester, MA

RoamAlert based on the features it offered and the service provided by RoamAlert dealer TotalKare of America, Inc. based out of Syracuse, New York.

After a year of using the system, Fairlawn is pleased with its decision to switch. It has found the system both easier to implement and to use. "You can tell that RoamAlert is an improved product. The installation process went smoothly and the training was a lot cleaner," says Mr. Akulonis.

Fairlawn was particularly impressed by the implementation support provided by TotalKare, which did initial training. Since then, the facility has been able to handle refresher training on its own. "It's a very easy system to use," notes Mr. Akulonis.

When asked to give advice to others looking to upgrade, Mr. Akulonis stresses the need to do your due diligence to make sure you get a solution that you and your staff can trust: "You need to be comfortable with the equipment and the purveyor of the equipment." ■

New from RoamAlert



Locating residents in an emergency

The RoamAlert software can help you get everyone to safety

The biggest challenge during a fire or other emergency is knowing that you've found every resident and got them to safety. The RoamAlert system can make that job much easier.

The fire alarm goes off, and you have just a few minutes to get everyone out.

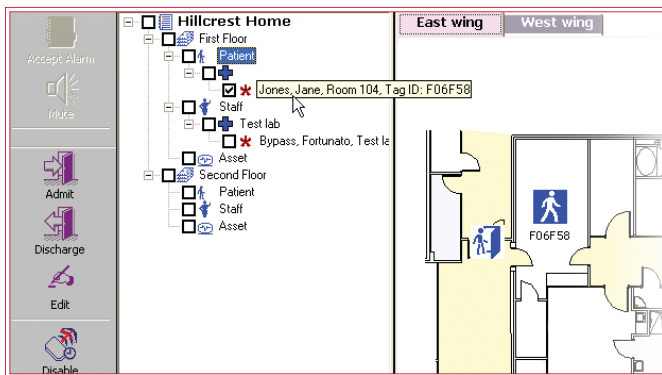
If everyone is where you *expect* them to be—in their room or a common area—things go pretty smoothly. But what if they're not? Then you have to begin a time-consuming facility-wide sweep.

Many RoamAlert customers use the RoamAlert system to help them manage this kind of crisis. It can locate any resident quickly and accurately.

How it works

Locating in the RoamAlert system is made possible using the Tag Pulse version of the Roam-Alert tag. This tag sends out a regular pulse every few seconds that is monitored by the system. The location of each tag is automatically updated with every pulse message received.

Locating a resident is done using the Locate menu in the RoamAlert software. It's very straightforward. Just click down the search tree to select the resident you wish to find: an icon appears on the map of your facility showing the resident's location.



The location of a resident is shown on the floor plan of your facility

What you need

There are a few things you need to do to add resident locating to your RoamAlert system. First, you require the right version of the RoamAlert software (version 1.2.10 or later).



Wrist tag with tag pulse

You will also need to add receivers throughout the area of your facility protected by RoamAlert. Your Authorized Dealer can help you with a site assessment to determine just how many receivers you will need. Receivers are installed on the same network as your door controllers.

As noted above, you will require the Tag Pulse version of the Roam-Alert tag (part number AR3TA01-00W). This tag is identical in size and shape to the standard RoamAlert tag, but it is easily identified by its teal color.

To extend locating to *all* your residents, considering adding Pendant tags (part number AR3TA01-00D). Like the Roam-Alert tag, these send out a regular signal so that you can locate the individual.

By the way, Pendant tags also enable residents to call for assistance at any time, adding yet another level of security to your facility. ■



Add pendant tags for other residents

To learn more

Contact your Authorized Dealer, or call Xmark at 1.866.55.XMARK or e-mail roamalert@xmark.com. ■

Secure units not always the right solution

The RoamAlert system can act as a vital backup

Many long term care facilities rely on “secure units” to house their most wander-prone residents. Typically, the doors to these units are locked 24 hours a day, and can only be accessed by entering a code on a keypad or using a swipe card.

This may seem to be a fail-safe solution, but there are drawbacks. Door lock systems cannot prevent tailgating—a resident slipping out unseen when a door is opened for legitimate reasons.

It is also not uncommon for doors to be left propped open. Every facility should certainly discourage this practice, but the fact is that there is no way of knowing that every door in a “secure unit” is actually secure. Under such conditions, it is easy for a resident to leave undetected.

Life safety codes

In many jurisdictions, delayed-egress magnetic locks are now mandated under “life safety codes.”

These codes are a replacement for older fire safety codes, and recognize that there are more threats to personal safety than fire or other events that affect the entire facility. A person facing physical attack should be able to use an emergency exit without having to pull the fire alarm to release the lock!

This is where delayed-egress locks come in. Unlike standard maglocks, delayed-egress locks will release after pressure has been applied to the crash bar on the door for several seconds, allowing the person to leave.

While the logic behind life safety codes is unassailable, they create an obvious problem for senior care facilities: it is much easier for a wander-prone resident to get out. Many magnetic door lock systems do not have a built-in ability to report alarms to a central station. There is only a local

sound alarm at the door that has been breached. If the door is in a remote location, the alarm may not be noticed for some time. And it is impossible to know when the alarm occurred.

The RoamAlert solution

The use of the RoamAlert system as an adjunct to secure units addresses these problems. Tailgating is not possible with RoamAlert. The system will generate an alarm for each monitored resident who enters the zone around an open exit.

RoamAlert also prevents wander-prone residents breaching a delayed-egress door. The system will immediately alarm when the door is opened, both locally and at the nurse station, either via the RoamAlert software or annunciator panel.

And the Door Ajar alarm means that any door that is left propped open is quickly detected.

Even if you decide that a RoamAlert door controller is not needed at every door, RoamAlert still provides the infrastructure to ensure greater safety for wander-prone residents.

When looking at delayed-egress locks, keep in mind that some models do include a relay for sending information back to a device like the alarm integration module (part number AR3IM01-008) or annunciator (part number AGEAN01-060). This means that you can monitor all your doors through the RoamAlert system.

Secure units for those affected by Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia are likely to remain a fixture of the continuum of services offered by senior care organizations. With the right mix of technologies, they can live up to their name and truly keep residents safe and secure. ■





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A roundup of news and views on wander prevention

Randy Gerlach works for RoamAlert dealer TotalKare of America, Inc., based in Syracuse, New York. He has over 20 year of experience as a long term care facility administrator in New York State.

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The benefits of wander prevention technology

An interview with former administrator Randy Gerlach

Based on your experience as an administrator, what benefit do you think LTC facilities can derive from a wander prevention system?

The first and foremost thing is the ability to provide a safe and secure environment for individuals who may have a tendency to wander. When the decision has been made to place a loved one in a long term care facility it is difficult for families as well as the resident. When families feel more secure with their decision, it helps to ease the admissions process. It decreases some of the tension and the feelings of guilt that families sometimes experience.

The other thing is the ability of the facility to minimize the potential for elopement. No matter how much we do, there is always the chance that something could happen. Systems, especially the software-based ones, really minimize the opportunity for elopement due to increased functionality. Coupled with the facility's policies and procedures, it creates a very strong program for wander prevention.

Are there common mistakes that facilities make when deciding on wander prevention measures?

I don't think that facilities always look at the advantages that can be had from the new computerized systems. Many states provide reimbursement systems based on the individual's acuity levels (clinical and activities of daily living). An example would be if you had a mobile resident with apparent minimal needs, but who also is constantly causing Loiter alarms at the door. Staff may have to interrupt other duties to attend to the alarm and re-direct that individual. If those incidents are documented in the medical record along with other evaluations, you may be able to qualify that person for a different RUGs (Resource Utilization Group) category.

The other thing the software does, with the documentation of alarms and alerts, is help in the care planning process. An example might be that Mrs. Jones goes out for lunch with her daughter each week. Staff has identified after reviewing a system report that Mrs. Jones is having an increased number of attempts to elope upon her return from these lunch outings.. This information can be helpful for staff when addressing the issue with family at the Care Planning Meeting.

Is it possible to calculate a "return on investment" for wander prevention?

A wander prevention system is not only to ensure the safety of the residents, it also goes into the marketing for your facility. When families come in, they're going to want to know that it's a safe and secure environment. A wander prevention system has a real impact on the ability to attract new patients. If those are private pay patients, that means a lot of additional revenue.

If a facility has an elopement, the costs can be very high. Fines can range up to \$3,000 a day. If the state felt it was a situation that required temporary management to take over, you're looking at fines that could be up to \$10,000 a day. Even with no injury to the resident, the state could give an instance fine between \$1,000 and \$10,000.

Facilities can also experience a ban on admissions. During this ban period a facility will not be eligible to receive Medicaid and /or Medicare reimbursement for any resident admitted due to non-compliance. Those amounts can compound very quickly. ■

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