

Transition of Care - Navigating the Wound Healing Gaps



Audrey K Moyer-Harris BSN RN MBA CWS WCCDC, Lauren McCarthy DPM DABPM AAFCAS CWSP, Jennifer Hurlow MSN GNP-BC CWCN, Stephanie Mowdy, APRN CNS DNP CWOCN CDE CFCN, Kari K Harman, RN CCM CWCA WCN-C ACCWS DAPWC, Stacy Kathryn Amer-Davis RN MSN FNP, Amy Couch MD, Kelly Roberts FNP-C, CWS, Amy Bruggemann MSN FNP-BC CWS, John P Kirby MD FCCWS FACS

Introduction Chronic wounds impact 6.8 million Americans and cost over \$25 billion yearly. Limited awareness and/or access to advanced trained/certified wound care specialists leads to suboptimal and outdated treatment, delayed healing, more complications, including higher amputation rates. Barriers include limited resources, lack of advanced wound care dressings, wound specific advanced modalities, insurance issues, and lengthy referral times. Enhanced discharge planning to include wound healing pathways, provider communication, clinician training, resource allocation, and standardized protocols are essential to improve outcomes, decrease readmissions/ER visits and reduce overall costs.[1][2][3]

Methods

The study highlights barriers to wound healing: few certified specialists, limited training for general practitioners and nurses, and restricted access to advanced wound care. These issues worsen outcomes, such as increased readmissions and amputations. The mission aims to improve discharge planning, primary care, and community nursing through education, specialist recognition, standardized protocols, collaboration, outcome tracking, and building local wound healing networks to enhance post-acute wound management and continuity of care.[6]



Only 30-40% of chronic wound patients see advanced trained/certified wound care specialists

Wound Healing Gaps

- Access to Advanced Wound Care Specialist
- Access to Advanced Wound Care Dressings
- Community Outreach "Wound Healing Network"

Participate in the Mission - Synergies Across the Country

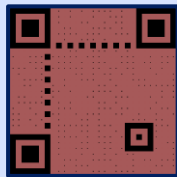
This is your opportunity to impact the "Wound Healing Gaps" Mission

*Please complete the survey add additional comments / barriers

Share with your:

- ✓ Advanced Wound Care Specialist Colleagues
- ✓ Bedside Nurses, Home Health & Nursing Home Nurses
- ✓ Patients & Caregivers

*** Data collection will be displayed at the conference on the final poster.



Wound Healing Gaps - Wound Care Specialist



Wound Healing Gaps - Bedside Nursing/Home Health/Nursing Facilities



Wound Healing Gaps - Bedside Nursing



Wound Healing Gaps - Patient and Caregivers

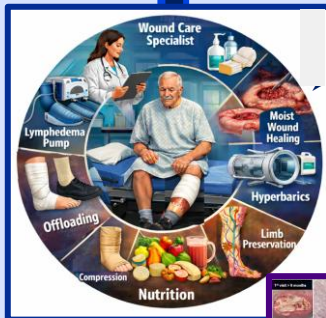
Summarizing the Gaps - Synergies Across the Country

Barriers

- Communication between "Transition of Care" providers
- EMR systems are different
- Not all discharge paperwork is including key components of wound assessment/treatment plans
- Awareness of Resources for Discharge Planning Team such as Wound Care Specialist, DME for Advanced Wound Care Dressings
- Navigating the "Post-Acute" setting has opportunities to create a continuum of care pathway
- Lack of "Basic Wound Care" trained Home Health/Facility Nurses
- Lack of / Limited resources for Transportation Services
- Underinsured / High Deductibles lack of financial resources
- Inconsistency of Wound Treatment with "Transition of Care"

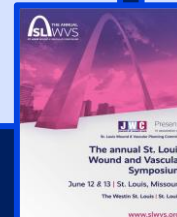
Mission Implementation

- Discharge Planning Wound Healing Mission
- Community Outreach Education for Post-Acute - Transition of Care
- Standardizing Pathways/Protocols
- Wound Healing Networks
- Transition of Care - networking with wound care specialist in all settings including industry
- Discharge planning pathways for resources including DME & options for patients/caregivers
- Community outreach education & collaboration
- Enhancing coordination of care across the continuum
- Increasing outreach between Industry Wound Care Specialist to create synergies to provide
- Ongoing education and collaboration of resources.



DME PROVIDER PARTNERSHIP Improves PATIENT OUTCOMES

- Improving Delivery Time
- Advanced Wound Care Dressing Options
- Ongoing Clinical Specialist Support



Community Outreach

- Synergies Across the Country

Making a Difference in our Communities

- Creating the "Wound Healing Network" platform to bring providers together and educate clinicians across community care settings.
- Involvement with local WOCN organizations nationwide, spanning a variety of care environments.
- Second year of JWC sponsorship of the "St. Louis Wound & Vascular Symposium."
- Providing wound care education and basic wound care certification for more than 450 students nationwide, including physicians, mid-level providers, nursing, and others, with a focus on limb preservation and evidence-based best practices.
- Monthly involvement with local directors of nursing and nursing home administrator groups in Missouri and Illinois.
- Development of collaborative educational sessions with industry clinical specialists.
- Coordination with nationally recognized speakers, including Pamela Scarborough, for 1-2 day education programs on "Wound Management & Pressure Injury Prevention."
- Collaboration with wound care colleagues in the Memphis area to contribute to a chapter in an upcoming ostomy book.
- Implementation of educational outreach programs, including wound care algorithms in the rural community of Ada, Oklahoma, with local nursing schools, home health agencies, and nursing facilities. Noticeable optimization of patient outcomes, limb preservation, and overall quality of life. Including partnership with Chickasaw National Medical Center to establish advance wound care pathways.
- Active involvement with multiple local WOCN organizations and conference planning to expand education and resources for bedside nurses.
- Creation of a "Community Outreach Lymphedema Mission" education workshop, providing hands-on training in compression wraps and appropriate use of lymphedema garments for community nurses.
- Expansion of the Wound Healing Network through partnership with industry specialists to develop a nutritional program focused on "Limb Loss Awareness," addressing diabetes and PAD challenges and opportunities across the continuum of care, with goals for April 2026 in St. Louis.



Wound Care Specialist Stakeholders

- representing a variety of settings across the country

- Mobile Providers - Nursing Facility & Patient Home Setting Oklahoma / Missouri
- Trauma Surgeon & HOPD University Based Missouri
- HOPD Specialty Council Hospital System Missouri
- Office Based Community - Oklahoma
- HOPD - Tennessee and California
- Rural Community Based HOPD - Podiatric Surgeon - Illinois



<https://slwvws.org/live/en/page/home>

Over 90% of hospitalists reported little to no confidence in managing pressure injuries or diabetic foot complications.

Discussion

High costs and frequent readmissions from wound healing complications are driven by resource shortages and limited training; only 10% of diabetic foot ulcer patients see multidisciplinary specialists, contributing to chronic wounds, readmissions, and amputations.[2][3] Expanding access to advanced wound care dressings, expert guidance, and coordinated discharge planning can improve outcomes. Community collaboration and comprehensive education are necessary to reduce disparities and address wound healing gaps nationwide.[5][6]

References

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7. Jencks SF et al., *N Engl J Med.* 2009;360:1418-1428; Bailey MK et al., *JAMA Netw Open.* 2019; 2(10):e1913264; Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). 2023; Syed ST et al., *J Community Health.* 2013; 38(5):976-993.



Results Only 30-40% of chronic wound patients see advanced trained/certified wound care specialists, resulting in slower healing and annual costs exceeding \$34,000 per patient. Improved access could accelerate recovery by 30%, reduce readmissions by 15%, and save up to \$3.75 billion each year. Missed appointments and transportation issues raise ER visits; larger health systems have nearly 20% of Medicare patients are readmitted within 30 days, costing \$26 billion, with \$17 billion potentially avoidable. Limited specialists and lack of access to advanced wound care dressings increase long-term expenses for complex chronic wounds. [6][7] Increasing community awareness enhances communication among wound care providers and boosts patient and caregiver satisfaction. This project examines gaps in wound healing and explores ways to improve outcomes.

Nationally, the prevalence of chronic wounds increased from 14.5% in 2014 to 16.4% in 2019 among Medicare beneficiaries