



Saint Peter's University Hospital and NJHA's "No Ulcers Campaign"

Through its "No Ulcers Campaign," the New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA) is making a concerted effort to reduce the painful, life-altering effects of pressure ulcers. Since inception, it estimates a 70 percent reduction in pressure ulcer incidence, as well as a 30 percent decrease in pressure ulcer prevalence.

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wound care coordinator

A member of the NJHA "No Ulcers Campaign" and Pressure Ulcer Collaborative, Saint Peter's University Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey, partners with Diversified Clinical Services (DCS) to manage its Wound Care Center. DCS employees frequently collaborate with hospital staff to continuously improve the care and prevention of wounds.

"We have instituted task forces on each floor that focus on wound care. We have also implemented improvements in our bed surfaces, wound care products, and increased physician participation in patient care, as well as staff education and awareness, to reduce the incidence of hospital-acquired pressure ulcers. This specialized service has made a significant impact," Program Director Wendy Calvin said. The thorough care and consideration each patient receives has led to notable improvement over a short period of time.

"The biggest value of having a hospital-based Wound Care Center is the ability to refer from within to our own specialists in the event that a patient that develops a pressure ulcer," Wound Care Coordinator Gwen Delbridge said. At the same time, she recognizes that the hospital must "also have a plan of care that is cost effective."



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Delbridge notes that with implementation of aggressive prevention and treatment protocols, "We've seen a tremendous decrease in pressure ulcers, as well as an increase in staff awareness with the focus on early detection and prevention."

OPTIMIZING CODING AND BILLING

Administrators at Saint Peter's agree. "Proper reimbursement is really dependent on making sure you classify the wounds correctly. With the continuous updates on coding changes instituted by CMS, DCS has helped us to maintain optimal documentation and coding. The close relationship between the attending physicians and the Wound Care Center has fostered a seamless working relationship," said Susan Klein, director of clinical documentation management.

THE IMPACT

A nurse at Saint Peter's for nearly 40 years, Susan Derr has seen the impact that the campaign and the Wound Care Center have had. "It's been because of the Wound Care Center that we have come to understand what's possible, but more than that, what's preventable. And if a pressure ulcer occurs, we have a specialized team equipped to immediately treat the patient with the most advanced modalities," Derr said. "If we can provide early treatment and prevent pressure ulcers in this country, we will have done an amazing job at furthering the healthcare of everybody."