

BETTER WOUND CARE, HEALTHIER MARGINS

Digitized wound care improves home health efficacy and productivity and boosts profits

The continuously rising incidence of acute, chronic and traumatic wounds imposes a greater burden of care on home health -- an industry that's already struggling under heavy government regulation, recent cuts to Medicare reimbursements, and the constant threat of litigation. Despite the continued rapid growth of the home health industry, an estimated 75% of agencies are unable to operate profitably.¹ Average profits are expected to decline to 3.3% of total revenue by 2019, compared to 4.2% in 2014.²

By digitizing clinical and administrative workflows for wound care management, home health agencies can increase their nurses' efficacy and productivity and, ultimately, boost their profit margins.

A GROWING BURDEN: THE CHALLENGES OF WOUND CARE IN HOME HEALTH

- + **Wounds are time consuming.** Home health nurses spend an average of 12 minutes during a patient visit assessing and charting wounds, using traditional techniques such as the ruler method to measure wound area and cotton swabs to gauge depth.
- + **They add to your workload.** Wound information is typically documented not once but twice: the first time at point of care and again when the information is keyed into the Electronic Health Records system. Documenting wounds adds three hours to a nurse's 12-hour workday³ and is one of the reasons why 72% of nurses stay after their shift.⁴
- + **Inaccurate wound assessment can hamper healing.** Traditional wound assessment techniques yield imprecise results, making it hard for home health agencies to effectively monitor and treat their patients' wounds. These traditional techniques are also often painful for patients.

¹ [Jocelyn Philips, IBIS World: "Home again: demand for industry services will remain high, but funding cuts threaten revenue" February 2014](#)

² [ibid.](#)

³ [Laura A. Stokowski, RN, MS, "Electronic Nursing Documentation: Charting New Territory", September 12 2013](#)

⁴ [ibid](#)

HOW INADEQUATE WOUND CARE MANAGEMENT HURTS YOUR BOTTOM LINE

- + **Reduced productivity = lost revenue.** The extra hours nurses spend assessing and documenting wounds with traditional techniques reduce home health agencies' ability to take on new patients and increase revenue.
- + **Prolonged wound healing cuts into profit margins.** Wound patients that take longer to heal usually need extra nurse visits. For home health agencies that get paid per episode of care, more visits translate into higher wage and travel expenses, and reduced profit margins.
- + **The high cost of high nurse turnover.** Long shifts and redundant work cause high staff burnout and low job satisfaction. Consider that it costs an estimated \$22,000 to \$64,000 to replace a registered nurse⁵ -- a significant expense that can quickly add up to an unhealthy bottom line.
- + **Inaccurate wound data increases reimbursement rejection.** Stringent documentation and reporting requirements introduced over the last decade have led to higher rates of reimbursement rejections. In a Medicare study, 17.2% of home health agencies cited insufficient reimbursement as a reason they could not admit or serve patients.⁶
- + **Poor outcomes lead to poor reputation, citations and penalties.** Online consumer reviews and low quality ratings on Medicare's Home Health Compare can lead to lower patient sign up and referrals. At the same time, more stringent regulatory oversight has resulted in more penalties for home health agencies, downgrading their reputation and bottom line.
- + **Wounds expose agencies to costly litigation.** Improper wound care and documentation put agencies at risk of litigation. Wounds are among the leading causes of medical malpractice suits, with pressure injuries ranking second among the top causes of litigation and yielding about \$4.2 billion in settlements each year.⁷

DIGITAL WOUND CARE MANAGEMENT: A GAME CHANGER IN HOME HEALTH

By digitizing and automating their entire wound care management workflow -- from image capture and risk scoring to claims submission -- home health agencies can eliminate hundreds of hours of point-of-care and administrative work for their nurses, reduce rejected reimbursement claims and increase patient referrals. The bottom line: a better bottom line.

⁵ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: [Business Case / Cost of Nurse Turnover](#)

⁶ I&M Policy Research, "Home Health Study Report" prepared for Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, January 11, 2011

⁷ Leaf Healthcare Inc., [The Financial Impact of Pressure Ulcers](#), 2017

Swift Skin and Wound delivers these benefits through a smart phone-ready software that makes capturing wound care information as easy as taking a photo. Swift Dashboards accessible from any computer or tablet display real-time healing and treatment data to help home health agencies immediately identify risks and improve care. Together, these innovative tools are transforming wound care management in home health and beyond.

**DIGITIZED
WOUND
ASSESSMENT**



**STREAMLINED
ADMINISTRATIVE
WORKFLOW**



**IMPROVED
PROFIT
MARGINS**

DIGITIZED WOUND ASSESSMENT

- + Swift Skin and Wound accurately measures and documents wounds 57% faster than the standard ruler method and paper documentation.
- + Touchless wound measurement and visualization is less painful for patients.
- + Real-time information in Swift Dashboards enable on-the-spot collaboration and accelerate decision-making.
- + Instant access to Best Practice Guidelines, Glossary and Care plan leads to better patient outcomes and less visits per episode of care.

STREAMLINED ADMINISTRATIVE WORKFLOW

- + With Swift Skin and Wound, data is captured digitally at point of care and flowed automatically into the Electronic Health Record system.
- + No more double documentation. Swift Skin and Wound reduces administrative work by up to 10 hours a week, with smart and guided workflows.
- + Accurate data capture and ordering decrease reimbursement claim denials by Medicare and private insurers.
- + Auto alerts and Business Intelligence reports enable home health agencies to respond quickly when wounds get worse, and to root out ineffective wound care practices.

RESULT: IMPROVED PROFIT MARGINS

- + Less paperwork translates to greater job satisfaction, better retention of nursing

staff and lower recruiting, hiring and onboarding costs.

- + Nurses can visit more patients, leading to higher revenue.
- + Higher rate of successful reimbursement claims reduces administrative costs and protects profit margins.
- + Better patient outcomes reduce regulatory citations and penalties and boost agency reputation, leading to more referrals, higher revenue and a healthier bottom line.
- + Informed wound care and accurate documentation give home health agencies a robust defence against personal injury litigation. An estimated 35% to 40% of pressure injury lawsuits are indefensible due to inconsistent or poor documentation.⁸

FOR HOME HEALTH, THE WAY FORWARD IS SWIFT

With growing demand for their services and ongoing changes to the healthcare system, home health agencies face an exciting -- and challenging -- future. Digitized wound care management with Swift Skin and Wound is the way forward for agencies looking to improve their efficacy, productivity and profit margins.

Swift Skin and Wound measures wounds 57% faster than the standard ruler method.

Better Is Waiting

Contact Swift Medical
Phil Wigmore
VP Business Development
1.800.484.2975
phil.wigmore@swiftmedical.com



⁸ Tim McVey, McVey & Parsky LLC, [Avoiding Costly Legal Pitfalls in Wound Care](#), October 28, 2011