

# WOUNDS: A GLOBAL PROBLEM, A HOME HEALTH CHALLENGE

*With acute and chronic wound cases on the rise, home health care providers face many challenges – and opportunities*

---

## A GREATER BURDEN OF CARE FOR A GROWING NATIONAL AND GLOBAL CONCERN

Acute and chronic wounds are a growing national and global concern, driven by aging populations and the increasing prevalence of chronic conditions such as diabetes and obesity.

Home health agencies bear a great burden of care for acute and chronic wounds, with over a third of home health care patients requiring treatment for wounds.<sup>1</sup> One study has found that looking after a wound can take up to 50% of care services provided in the home.<sup>2</sup>

## THE WOUND CARE CHALLENGE FOR HOME HEALTH

As the incidence of chronic wounds continues to rise over the next decade at an expected rate of 2% annually,<sup>3</sup> home health agencies face significant clinical, administrative and financial challenges.

- + **Inaccurate wound measurement.** Accurate data enables proper wound diagnosis and treatment, yet the commonly used ruler methods for measuring and tracking wounds often yield imprecise results. As a result, wounds can take longer to heal, requiring more provider visits per episode of care and restricting agencies' ability to schedule in more patients. This cuts into profits and reduces potential to grow revenue.
- + **Inaccurate or incomplete documentation.** Hand written documents with imprecise measurement techniques are inaccurate and incomplete – a challenge that's compounded when workers with little training in wound care are tasked with documenting wounds, or when confidential paper documents are lost or misplaced. Beyond their impact on patient outcomes, inaccurate wound records can lead to reimbursement claim denials.

---

<sup>1</sup> Carol Hall Ellenbecker; Linda Samia; Margaret J. Cushman; Kristine Alster, "Patient Safety and Quality: An Evidence-Based Handbook for Nurses"

<sup>2</sup> Corinne McIsaac, "Outcomes Research—Closing the Gap Between Evidence and Action: How Outcome Measurement Informs the Implementation of Evidence." Wound AAWC Official Journal, November 2007

<sup>3</sup> *Chronic Wound Epidemic Cited in U.S.*, June 7 2016, Healogics Inc., Surgical Product Magazine

- + **Time-consuming workflows.** Traditional methods for measuring and documenting wounds at point of care -- using a paper ruler and cotton swab to measure, and pen and paper to log results and observations -- can consume a significant amount of a nurse's time at the bedside. At the end of their shift, nurses still need to enter wound information into the electronic health records system, adding up to three hours to a 12-hour workday.<sup>4</sup>
- + **Lack of direct oversight to enforce care protocols.** Home health nurses work independently in the field, making it hard for agencies to ensure and enforce compliance to wound care protocols and best practices. This is a significant challenge for agencies, given the greater focus on wounds in home health quality measures -- metrics that can affect new patient sign-ups and referrals.
- + **Lack of wound expertise.** Numerous hospitals have introduced protocols for early discharge after major surgery in the wake of Medicare's transition to bundled payments and episodes of care.<sup>5</sup> Many of these discharged patients who end up in home health care have complex wounds, or have wounds that are at risk of infection. This presents a challenge for home health agencies with little training in complex wound care.
- + **High risk of litigation.** Wounds are among the leading causes of medical malpractice lawsuits, with pressure injuries ranking second among the top causes of litigation.<sup>6</sup> As the incidence of chronic wounds continues to rise, home health agencies face higher risks of litigation.

## HOW CAN SWIFT HELP?

Swift Skin and Wound digitizes and automates the entire wound care management workflow -- from image capture and risk scoring to claims submission. The Swift smartphone app 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 address the many challenges of wound care management.

- + **Accurate and faster measurement.** Swift Skin and Wound measures and documents wounds accurately and 57% faster than the standard ruler method to improve patient experience and outcomes, and helps to reduce extra nurse visits per episode of care.
- + **Efficient workflow and automatic data capture** ensure complete and accurate information for better treatment planning and care management, and successful reimbursement claims. This

---

<sup>4</sup> Laura A. Stokowski, RN, MS, "Electronic Nursing Documentation: Charting New Territory", September 12 2013

<sup>5</sup> Scott E. Regenbogen, MD, MPH, Anne H. Cain-Nielsen, MS, Edward C. Norton, PhD, Lena M. Chen, MD, MS, John D. Birkmeyer, MD, and Jonathan S. Skinner, PhD, "Costs and Consequences of Early Hospital Discharge After Major Inpatient Surgery in Older Adults" May 2017

<sup>6</sup> Leaf Healthcare Inc., The Financial Impact of Pressure Ulcers, Leaf Healthcare Inc., 2017

seamless flow of data also eliminates the need for nurses to stay post-shift to transfer wound assessment information from paper to computer.

- + **Built-in care protocols for easier compliance.** Swift ensures best wound care practices are followed by integrating protocols into the the Swift App and alerting home health administrators to wounds that need advanced care.
- + **Actionable insights for enhanced collaboration.** Swift Dashboards provide secure access to real-time information, including flagged wounds. This makes it easy to consult and share information with a physician, wound care expert or skilled nurse. This also enables home health agencies to be proactive when post-surgery patients are sent home with complex wounds or when an existing patient develops a wound.
- + **A stronger defense against lawsuits.** Did you know that an estimated 35% to 40% of pressure injury lawsuits are indefensible due to inconsistent or poor documentation?<sup>7</sup> Accurate and complete wound care information gives home health agencies a more robust response to lawsuits.

## DIGITAL WOUND CARE RISES TO THE CHALLENGE

By delivering accurate measurement and streamlining clinical and administrative workflows for wound care management, Swift Skin and Wound addresses all the key challenges of wound care management in home health. With Swift Skin and Wound, home health agencies are well equipped to tackle this growing national and global concern.

---

## Better Is Waiting

### Contact Swift

Maurice Taylor  
Account Executive  
416.786.4636  
maurice.taylor@swiftmedical.com

**SWIFT SKIN & WOUND** 

---

<sup>7</sup> Tim McVey, McVey & Parsky LLC, Avoiding Costly Pitfalls in Wound Care, October 28, 2011