

USING TELEHEALTH TECHNOLOGY TO EXTEND THE REACH OF THE WOC NURSE INTO UNDERSERVED PRACTICE SETTINGS

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Challenge

A Shortage of Wound/Ostomy Continance Nurses (WOCN) in western North Carolina

- Inability to meet current and future patient demand
- High cost of admission/readmission/transfers
- Increased length of stay
- Decreased patient satisfaction

Goals

- Increase patient access to specialty wound/ostomy care
- Decrease cost of care through better outcomes
- Allowing patient to remain in their community!

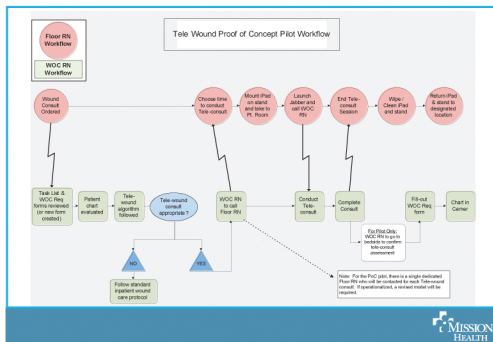
Methodology

- A proof of concept design was used.
- The pilot was conducted on 7 units of a tertiary acute care facility.
- Consult requests were received by a centrally located WOC nurse.
- Remote bedside assessment was conducted using a tablet device with HIPAA compliant software for data transmission and interactive video conferencing.
- A treatment plan was developed collaboratively by the WOC nurse, patient/family and their primary nurse.
- Treatment fidelity was assessed via a bedside visit by the office WOC nurse.

Proof of Concept In Action



Workflow for Telemedicine Wound Care Consults



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Pluses

- Accurate Assessments
- Bedside RN involvement in consult
- Well received by patients
- Easy to conduct
- Proven to be an effective tool with low cost

Learnings

- Requires good lighting
- Requires a steady hand or mount
- Requires good communication between WOC RN and bedside RN
- WOC RN limited on use of senses
- Requires "queuing" process to operationalize

Outcomes

- No treatment plan alterations were indicated in a 28 case pilot.
- Overall staff and patient/family satisfaction with the process and technology were high.
- Telehealth technology has the potential to facilitate the delivery of high quality, low cost wound care assessment and management across multiple underserved areas.
- Project expansion plans include deployment across rural acute, home health, and long-term care settings in the region.

