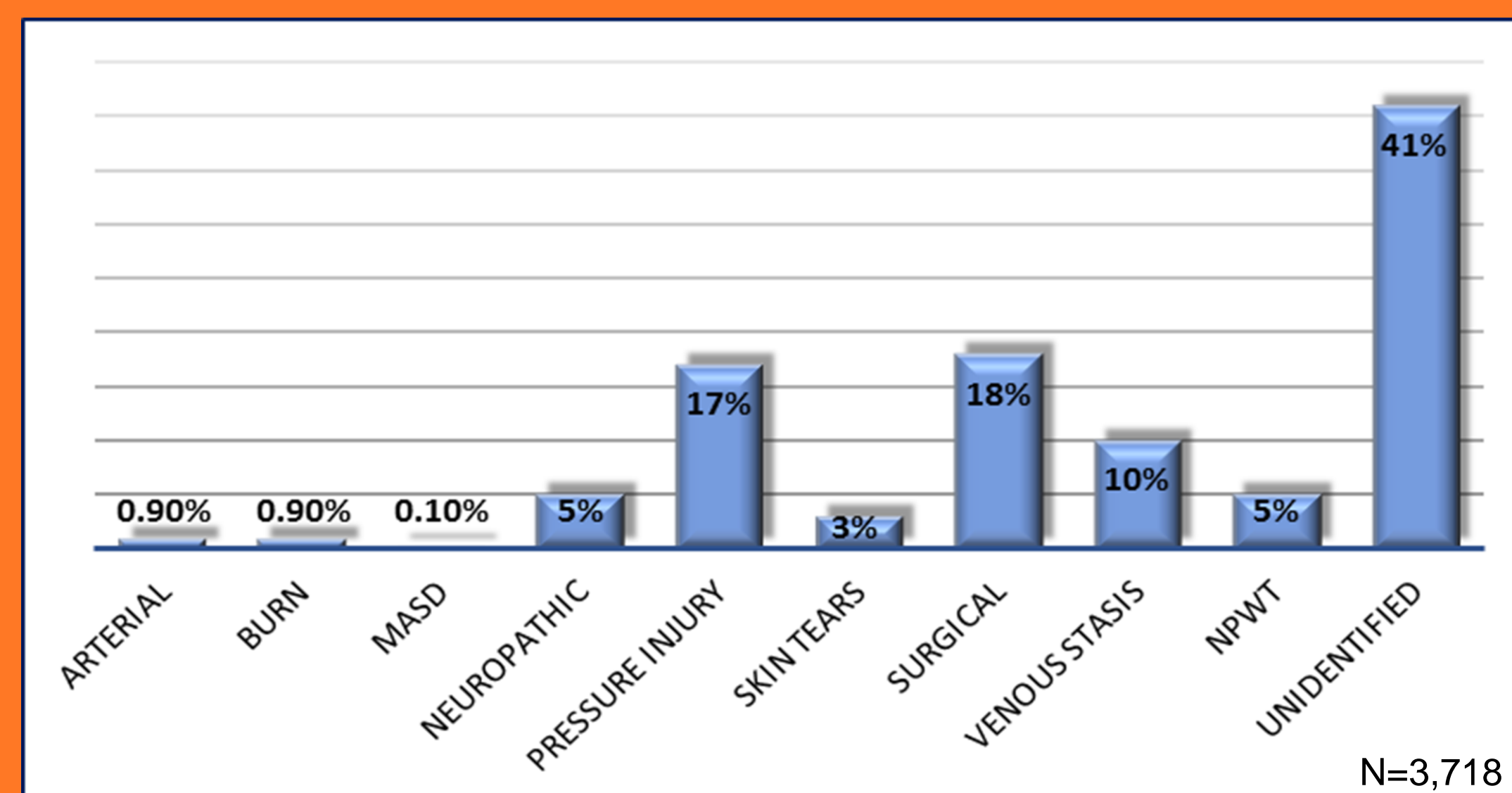


Need for Awareness: Health Care Reform

Changes in health care reform are providing new opportunities for the WOC Nurse to expand into new practice roles. Health care organizations, insurers, and providers must become more efficient in the delivery of quality health care services. As experts in wound care with a keen awareness of evidence-based practice and financial implications of treatment, the WOC Nurse is in a unique position to assume a vital role in utilization management (UM). Utilization Management encompasses a diverse set of activities designed to influence the use of health care services and thereby constrain health care resource consumption.

Wound Etiology in Home Care

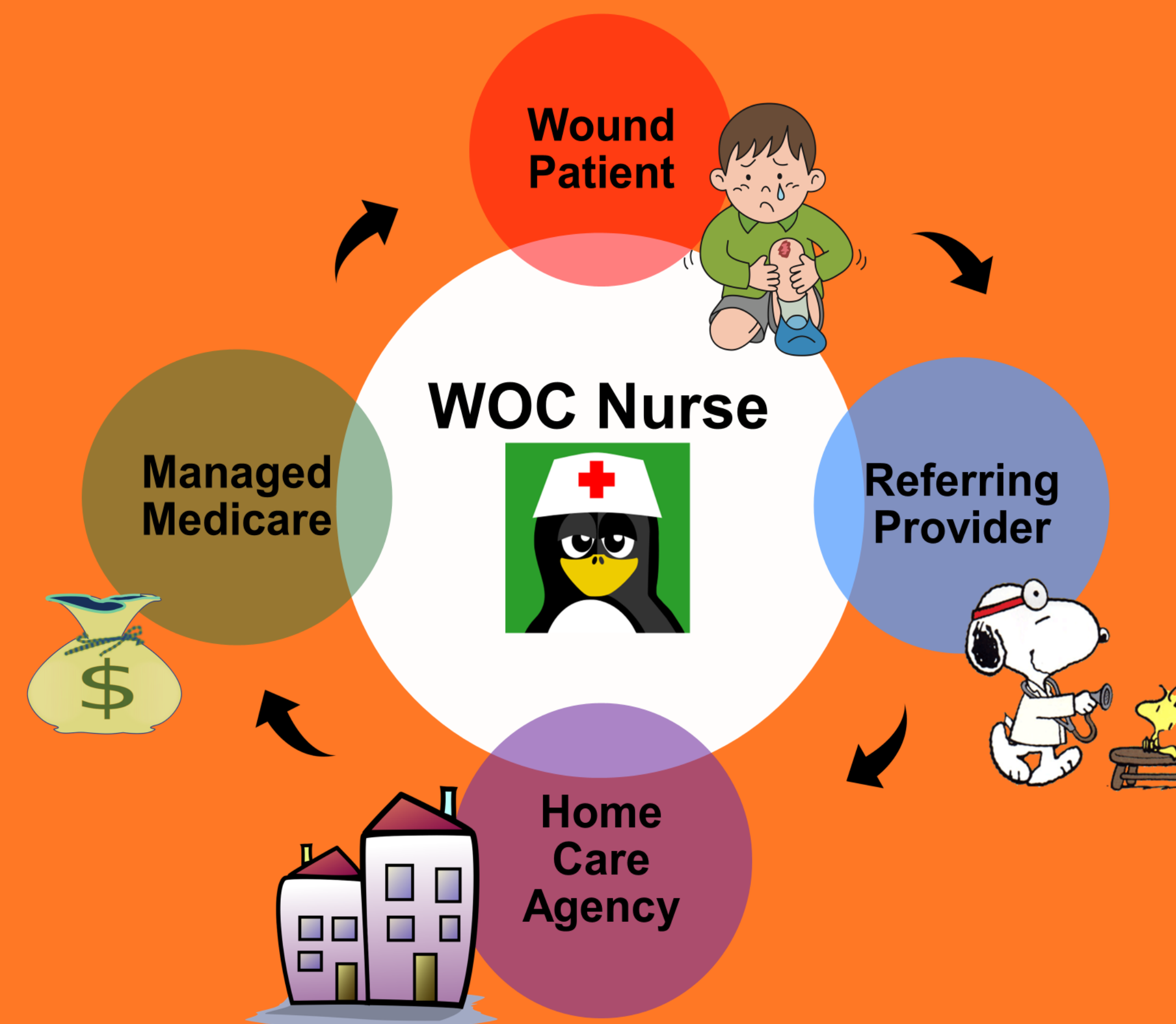
Data collected from review of OASIS and Plan of Care (485) documents over 6 months reveals the majority of wounds are unidentified. The second greatest volume of cases are pressure injuries followed by surgical wounds. NPWT data has also been collected which is mostly pressure injury and surgical wounds. In order to improve accuracy of data collection, more education on OASIS documentation of wound etiologies is needed at the home care agencies.



The Role of the WOC Nurse in Utilization Management

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WOC Nurse Role in Utilization Management Process



Wound Care & Home Care

- Wounds impact nearly 15% of Medicare beneficiaries.
- Wound Care costs \$28 billion annually.
- Over 1/3 of home care patients are treated for wounds.
- Nearly 42% of those home care patients have multiple wounds.
- Chronic wound care patients are often negatively viewed as the "problem patient" due to excessive costs and long-term needs.
- Optimal home health care allows the patient to remain at home and avoid hospitalizations or long-term care placement.
- The WOC Nurse is uniquely suited to monitor and authorize home care services for complex wound cases.

The Impact

Medicare Advantage plans contract with utilization management organizations to ensure that home healthcare agencies are delivering reasonable and necessary services. The UM company employs WOC Nurses specifically to review pre-authorizations for skilled nursing visits of wound care patients. By collaborating with the agency's coordinator, home care nurse, physician, patient, and caregiver, the UM/WOC Nurse advocates for the delivery of evidence based treatments and optimization of healthcare resources. Through the WOC Nurse's ongoing management, the UM company can improve healthcare outcomes while reducing the costs associated with wound care patients. This unique role for the WOC Nurse in UM provides specialized clinical expertise needed to manage the complex, long-term needs of patients with managed health care plans.

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