Advancing Skill Set for Wound Care in the Long-Term Care Setting

WOCN/W.T.A. Wound Treatment Associate Program

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Purpose

Pressure ulcers can be a challenge to treat and manage in the long-term care/nursing home setting. Many skilled nursing facilities do not have a wound care specialist, or even a staff member (associate) trained in wounds. The lack of certified wound care professionals in these facilities can lead to an increase in the following:

* Complications from pressure ulcers
* Hospitalizations
* Prevalence of amputations
* Risk of death

Objective

Life Care Centers of America, Inc., (LCCA) is a long-term care community of over 200 skilled nursing facilities in 28 states from Boston, MA to Hilo, HI.

Life Care reviewed several other certification and wound training courses and decided that the WTA would best meet our needs since the course is completed online at the center. The course content allows flexibility in the scheduling to allow more associates to be able to participate in the course.

"Life Care Centers of America is dedicated to providing the most advanced care to the residents and is specializing in the field of wound care to better meet the needs of the residents for both long-term and short-stay."

The course content is applicable to our setting of long-term care and the course is taken by nurses, therapists, and some of our physicians. The training course has greatly improved our skill level and confidence from our wound team clinicians by engaging many members of the team.

Outcome

Now we have more interventions and treatment options and wound healing rates have increased.

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LCCA began the WTA program last July to provide additional wound training to its associates and currently has over 450 participants. It is our goal to have trained clinicians in every center and to date we are achieving that with a 95% success rate.

References

Stass WE Jr., Cioschi HM. "Pressure Sores – A Multifaceted Approach to Prevention and Treatment" West J. Med 1991; 154:539-544

Szabo, L. "Spinal Cord Injury Patients Often Succumb to Bed Sores" USA Today 2004.

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