Reduction of Pressure Ulcer Incidence and Specialty Bed Rental Dollars Across the Continuum of Care

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INTRODUCTION
Pressure ulcer prevention and related product cost containment across the continuum of care are ongoing challenges for healthcare providers. Presented will be our timeline of actions toward meeting this challenge.

January 2003
The poster author is employed by Memorial Hermann Northwest Hospital (MHNWH) as its first on staff CWOCN into the position of Performance Improvement Coordinator. The skin team/program is part of the responsibilities.

March 2003
We participated in a National Prevalence and Incidence Study. It identified an incidence rate of 17% and 33% respectively in our 200-bed acute care hospital and in the 19-bed rehabilitation unit.

In addition, financial reports revealed a yearly expenditure of $78,209 for specialty bed rental. These results were despite existing skin care/specialty bed-rental guidelines. The results were unacceptable to the MHNWH skin team.

Assessment of the current situation revealed:
- Protocols/Guidelines that were outdated
- Virtually no prevention strategies in use by the unit-based caregivers
- Inappropriate use of specialty beds due to outdated evidence-based criteria guidelines
- Unit staff unaware of products available for use with our patients

Plan of action:
- Education of the staff regarding:
  - Prevention strategies
  - Methods to enhance the healing potential of the skin
- Revise protocols/guidelines with emphasis on prevention and early intervention strategies, including the use of static air technology: overlays, seat cushions, and heel protective devices.

April–August 2003
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September 2003 through February 2004
The MHNWH multidisciplinary team presented The Skin Care Awareness Week

Clinical education was provided to licensed and non-licensed personnel with emphasis on prevention strategies. The product vendors offered objective-based product education to enhance selection competence by the staff.

Protocols/Guidelines revised and implemented
Skincare and Wound Care Product Guide: This form has a picture of:
- Denuded skin, skin tear, Stage I thru IV, and eschar, with treatment options for each. Pictures of the products are also included.
- Guidelines for Specialty Bed Usage: This form includes options for patients with prevention needs up to those with extensive skin breakdown. Form is presented as a matching format.

Weekly audit sheet designed and implemented
Audits done every Wednesday and sent to the CWOCN for review and suggestions for treatment/plan of care.

March 2004
A follow-up prevalence and incidence study identified an incidence rate of 7.1% for acute care and 0% for rehabilitation. This was a 59% and 100% reduction respectively from the previous year.

Simultaneously, with the better use of prevention options, (i.e. WAF-FLE Static Air Products) and appropriate use of specialty beds, the specialty bed rental expenditures decreased to $40,014, a 49% reduction.

March 2005 Update
A follow-up prevalence and incidence study identified an incidence rate of 0% for acute care and 0% for rehabilitation.

Conclusion
This practice innovation has been successful in reducing the pressure ulcer incidence rate as well as specialty bed rental costs across the Continuum of Care, which includes areas within the acute care hospital to the rehabilitation unit. It also served to remind us of the importance of conducting ongoing evaluations of protocols/guidelines so that they will continue to promote cost containment and most importantly optimal patient care outcomes.

In addition, it shows the outcome of empowering a CWOCN on staff to educate, assist and direct as appropriate, the healthcare team, which is then successful in achieving the most beneficial patient care in the most cost-effective manner.

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