

VNS Health Expands Its Wound Care Clinical Expertise

More than one-third of VNS Health's patients have some form of wound. And with most physician practices seeing a significant reduction in visits since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic—resulting in postponed or delayed care in some cases—a greater number of home care and home hospice patients have been admitted with complex wounds over the past two years.

To address this trend and ensure the best possible wound care for these patients, VNS Health is now providing its frontline employees with a state-of-the-art wound-monitoring app. The app, developed by Swift Medical, uses artificial intelligence to analyze photos of the patient's wound and report its exact dimensions and location. Both photos and wound measurements are automatically transmitted to the patient's electronic medical record (EMR), where VNS Health's clinicians can compare the latest photo to prior photos to assess how the wound is healing, and also view up-to-date graphs showing the wound's progression over time.

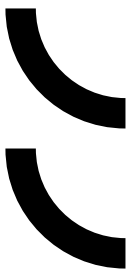
"This instant transmission of wound data lets our specialized wound care nurses access the patient's wound status in real time, resulting in faster, more proactive interventions," explains Tameka McCabe, director of VNS Health's wound care program. "The wound care nurse can immediately tell when a wound isn't improving—in which case they'll consult with the patient's other clinicians or, if needed, have the patient see a wound care physician."

“VNS Health is the first home health care organization in the northeastern U.S. to employ the Swift wound-monitoring app,” notes Tony Dawson, Chief Quality Officer for VNS Health. To make optimal use of this new technology, VNS Health has reorganized its wound care operations: Wound care nurses are now assigned to specific geographic regions—enabling each nurse to follow a targeted set of patients, and quickly schedule virtual or in-person consults when the data shows a patient’s wound is having difficulty healing. The wound care program has also added an education specialist who will provide ongoing training to frontline clinicians around wound treatment and monitoring, as well as help educate family caregivers on wound care protocols.

“By standardizing our approach to wound care, we believe we can enhance and further expand on our clinical expertise when it comes to the measurement and management of patients with complex wound care needs,” says McCabe. “Our frontline nurses and therapists can now alert the rest of the care team sooner when a complex wound presents itself; our wound care nurses are able to consult earlier and more frequently; and family members will have a better understanding of how they can assist in the healing process—all of which adds up to better wound care for our home care and hospice patients.”

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