



# Industry, Clinicians and Patients: A Pandemic Journey To A New More Virtual Interaction

## WOUNDS CANADA

We are all too familiar with the personal impact of the pandemic and its effects on our world. Even on a professional basis, the short time frame over which our world changed, limited our exposure to our immediate business environments.

So, Wounds Canada decided to bring together different stakeholders involved in the management of patients with wounds to share their collective experience through a town hall.

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## Wound Care Stakeholder Panel



**Douglas Queen**  
Moderator  
Wounds Canada



**Cassie Alverson**  
Marketing Manager  
Wound & Skin Care  
Coloplast



**Patricia Coutts**  
Wound Care Nurse  
Toronto Regional Wound  
Healing



**Janet Daglish**  
National Director  
Business Development &  
Government Relations at  
Bayshore HealthCare



**Shelley Masvoluk**  
Director Clinical  
Engagement  
Medline



**Dr. Perry Mayer**  
Medical Director  
The Mayer Institute

Most businesses were left scrambling to do things differently. The biggest challenge was how to reach the patient. Like most pandemic interactions, this became a more virtual contact. Some clinicians continued to see patients but differently. After a steep learning curve, it's safe to say a hybrid approach is likely the new norm for most stakeholders. While there are many challenges moving forward, there are also opportunities for increased innovation, collaboration and education of all involved in the management of wounds. Find out more about what tools, strategies and mindsets were helpful to the wound care community while navigating the confusion and shifting priorities of a global.

## The Impact of Covid-19

Industry was left scrambling to build virtual platforms for client and patient engagement during a time when many people were afraid to leave their homes. Important decisions had to be made about when to pivot to virtual visits and when in-person visits for patients were still needed. While **Dr. Perry Mayer**, medical director of The Meyer Institute, was able to keep his waiting room open due to its large capacity, **Patricia Coutts**, a wound care nurse with Toronto Regional Wound Services, was working in a setting with limited capacity where patients had to wait in cars.

**Janet Daglish**, National Director of Business Development and Government Relations at Bayshore HealthCare, saw an immediate reduction in services, but with increased volume looming. One of the biggest challenges was sourcing PPE as prices skyrocketed all over the world – policy had to literally evolve on a daily basis. Not all retirement homes were interpreting public health directives in the same way, so her company was often making decisions ahead of public health and was able to keep their staff COVID-19 rates low with this proactive approach. **Shelley Masvoluk**, Director of Clinical Engagement at Medline, had little to no access to wound care clinicians over the past year due to the crisis. **Cassie Alverson**, Marketing Manager for wound and skin care at Coloplast, identified a need for her team to employ communication, empathy, adaptability and new technology to deliver products during uncertain times.

Panelists offered key insight to aid in surviving the pandemic:

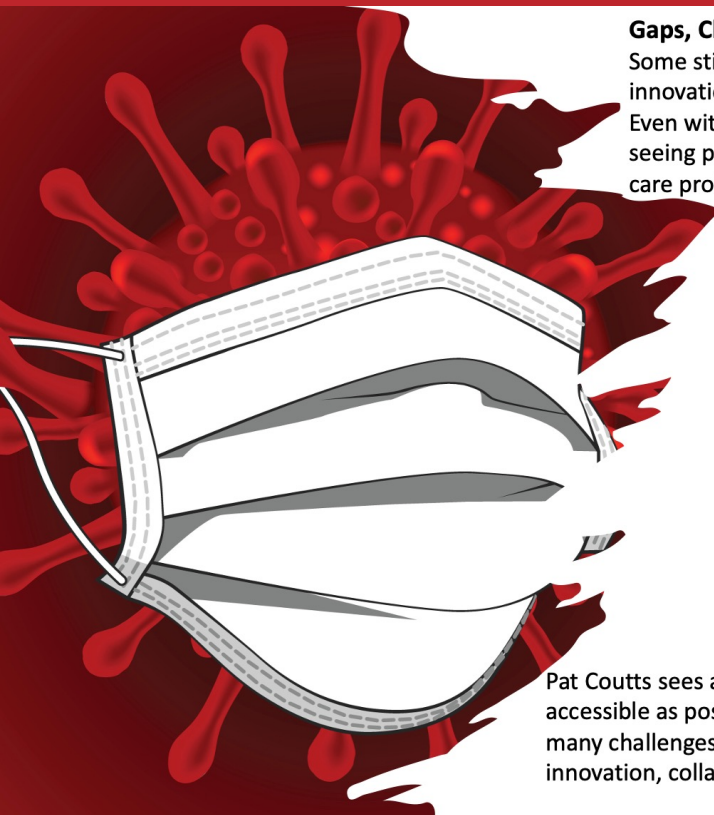
- Valuing the time of health-care professionals,
- Crafting organizational strategies and clear communications plans,
- Giving team members time to adapt to different technologies and meeting styles, were all key to surviving the pandemic.







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## Gaps, Challenges & Concerns

Some still resist being completely online, which can make introducing new innovations to customers and virtual consultations with patients challenging. Even with so much of our world existing in a digital space, a preference for seeing patients in-person is still widely preferred by both patient and health-care professionals alike.

If a patient consultation is taking place in a virtual setting, it's crucial that information sharing and communication is perfected within a health-care team. Many patients who do have in-person visits still mourn the lack of human connection that results from health-care professionals being heavily outfitted in PPE rendering them unrecognizable. As patients and family assume more responsibility for their own health, they require a lot of additional support and coaching via the internet, or in many cases, by phone where internet services are unavailable. There's a need for easily accessible and targeted education during the nursing shortage caused by the pandemic. Many nurses entering homecare settings face a steep learning curve and must develop their expertise quickly without necessarily having a specific educational background in wound care and management.

Pat Coutts sees an opportunity to make educational resources as targeted and accessible as possible to health-care professionals in the pandemic. While there are many challenges moving forward, there are also opportunities for increased innovation, collaboration and education.

## The New Normal

After a steep learning curve, virtual connection and education is here to stay. For most businesses, the day-to-day will look like a hybrid of in-person and virtual business. There is an opportunity to innovate in the field of delivery of education and provide more manageable, accessible webinars and videos. Virtual education and conferences can reach a wider audience while also reducing travel expenses for a company overall.

While industry struggled with how to deliver education, coaching and symptom management through virtual care, there was an unexpected positive outcome: an increased interest in self-management and prevention on the part of patients and their families. Patients are now more invested in their own care and management because they're trying to avoid in-person physician visits, as well as placement in hospital and long-term care. There is an industry pivot towards better supporting families for the care of patients (because an in-person visit isn't always guaranteed) and using easy-to-access patient and family teaching tools like the resources featured on Wounds Canada's website.

