



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wounds Canada prioritizes the voices of patients by partnering with Lakehead University

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Toronto, ON – Wounds Canada, a non-profit organization, has partnered with Lakehead University to host a national exchange focused on the patient experience and journey through wound care in Canada, as part of a long-term research project begun in 2022.

The project, called Our Voices, Our Stories, kicked off with a unique knowledge mobilization event where patients and patient advocates shared their stories of navigating Canada’s health-care systems and social life challenges to access wound care services. Event participants, including health-care providers and researchers, used the shared stories, reflections and dialogue to highlight several key areas of focus, including advocacy, change, collaboration, wound specialists, barriers, cultural safety and accessibility.

Wounds Canada brings the community together to drive social change by prioritizing the voices of patients. This initiative is led by Dr. Ide Costa of Lakehead University’s School of Nursing, in collaboration with Dr. Michelle Spadoni (Lakehead University School of Nursing), Dr. Catherine Phillips (Lakehead University School of Social Work), Dr. Pilar Camargo Plazas (Queens University School of Nursing) and Mariam Botros (CEO, Wounds Canada).

According to Dr. Costa, the principal investigator of the “Our Voices, Our Stories” research project, a key outcome of this initiative is to find ways to “shift away from the current biomedical model of wound care and toward an empowerment and person-centred model of care.”

“This initiative is committed to honouring the voices and stories of vulnerable populations, particularly those living with chronic wounds. By sharing their lived experiences, we aim to amplify their voices, raise awareness of their struggles and inspire systemic change that addresses the unique challenges they face. Through their stories, we can drive the development of more inclusive, compassionate and effective

wound care solutions that prioritize the dignity and well-being of all Canadians, especially those most at risk.” she said.

As Canada’s leading advocate for Canadians at risk for, or with, wounds, Wounds Canada believes the patient’s voice is essential for informing efforts for creating a national person-centred wound care strategy. The information captured through this research helps to

- put a human face on the burden of wounds in Canada,
- identify gaps in care and how they should be addressed,
- identify areas in which holistic wound management is developing and/or can be enhanced, and
- highlight the need for equitable, best-practiced-based and person-centred policies and education in the areas of skin health, wound prevention and management, and patient skin and wound self-management.

Mariam Botros, CEO of Wounds Canada says, “Wound care isn’t just about treating a wound. To be effective, clinicians need to understand patients’ contexts, personal factors, social factors and economic factors, and how these work together to influence wound management and healing, not to mention the quality of life of not only patients but their families as well. This research project goes beyond the study of physiological factors and moves into areas that are less-often studied but have equally important impact.”

Nationally, health-care professionals have noted a rapid rise in hard-to-heal wounds that require life-long management and affect patients’ physical, psychosocial and spiritual lives, particularly for low-income, marginalized and/or vulnerable people.

The cost to Canadians regarding the treatment of complex wounds is estimated at \$3.9 billion per year, and efforts such as these help reduce the prevalence and incidence of wounds of all types.

The interviews with the patients living with, or at risk of wounds, and/or their caregivers are featured at <https://www.woundscanada.ca/patient-or-caregiver/patient-stories>.

To arrange an interview please contact: Larry Sawyer at larry.sawyer@woundscanada.ca

Established in 1995, Wounds Canada is the voice for people in Canada at risk of, or living with, wounds and their providers. Our mission is to build a healthier Canada by advancing skin health and excellence in wound management. Wounds Canada is holding an educational conference October 17-19 in London, Ontario and the public is invited. For more information contact www.woundscanada.ca.

