

CAWC Receives Further Funding for *Diabetes, Healthy Feet and You* Initiative

In 2010, the Canadian Association of Wound Care (CAWC) received funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to launch Phase 1 of a comprehensive educational program for people with diabetes called *Diabetes, Healthy Feet and You*. Earlier this year, the association received further funding, allowing it to implement Phase 2 of the program.

Phase 1 wrapped up earlier this year and included the following initiatives, some of which have been translated into as many as 19 languages:

- An interactive website – <http://cawc.net/index.php/public/feet> – where patients can complete a diabetes self-management questionnaire, develop a personal foot care plan and learn what questions to ask their physician.
- A brochure for clinicians, to help them determine if their patients are at risk for diabetes-related foot complications.
- A patient self-screening brochure and posters, which were designed to assist people with diabetes in recognizing factors that lead to skin breakdown and support early interventions to prevent diabetic foot ulcers.
- Information sheets for patients, on the topics of vascular insufficiency, neuropathy and foot deformity.
- A patient education video, entitled *Diabetes, Healthy Feet and You: Caring for Your Feet*.
- A series of 3 information guides that complement the video by providing patients with quick reference tips on proper foot care, questions to ask their healthcare professional and an explanation of what occurs during a foot exam.

All of the CAWC *Diabetes, Healthy Feet and You* materials were developed with the support of an expert advisory group and a patient focus group. The expert advisory group for Phase 1 was composed of interdis-

ciplinary healthcare professionals from healthcare organizations across Canada.

Due to the success of the Phase 1 initiatives, more funding was received by the CAWC from PHAC to initiate Phase 2 and a second expert advisory group was formed.

In late August 2011, the expert advisory group met to plan and outline the next steps and outcomes for Phase 2 of the program. Planned outcomes include: development of a Canadian network of peer educators working in partnership with the

diabetes community and healthcare professionals to assist Canadians living with diabetes to keep their feet healthy.

These peer educators:

- will work in the community setting, serving as connectors between patients and healthcare providers to promote good foot health; and
- must be accepted as having the same challenges as their peers, and must be accepted by their peers.

The program will involve 10 communities – one in each province – and two patients who



live with diabetes and two healthcare professionals will be identified.

The program will use the materials developed in Phase 1 to inform patients of the early warning signs of neuropathy and foot ulcers, to prevent diabetic foot ulcers, and advocate to ensure effective care.

Program elements include:

- expert advisory group;
- educational/training session;
- research/evaluation program;
- diabetic foot ulcer prevention peer educator outreach action plans;
- diabetic foot ulcer prevention peer educator portal/network; and
- communication and information dissemination.

"Developing a national peer-to-peer education program is a new frontier in wound care and we are excited to be undertaking this new initiative," says Peggy Ahearn, Executive Director, CAWC.

Stay tuned for further details in the coming months!



CAWC Increases Online Presence

The Canadian Association of Wound Care now has a Twitter feed (@WoundCareCanada) and a dedicated Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/woundcarecanada>), but we're doing even more to ensure that our members, healthcare professionals and the general public have access to the best and most current information at our website (www.cawc.net). In 2012, we'll be expanding our online presence to include more information for healthcare professionals, as well as patients and caregivers.



Healthcare and Social Media

Social media, the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue, is influencing the way we communicate with family and friends via such websites as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace. However, many healthcare professionals and corporations are now using it to communicate with peers and patients, in an effort to provide optimal care.

Jackie Hickey, Community Health Advisor with Bayshore Home Health in Toronto, Ontario, provided insights at the CAWC annual professional conference regarding social media and healthcare, specifically wound care, in her session entitled *Social Networking and Healthcare*.

“There is a connotation to social media that it is indeed social and that’s the extent of it ... however, healthcare professionals should realize that it can play a very vital role in their patient care.”

A registered nurse in practice for 25 years, Hickey notes that “as a clinician, I believe that social media has benefits and capabilities to capture the attention of mass audiences, including healthcare professionals, patients, family members and caregivers.” She writes a blog for Bayshore Home Health entitled [caring@home \(http://www.bayshore.ca/caringathomeblog/\)](http://www.bayshore.ca/caringathomeblog/).

She notes that for some time the younger generations have been taking full advantage of social media websites and applications. They are indeed the wave of the future and can be utilized by people of all ages, for both

personal and professional purposes. Hickey believes that the younger generations of clinicians and patients will have a big influence on social media and its role in healthcare.

In the healthcare milieu specifically, social networking provides a means to connect and communicate with other healthcare professionals, patients and caregivers. “The issue with healthcare in this day and age is that you see patients face to face in the clinic for a fairly short period of time, then they walk out the door and 15 minutes later you’ve forgotten what was said, and they likely have too,” she says. “Thus, social networking provides platforms and opportunities for health-

care professionals to share relevant information and foster collaboration on an ongoing basis, literally 24/7.”

Hickey is careful to point out that privacy remains a top priority. “We can utilize all the social media tools available – including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter – but we need to build and customize them for the audience that we’re addressing.” Hence, for example, a Facebook page that is set up to attract patients with a specific disease state must have the proper privacy settings for the individuals who are visiting; in this way, says Hickey, “we can control who has access to



specific sites, and the information that will be displayed and shared there.”

The sustainability of the healthcare system with respect to human resources is also an issue, Hickey notes. “When you think of shrinking budgets and burgeoning patient populations, building social networking tools into best practices will be crucial; think, for example, of YouTube: it’s amazing the vast reach social networks such as these can provide.”

Although until now there has been a fairly slow integration of social media into healthcare, some of the “big guns,” such as large teaching hospitals and other healthcare institutions, have begun communicating on a large scale through social media settings. Hickey believes that this trend will only continue. “Social media is forever changing, and as users of social media, healthcare practitioners need to adapt and change and grow,” she says. “Starting out could involve something as simple as a Facebook page or a Twitter account to provide pertinent and timely information to the communities they serve. Twitter provides a means of communicating instant information ... 140 characters at a time! ... that is timely and relevant to a mass audience.”

CAWC Institute L-Series – Toronto

The Canadian Association of Wound Care Institute of Wound Management and Prevention will be holding an L-Series educational event in Toronto, Ontario, from December 1-4, 2011, at the Delta Toronto Airport West, 5444 Dixie Road. This event will include the following:

Level 1: Knowledge Learning

Basic wound management knowledge to support a best practice approach to patient care, including: wound healing principles; wound bed preparation; pressure ulcers,

venous leg ulcers and diabetic foot ulcers.

Level 2: Skills Learning

Interactive learning and practice of wound care skills, including: local wound care; debridement, infection control and dressing selection; lower leg assessment and compression therapy; foot care and footwear; pressure, friction and shear management.

Level 3: Attitude Learning

Steps and methods for practicing within a team to develop and sustain prevention strategies, with a focus on pressure ulcer

and diabetic foot ulcer awareness and prevention.

For more information, please contact Diana Seminara, Event Coordinator, by telephone (416-485-2292, ext. 225) or email (diana@cawc.net).

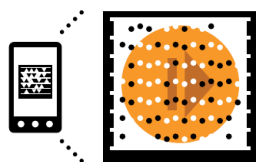
The CAWC Institute of Wound Management and Prevention will also be offering L-Series educational sessions across Canada throughout 2012. For information regarding future dates and locations, and to register, please visit www.cawc.net.



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