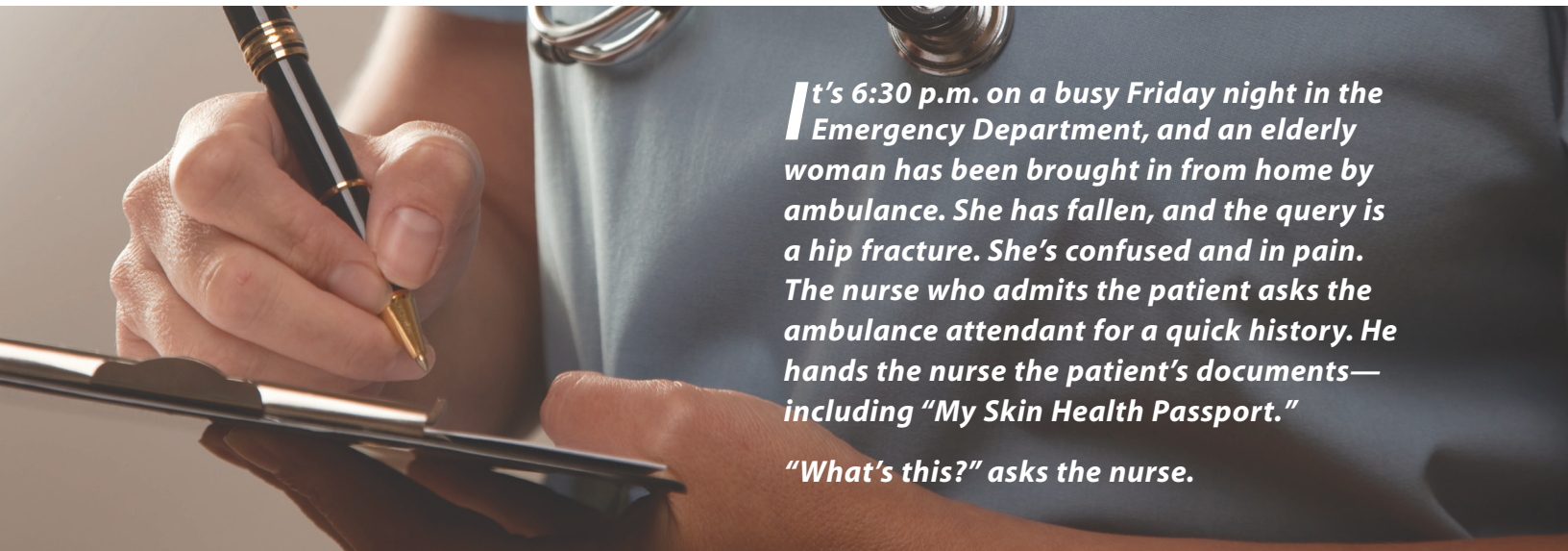




My Skin Health Passport: Introducing a Way to Prevent Avoidable Wounds

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It's 6:30 p.m. on a busy Friday night in the Emergency Department, and an elderly woman has been brought in from home by ambulance. She has fallen, and the query is a hip fracture. She's confused and in pain. The nurse who admits the patient asks the ambulance attendant for a quick history. He hands the nurse the patient's documents—including "My Skin Health Passport."

"What's this?" asks the nurse.

The physiologic changes that occur with aging, in addition to chronic conditions such as diabetes, congestive heart disease and peripheral vascular disease, put

our elderly population at risk of developing skin breakdown. While there are many effective assessment tools for risk, it can be difficult to ensure that appropriate prevention strategies are put into place in a timely

manner—particularly when the health history and condition of the individual are not known, or when limited information is available.

In 2010, the Ontario-based Wound Care Community of

The Skin Health Passport

The Passport is available for download at: http://seniorshhealthknowledgeenetwork.com/sites/seniorshhealthknowledgeenetwork.ca/files/MySkinHealthPassport_2013_0.pdf.

Practice (CoP), through the Seniors Health Knowledge Network (SHKN), with support from the health-care organizations Bruyère and Saint Elizabeth, set about to create a tool that could be used by patients and their families to provide the up-front information often missing in a transfer situation (not just to the Emergency Department) or with a new care provider. A review of the literature and discussions with clinical experts were essential in the development of the tool: My Skin Health Passport. The passport is a tool that allows patients and families to easily provide valuable information to their care providers that will help prevent skin breakdown.

What is it?

My Skin Health Passport is a free downloadable two-page document, available in English or French, that can be accessed at the Seniors Health Knowledge Network website (or by typing "My Skin Health Passport" into a search engine). The tool is designed to be used by individuals and their families to provide relevant information regarding aspects of their health that could impact on the

development of skin breakdown if appropriate measures are not put in place.

How can I help my patient/resident/client use My Skin Health Passport?

The tool is self-explanatory, but because it is new, health-care providers are in a position to assist and encourage patients and family members to complete the document and put it with other health-related documents (such as the health card or medication list). By explaining to your patients/family members that this tool will provide information in situations where the care providers may want to ensure interventions are in place to prevent the possibility of skin breakdown, you will help reinforce its purpose and value.

How can I support my colleagues in using this tool?

Providing information and preparing health-care professionals where My Skin Health Passport would be useful will encourage them to ask the patient/family member if they have brought their copy of the passport with them. If not, the tool could be readily available for the family/patient to fill in at the point of care.

The information contained in the passport supports the standard risk assessment tools recognized as evidence-informed for the prevention of skin breakdown. Helping busy clinicians with valuable details about the health needs of the individual, so interventions can be instituted quickly, will do much to ensure that avoidable skin breakdown does not occur in any setting. 🍷