

The WoundExpert® IRIS Experience



st. Joseph healthcare
St. Joseph Hospital

In the Spirit of Healing

Driven by their desire to reduce non-payment and audit risk, stay ahead of pending regulatory updates, and raise the bar on overall quality of patient care records, a wound care clinic in Bangor, Maine, changed the way they capture and manage wound photos.

The results are clear. Using WoundExpert IRIS, an integrated wound image calibration technology, the clinic now has high quality and color corrected images that more effectively make the case for medical necessity of treatment. They are ready for Local Coverage Determination (LCD) changes that put added weight on the quality of supporting documentation and confidently prepared for an audit.

Facility Snapshot:

Type of facility:

Hospital owned outpatient wound care department

Services offered:

Wound care, HBO, Inpatient

Established in 1997

Hours of Operation:

Monday –Friday 8AM – 4:30PM

Documentation platform:

WoundExpert® EMR users since 2007; Utilizing Console

Problem:

Inconsistent photo records left them exposed to risk in case of an audit

Situation

Beth Allen, RN, BSN, and her wound care team at St. Joseph Hyperbaric and Wound Healing Center were confident in the excellent clinical care they provided to about 600 patients per month. But, when Beth became aware that looming LCD changes would place further scrutiny on the quality of the center's supporting documentation, she knew it was time to improve the quality of their wound photo documentation.

The staff and physicians saw inconsistencies in patient wound photo records, from bad lighting affecting the coloring of wounds captured in the photos to inconsistent orientation and measurements. Beth figured out that the latter was a matter of existing tools that weren't designed to compare previous wound photos to the current photo at the time of upload.

The clinic's physician community also commented on the unsatisfactory nature of some of the wound imagery they were provided. Poor quality and color prevented an accurate view of things like wound to periwound ratios, making it difficult to review patients' progress at the clinic based on images alone.

All in all, there was growing consensus that the clinic's photo documentation wasn't capturing the wound as it appeared in the treatment room, therefore jeopardizing support of medical necessity— should the facility be audited in the future.

According to Beth, "As a Director, I expect to see a big difference in 'before' and 'after' photos. What I was seeing didn't have the impact we needed."

Opportunity

Beth reached out to WoundExpert when she noticed a banner on the login screen about a BETA testing opportunity for the IRIS module. St. Joseph's was one of six sites selected to participate in the limited 2-week program.

From the beginning, IRIS proved to be a simple solution to implement. They used their existing digital cameras and were provided webinar training to understand the new IRIS module. Training included camera setup and understanding external reinforcements that would support consistent and proper picture taking techniques in their existing workflow.

Results

Beth says that IRIS is doing everything she hoped by way of improving wound image quality and greatly increasing her confidence in the clinic's photo documentation where reimbursement and potential audit(s) are concerned. The site's physicians, as well as their referring physicians, are impressed by the accurate, diagnosable coloration of the photos. In addition, inclusion of reference photos from previous assessments make the module a valuable tool for ensuring consistency from one visit to the next.

“Clinician workflows are guided to review the previous picture's orientation and measurement methodology, so we expect consistency from assessment to assessment. Our ongoing patient images are like comparing apples to apples now.”

– Beth Allen, RN, BSN, Specialty Services Director, St. Joseph Healthcare

Beth's team experienced a surprise benefit when they discovered that IRIS drove a more streamlined workflow. Previously, it was common to go back and forth between a patient and the work station to document measurements and other treatment notes in real-time. This resulted in a cumbersome process where gloves were coming on and off, necessitating hand washing each time and prolonging the time it took to complete documentation. At the time, Beth had decided to have two clinicians in the treatment room, for patients with multiple wounds, one with gloves, the other work station, in order to speed up documentation. The IRIS module auto calculates measurements from photo anchors that are manipulable on screen allowing a clinician to treat the patient and capture the photo, remove the gloves, and complete everything else at the work station in a timely manner.

Beth says WoundExpert “is such easy to use software. Our nurses that come on board from other places are amazed. We've been very, very happy.” And, true to WoundExpert form, IRIS was straightforward to implement and displays the same user friendly qualities.

About St. Joseph Outpatient (Maine)

St. Joseph Healthcare is a dynamic, values driven organization excelling in primary care, wellness promotion and community service. We are committed to wellness promotion and holistic healing. We provide healthcare services which embody compassion, competence and community. These are not just words, but a way of life; a noble statement of what we are, meticulously crafted after thoughtful consideration, study and examination of all the things we do, big and small, day and night, caring for our patients. These are the words we live by, each and every one of us who comprise the caring community of St. Joseph Healthcare. We take our Mission seriously. Those we serve depend on it. www.stjoeshealing.org

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