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## **Preventing Pressure Ulcers (Bed Sores) Could Save Millions in Health-Care Costs Reports the Canadian Association of Wound Care**

**TORONTO** – According to the preliminary results of a ground-breaking Pressure Ulcer Awareness Pilot program, the Canadian Association of Wound Care (CAWC) projects that a 100-bed health-care facility with a pressure ulcer prevalence of 25 per cent, the national average for acute-care facilities, could save between \$239,000 and \$1.2M annually by reducing their pressure ulcer prevalence by 35%.

Additionally the program was able to demonstrate increased awareness of staff that led to early recognition of pressure ulcers resulting in effective treatment plans that diminished patient suffering. Awareness was also brought to the bedside through patient and family education relating to their risk for pressure ulcers.

“Approximately 70% of pressure ulcers are preventable, yet 1 in 4 people in health-care settings across Canada are afflicted with a pressure ulcer at any given time,” says Dr. David Keast, CAWC President. “This translates into untold patient suffering, extra work for health-care providers and millions spent in health-care dollars that could be directed elsewhere. Clearly we have to take action.”

To address this serious and increasing health-care issue the Canadian Association of Wound Care created an awareness and prevention program to test materials and processes that focus on increasing awareness about pressure ulcer prevention for clinicians, other caregivers, patients and their families, and facility administrators.

The success of the program was evaluated and measured in three key areas:

- Awareness – to determine the extent to which awareness was improved among clinicians, other caregivers, patients and their families, and facility administrators
- Clinical Practice – to document the change in clinical practice and processes toward the prevention of pressure ulcers in moderate to high-risk patients;
- Prevalence – based on a pre- and post-pilot analysis of pressure ulcer prevalence among the patient population to determine the impact of the program on prevalence rates.

The program was piloted at five sites over a six month period in different types of facilities including acute care, non-acute care, and mixed health-care settings – in different locations across Canada.

Preliminary findings of the pilot program evaluation include:

- A positive change in awareness was found among participants, most importantly patients and their families where awareness improved by almost 50%.
- A positive change in clinical practice:
  - Admission procedures were modified to identify patients at risk and customized treatment plans were created for them
  - High-risk rounds directed at pressure ulcer prevention were instituted
  - Two facilities recognized that existing dietary programs were inadequate to meet patients' needs and made modifications
  - The use of support surfaces and positioning aids was increased

Though this is early in the results phase, a decrease in prevalence by 35% has been seen in one of the sites.

“The impressive improvements in awareness, clinical best practices and pressure ulcer prevalence rates demonstrate the success of this program,” concludes Keast. “Moving forward, our goal is to work with health-care organizations in encouraging them to adopt this program for the benefit of both their patients and their bottom lines.”

The Canadian Association of Wound Care is a non-profit organization of healthcare professionals, industry participants, patients and caregivers dedicated to the advancement of wound care in Canada. The CAWC was founded in 1995. For more information visit [www.cawc.net](http://www.cawc.net) or email us at [info@cawc.ca](mailto:info@cawc.ca).