



State of Wisconsin  
**Department of Health Services**

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Jim Doyle, Governor  
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Wisconsin a Leader in Pressure Ulcer Initiatives**

The Department of Health Services announces that health care leaders from across the state have formed the Wisconsin Pressure Ulcer Coalition to help reduce pressure ulcers in Wisconsin's health care industry, including nursing homes and hospitals. A pressure ulcer, also known as a bedsore, is a painful condition that can occur in individuals who are unable to move without assistance.

"Wisconsin continues to be an innovative leader in finding ways to help improve the quality of care of our loved ones," said Department Secretary Karen Timberlake. "Wisconsin and New Jersey are the only states taking these types of steps – and Wisconsin is looking at the full spectrum of regulated health care facilities. These types of partnerships and collaborations are what we need to help us move forward and it's what our citizens deserve."

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has set a goal to reduce the number of residents nationwide that develop pressure ulcers to eight percent. Wisconsin has performed consistently better than the federal goal with an average holding steady at approximately seven percent of nursing homes residents affected by pressure ulcers. CMS currently does not have figures for other types of health care settings. The goals of the Wisconsin Pressure Ulcer Coalition are to:

- Decrease the incidence of pressure ulcers in our health care settings
- Continue to educate caregivers and leaders about effective preventive measures
- Improve assessment when an individual is admitted to a health care facility, as well as continue to monitor appropriately
- Develop appropriate prevention strategies within 24 hours if individual identified to be at risk of developing pressure ulcers
- Improve communication between providers to provide a better continuity of care

MetaStar is the Quality Improvement Organization for Wisconsin's health care facilities. According to Jennifer Harrison, Nursing Home Project Lead, "pressure ulcers are not just a concern for one health care setting, but an issue for all of those represented on the Coalition. This Coalition is intended to address pressure ulcer prevention across the entire continuum of care by bringing all of these players together to help facilitate communication and problem solving at many levels."

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According to CMS, pressure ulcers affect more than 1 million patients annually across the nation in both hospitals and nursing homes. The costs associated with caring for pressure ulcers exceed \$1.3 billion.

Stakeholders who are currently part of the Wisconsin Pressure Coalition are:

- Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- MetaStar, Wisconsin's Quality Improvement Organization
- American Medical Technologies
- Association for Professionals in Infection Control - Southeastern WI Chapter
- Hospice Organization Palliative Experts of Wisconsin
- The Laureate Group
- Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative
- Specialized Medical Services, Inc.
- Wisconsin Assisted Living Association
- Wisconsin Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
- Wisconsin Health Care Association
- Wisconsin Hospital Association
- Representatives from a variety of nursing homes, home health organizations and hospitals

In June, the Department announced the Wisconsin Wound Care Initiative which trains registered nurses from across the state to become certified in the prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers. The public-private collaboration more than doubles the wound care specialists in the state.

The 224 new wound care specialists were certified through a week-long course this fall. This collaborative effort in mass training of staff is the first of its kind in the nation. The model is novel and unique, signifying Wisconsin's commitment in continually searching for ways to improve quality of care.

The Wisconsin Wound Care Initiative was made possible by the following sponsors:

- Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- Wisconsin Health Care Association
- Wisconsin Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
- Wisconsin Directors of Nursing Council
- National Alliance of Wound Care
- West Bend Mutual Insurance
- GuideOne Insurance
- Golden Living
- Kindred Healthcare Foundation
- MetaStar

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*Note: please see the next page which provides quotes from a variety of organizations regarding the Wisconsin Pressure Ulcer Coalition*

### **American Medical Technologies**

“AMT is committed to working with the state of Wisconsin and the Pressure Ulcer Coalition to significantly reduce pressure ulcers and improve the quality of life for those suffering from pressure ulcers,” said Charles Gokoo, MD, Chief Medical Officer at AMT.

### **HospiceCare Inc. - Rock County**

“This is a great opportunity for hospices to work with healthcare providers throughout Wisconsin to improve quality of life for patients and their families,” said Jane Quinn, VP of HospiceCare Inc. - Rock County and representative of the HOPE of Wisconsin.

### **Wisconsin Assisted Living Association**

“Assisted living providers are beginning to face the same issues of protecting skin integrity of their residents. The results of this initiative will help provide best practices for providers of all sizes and regulatory categories in order to meet the rising acuity in assisted living,” said Jim Murphy, WALA Executive Director. “WALA will help take this message to the assisted living providers statewide to increase care for our residents.”

### **Wisconsin Association of Homes and Services for the Aging**

“This collaborative effort clearly demonstrates the positive and proactive work of a diverse group of organizations that are serious about raising the bar of quality throughout our health and long term care systems. We are confident the Coalition’s work will significantly improve the lives of persons in need of ongoing care and services,” said John Sauer, WAHSA Executive Director.

### **Wisconsin Health Care Association**

“Wisconsin is already one of the top states in the nation in successful treatment outcomes,” said Tom Moore, Executive Director of WHCA. “But this collaboration, along with the Wisconsin Wound Care Initiative launched this year, is going to take our state from good to great in preventing and treating pressure ulcers. I’m proud to partner with this coalition, which will help Wisconsin’s health care providers work individually and collectively with a common goal of improving the quality of care for patients statewide.”

### **Wisconsin Hospital Association**

Dana Richardson, Vice President, Quality Initiatives, WHA, said, “The Coalition hopes to have 100 providers participate in the first year of the project, if funding is obtained to support that number of participants.” Funding for the Coalition will be provided in various ways. Coalition members will all contribute and participants will pay a fee, which will vary depending on the provider’s size.