



Wound  
Ostomy and  
Continence  
Nurses  
Society®

## Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society™ (WOCN®) Health Care Agenda

**Guiding Principle:** The purpose of the WOCN Society's Health Care Agenda is to promote public policy and advocacy activities that are related to the Society's mission, vision and strategic goals.

### Public Policy/Advocacy Priorities:

#### 1. Access to Wound, Ostomy and Continence Supplies

**Goal:**

Protect and enhance patients' access to wound, ostomy and continence supplies.

**Rationale:**

Patients require access to medically necessary wound, ostomy and continence products and durable medical equipment.

The WOCN Society and its members understand that state Medicaid, as well as federal Medicare spending programs, are under extreme pressure to control costs while still providing quality outcomes.

Investment in quality wound, ostomy, and continence products assists with controlling costs and improves patient outcomes. These outcomes include:

- Reduced facility admissions and readmissions/emergency department visits.
- Reduced medical/surgical complications.
- Reduced cost of chronic care management.
- Successful rehabilitation of patients and early return to the workforce.

The WOCN Society supports HR 152, which advocates for access to ostomy supplies by all those in need for these life saving products.

**Resources:**

- [HR 152](#)
- [WOCN Ostomy Resolution Support 2011](#)

**Actions/Tactics:**

- Actively monitoring state Medicaid and Health Insurance Exchange programs to ensure proper coverage for WOC supplies.

## 2. Payment Reform

### Goal:

Ensure that patients have access to wound, ostomy and continence (WOC) specialty nursing services.

### Rationale:

WOC nurses meet patient needs not usually provided by physician services or other health care providers.

- [AUA and WOCN Joint Position Statement on the Value of Preoperative Stoma Marking for Patients Undergoing Urinary Ostomy Surgery](#)
- [ASCRS and WOCN Joint Position Statement on The Value of Preoperative Stoma Marking for Patients Undergoing Fecal Ostomy Surgery](#)

WOC nurses are highly qualified providers due to intensive education, experiential learning, precepted clinical experiences, and a rigorous independent certification process.

The premier organizations for the education and certification of wound, ostomy and continence specialty nurses are the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society (WOCN) and the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing Certification Board (WOCNCB<sup>®</sup>), respectively. The WOCN Society and WOCNCB believe that a nurse who is responsible for the management of the nursing care of patients with wound, ostomy and/or continence needs can best demonstrate competency by completion of a WOCN Society-accredited, Wound, Ostomy and/or Continence Nursing Education Program (WOCNEP) and/or certification by the WOCNCB in all of the specialty areas in which they practice.

Findings from studies in the United States (Arnold & Weir, 1994; Bolton et al., 2004; Peirce, Tiffany, Kinsey, & Link, 2008) and in Canada (Harris & Shannon, 2008) have shown that patients who were cared for by WOC nurses (also known as Enterostomal Therapy Nurses or ETs) had better outcomes in terms of healing rates and/ or costs of care compared to patients cared for by non-WOC/ET nurses.

The WOCN Society supports a comprehensive health care system focused on wellness, which maximizes patient health and minimizes long-range costs.

The WOCN Society is dedicated to assuring the availability of appropriate care for individuals with wounds, ostomies and incontinence because patients deserve health care that assists them in maximizing their functional status.

The WOCN Society encourages the appropriate utilization of specialty nurses to assure that its goal of giving the most beneficial care in the most cost-effective manner is met.

The WOCN Society believes that nursing as a profession enhances health care services to a multifaceted society and includes prevention, health maintenance, therapeutic

intervention and rehabilitation. Wound, ostomy and continence care are areas of specialty practice within the framework of nursing that strive to advance the health care and quality of life for all affected individuals.

**Resources:**

- [WOCN/WOCNCB Position Statement: Entry Level Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurse Education and Certification](#)
- [Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing, Scope & Standards of Practice](#)
- [There is a Difference...](#)
- [Position Statement about the Role and Scope of Practice for Wound Care Providers](#)
- [Understanding Medicare Part B Incident to Billing: A Fact Sheet](#)
- [Reimbursement of Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Services: A Fact Sheet](#)
- The role of wound, ostomy and continence (WOC) specialty nurses in managing complex cases. The Remington Report, 17, 10-13. : Bonham, P. (2009).

**Action/Tactics:**

- Monitoring federal and state payment reform initiatives to ensure WOC nursing is fairly represented.

### 3. Nursing Workforce and Education

**Goal:**

WOCN Society advocates for adequate funding of programs for the development and education of nursing's workforce, including Title 9 of the Public Health Services Act to support the recruitment, education, and retention of the nation's nursing work force.

**Rationale:**

As a member of the Nursing Community, the WOCN Society supports the following core principles:

A robust and diverse nursing workforce is essential to the health of all Americans:

- Nurses are an integral part of the health care team, are involved in every aspect of care, and are committed to the patient, their families and the community.

The contributions made by the practice and science of nursing are critical to the delivery of high quality, life saving, preventative and palliative health care across all care settings, geographic areas, and social determinants of health.

**Resources:**

- [Nursing Community Core Principles](#)

**Action/Tactics:**

- Actively lobby Congress to fully-fund federal workforce programs.
- Participate in Nursing Community activities aimed at protecting federal workforce programs.

#### 4. Quality of Care Initiatives

**Goal:**

Active participation in policy and regulatory development.

**Rationale:**

The WOCN Society believes best practice, patient-centered care is data driven and evidenced based.

**Sign on:**

- [Endorsement of the American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing Position statement “Role of the RN in Ambulatory Care”](#)
- [Joining Forces](#)
- [Conditions of Participation \(COP\) for Acute Care](#)
- [Moving the Sharps Safety Agenda Forward in the United States: Consensus Statement and Call to Action](#)

**Resources:**

- [WOCN Society’s Guidance on OASIS-C](#)
- [National Quality Forum](#)
- [American Nurses Association](#)
- [Cms.gov](#)
- [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#)
- [Management of Wounds in Patients with Lower-Extremity Venous Disease: WOCN Clinical Practice Guideline Series](#)
- [Prevention and Management of Pressure Ulcers: WOCN Clinical Practice Guideline Series](#)
- [Management of Wounds in Patients with Lower-Extremity Arterial Disease: WOCN Clinical Practice Guideline Series](#)
- [Management of Wounds in Patients with Lower-Extremity Neuropathic Disease: WOCN Clinical Practice Guideline Series](#)
- [Management of the Patient with a Fecal Ostomy: Best Practice for Clinicians](#)

**Action/Tactics:**

- The Society contributes to quality of care by producing evidence-based, clinical practice guidelines for the management of patients with wounds due to pressure, venous, arterial and neuropathic disease and a best practice guideline for management of patients with fecal ostomies.
- The Society participates in the development of quality measures pertinent to the scope of WOC specialty nursing practice through collaboration with NQF.
- The Society endeavors to engage in collaborative efforts with HHS, ANA and policy makers in the development of relevant quality initiatives.

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