Partnering with Industry to Improve Ostomy Patient Outcomes

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Overview
At University of Maryland Medical Center, nursing care delivery is organized within a relationship based care model. As the healthcare arena continues to change and length of stay decreases, there are many challenges which the WOC Nurse faces in promoting quality care for the ostomy patient and family. We have less time to teach our patients, lack quality home care education and follow-up, and are challenged by reimbursement issues. We must partner with other disciplines to promote quality patient/family education to improve the continuum of care.
Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse Role

At University of Maryland Medical Center, the WOCN takes pride in helping our ostomy patients from preoperative education to ongoing postoperative follow up.

We partner with many other disciplines to create an environment that will support the patient and their family in gaining independence and confidence after ostomy surgery. Except for emergency surgery, we interact with all of our patients prior to ostomy surgery, in order to form a therapeutic relationship that will continue well beyond their inpatient stay.

During the preoperative interview, the WOCN has the opportunity to teach the patient and family about the upcoming ostomy surgery as well as answer any questions they may have regarding everyday life with an ostomy. Utilization of a preoperative kit supplied by industry provides the patient with literature, simple anatomical illustrations, important preoperative information, sample ostomy appliances and other educational opportunities. Stoma marking is also done at that time.

Due to the changing healthcare practices and shortened hospital stays, the WOCN faces challenges to fully prepare the patient for discharge following ostomy surgery despite adequate preoperative education. Partnering with home healthcare, support groups and industry have made this transition easier for the patient and family.

One resource we have partnered with is industry to ensure that our patients receive quality comprehensive follow up support with sample products, newsletters and insurance answers as needed. With the Secure Start Program patients are empowered to try new products to return back to their normal lifestyle and comfort level. The WOCN monitors this process by ongoing patient follow-up to make certain that the products are utilized correctly.

Secure Start Coordinator Role

As a coordinator in the Secure Start Program, I work with both patients and WOC nurses. This program offers many unique benefits.

For the patient, we continually provide timely access to samples and education. There is less confusion upon discharge from the hospital because the patient and/or family have access to me as their coordinator to answer questions. My knowledge of suppliers and reimbursement helps to match the patient to the appropriate provider who best addresses their insurance needs. Overall, we can help improve a patient's quality of life through this difficult transition after surgery.

For the clinician, this program provides timely access to samples and education. By assisting patients with insurance questions, the nurse knows her patient is taken care of and then the nurse can focus on clinical care. Knowing that the patient can call anytime with simple questions does not tie up the nurses’ time returning calls for non-clinical questions that are frequent in the early pos-op period. This program extends the care continuum beyond the home care episode and the WOC nurse knows their patients receive the customized care they want for them.

Home Health Care Nurse Role

As the patient and family arrive home, many patients are overwhelmed by the prospects of caring for their new ostomy. The WOCN in home care has the opportunity to teach the patient/family over a period of time in their own environment. Patients are more relaxed and ready to learn after their hospitalization.

Using the Secure Start Program, many options for ostomy pouching are discussed and selected for sampling. The patient may try several brand products to choose what meets their needs. By the time of discharge from home care, the patients feel they have ownership again over their daily routine and their body.

With this focus on the patient and collaboration with others, “there is no place like home…care!”
Retailer Role

Serving the needs of ostomates goes well beyond a simple catalog of products. The reassurance of having a consistent, experienced resource that is well-equipped and knowledgeable to order products from each month is reassuring to patients and their families.

The relationship and daily interaction with the WOCN and the Secure Start Program enables the retailer to provide a highly customized regimen of care and gives the retailer the ability to respond quickly and efficiently to changes with little burden to the patient.

UOAA Role

The United Ostomy Associations of America (UOAA) is a national network for bowel and urinary diversion support groups that provide peer support and information to ostomy patients and their caregivers about quality of life issues. For information about services call 800-826-0826, e-mail info@uoaa.org, visit www.uoaa.org or subscribe to The Phoenix.

Sales Specialist Role

It is my responsibility to ensure my customers are familiar and educated about all the options available for patients and their caregivers. In my role, I have the opportunity to see many different types of practices on a regular basis, which enables me to gain a breadth of knowledge about what clinicians need for their patients. I can inform them of programs and additional support services that will help improve the WOCN daily practice as well as their patients’ quality of life. Making clinicians and patients aware of the programs and support services such as the Secure Start Program, gives me great satisfaction in knowing that patients will be able to make a smooth transition from hospital to home with the support they need.

Patient Case Study 1

G.G. is a 10-month old male who underwent emergency surgery a few days after birth for Hirschsprung’s disease. Mom was very familiar with this disease as her two previous children also had the disease and underwent ostomy surgery. Both previous children have since had their ostomies closed. As G.G. grew, he needed bigger pouches. He was enrolled in the Secure Start Program and was provided with pouch samples. The coordinator also followed up with phone calls to make sure G.G. had the correct pouches between physician/WOCN visits.

Patient Case Study 2

Mrs. D is a 64 year old female who underwent a total colectomy and ileostomy for ulcerative colitis. The WOC Nurse met with the patient and her devoted husband prior to surgery. Utilizing the Secure Start Program Pre-Op ileostomy kit, the patient and family were educated on the surgical procedure, shown sample pouches and a stoma site was selected.

Although Mr. and Mrs. D were both educated on the post-op care, Mrs. D. relied on her husband to provide the care until she regained her strength. Her incision healed by secondary intention which created a challenge for pouching. As the incision healed, she developed more creases which created the need for convexity and a change in pouch type. The Secure Start Program provided the samples needed to meet their changing needs.

Mrs. D said, “The representative from this program was patient, compassionate and understanding. We call once a month and we receive the supplies within three days. We praise the Lord for this program which has provided a great service since the ostomy surgery. I am now independent in my care and am returning back to my normal lifestyle.”
Patient Case Study 3

A 24 year old young man underwent emergency colostomy surgery as a result of injuries sustained from a motor vehicle accident. No prior teaching was possible which increased this patient’s anxiety. Initially, having a colostomy was very overwhelming but with family encouragement, he decided he could handle caring for his ostomy himself.

The patient appreciated the support provided by the WOC Nurse. Having the ability to leave messages or paging when necessary gave him a “lifeline”.

Mr. B. was enrolled in the Secure Start Program. He received samples of products recommended by the WOC Nurse. These product samples helped him reduce the concerns of returning back to work and his social life. He commented, “I know I can now manage my job using the two-piece closed end pouching system with a belt.”

Patient Case Study 4

Ms. R.P. is a 50-year-old female who underwent an elective ileostomy for ulcerative colitis. The WOC Nurse utilized the Secure Start Program Pre-Op ileostomy kit to educate R.P. on ileostomy surgery and care. The patient appreciated the sample pouch so she could wear it prior to surgery and understand the reality of wearing a pouch. The stoma site was also marked prior to surgery. Postoperatively the patient was motivated to become independent in her care.

We discussed her pouching needs and R.P. was enrolled in the Secure Start Program. Pouching samples were provided as well as follow-up calls from the program coordinator. Ms. R.P. also received home care to make the transition from hospital to home easier and also continue her ostomy education. She also received a call from a local UOAA visitor.

With each post-op visit she was seen by the WOC Nurse. Ms. R.P. was becoming frustrated as her pouches were not lasting longer than 24-48 hours despite a well-placed and matured stoma. Upon further assessment, Ms. R.P. was having “power surges” related to her hysterectomy causing her pouches to come off. The Secure Start Program provided a medical grade adhesive spray which solved her adherence issues and she has now returned to work and has increased her pouch wear time.

Conclusion

Through this coordination of care, the WOC Nurses have achieved exceptional outcomes by utilizing pre- and post-operative teaching tools in addition to collaborating with support groups, industry, distribution, retailers and home care. The Secure Start Program allows us to focus on patient care. Through partnering with other disciplines, the WOC Nurse continues to meet the challenges of healthcare delivery at University of Maryland Medical Center. By maximizing collaboration with ostomy support groups, industry, home care, and distribution, we have improved patient/family satisfaction as well as staff education.