

## **SAMPLE POLICY & PROCEDURES FOR DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF WOUNDS**

### **Overview**

Photography adds a visual, objective confirmation to the written documentation record.

For the purpose of this policy, client will be used when referring to clients, patients and residents.

### **Definitions**

Nurse - means a Registered Nurse (RN), Registered Nurse (Nurse Practitioner) (RN[NP]), Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Graduate Nurse (GN), Graduate Licensed Practical Nurse (GLPN).

### **Purpose**

- To promote evidence based practice in the provision of quality care.
- To accurately document the status of a wound as an adjunct to a wound assessment record.
- To support a standardized approach to wound assessment and management.

### **1. Privacy and informed consent**

*HIPAA* guidelines mandate the protection of client privacy, requiring that clients are adequately informed of the use of photography and that policies are in place to ensure privacy is protected.

Client consent is required prior to taking photographs, and clients may withhold consent without otherwise affecting their care. Verbal consent (or lack thereof) may be documented in case notes. A signed consent form is optional for sharing wound care photos for treatment purposes, including consulting with other healthcare professionals who may be internal or external to an organization. With or without a consent form it is the responsibility of the sender to ensure that information goes only to the intended recipient. Proper procedures for secure sharing of personal health information must be followed at all times.

Although de-identified photos are not considered personal health information, it is best practice to use a consent form to document that education has taken place and that the client consents to the use of de-identified photos for purposes other than for treatment (i.e. education).

Photographs are a permanent part of a client's personal health record. All staff accessing, downloading or printing photographs containing client identifiers have a duty to keep them safe from unauthorized access, use or disclosure.

### **2. Appropriateness of photographs**

Photographs must be taken in such a way that the confidentiality and dignity of the client is respected at all times. Photographs are normally taken during admission and at each formal reassessment (as per wound management plan), or when there is a sudden or significant change in clinical status.

### **3. Standards for establishing and maintaining competency**

Nurses who will photograph wounds must review a learning module on digital photography of wounds. The on-line learning module is accessible at [www.woundpathwaysk.ca](http://www.woundpathwaysk.ca) and will generate a dated certificate of completion to be shared with manager or designate.

Other resources will be available on the Lower Extremity Wound Pathway web pages at [www.sasksurgery.ca/provider/lowerextremitywound.html](http://www.sasksurgery.ca/provider/lowerextremitywound.html).

### **4. Standards for Camera equipment**

Local home care departments may approve cameras with a minimum of 6 mega-pixels for use to photograph wounds. Digital photographic images will only be taken with and stored on approved devices (including USB drives and memory cards) from which the image(s) can be permanently deleted.

**Note:** Due to the high risk of privacy and confidentiality breaches, mobile devices other than a point and shoot camera or dedicated software system (e.g. WoundZoom) are not recommended.

### **5. Confidential, accurate client identification**

For treatment purposes, digital wound photographs are to remain identifiable using client's initials and date photo is taken. Identifiable images must be saved electronically on a secure site. Transmission of client information via email must be restricted to health professionals for the benefit of on-going assessment and management.

### **6. Secure storage and file maintenance**

Store photos in the client's wound flow sheets in Procura, or create a folder and subfolders specifically for client photos on the home care secure server. Restrict folder access to home care nurses, home care manager, clinical educator, and administration assistant.

Re-format the memory card immediately after downloading photos.

<b>7. Wound photography detailed procedures</b>
<p>7.1 Supplies needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wound care supplies as required</li> <li>• Disposable blue pad(s)</li> <li>• Disposable measuring device labelled with client identifiers (initials, PHN), date and anatomical location. Note this information directly beneath grid.</li> <li>• Approved device i.e. point and shoot camera (with memory card). Ensure it is charged.</li> <li>• Hard carrying case for device</li> <li>• Hand hygiene supplies</li> <li>• Non-sterile gloves</li> </ul>
<p>7.2 If possible, view previous pictures to aid in the consistency of subsequent photos (i.e. client position, background, lighting, additional photos, etc.). Review any notes specific to the client (i.e. certain light, which camera used, etc.)</p>
<p>7.3 Place device case on hard, clean surface.</p>
<p>7.4 Obtain consent from client or substitute decision maker verbally, or use a consent form.</p>
<p>7.5 Position client appropriately, maintaining comfort, privacy and confidentiality.</p>
<p>7.6 Perform hand hygiene. Don gloves remove dressing and cleanse wound as per protocol.</p>
<p>7.7 Place blue disposable pad with blue side up in the background of the wound.</p>
<p>7.8 Remove any items that could distract or impede view of wound.</p>
<p>7.9 Place measuring device close to wound edge and on same plane as wound.</p>
<p>7.10 Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene before handling device.</p>
<p>7.11 Turn device on and check settings (i.e. flash off, macro setting on, VR on, etc.).</p>
<p>7.12 Take photos, avoiding device contact with client and surroundings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close-up shot taken 20-30cm from wound base and measuring device, using zoom to provide detail i.e. 90% wound/reddened periwound, 10% clear, intact periwound</li> <li>• Midway shot including 4-6cm of periwound and measuring device, to reveal some wound detail and clear intact periwound within the image</li> <li>• Distance shot <b>with</b> measuring device showing anatomical location, large area of intact healthy tissue, and/or comparison of limbs</li> <li>• Distance shot <b>without</b> measuring device on the skin</li> </ul>

7.13 Review pictures. Immediately delete blurry or obscured photos and retake as necessary.
7.14 Turn off device and return to carrying case. Wipe outside of carrying case as per Infection Prevention and Control policy.
7.15 Perform hand hygiene.
7.16 Don gloves, provide wound care and redress wound as per protocol.
7.17 Document wound assessment and photographs taken on the Wound Care Record (NISS) or the appropriate assessment form for your clinical area.
7.18 Upload photographs from the camera to the computer (with a USB cord), or remove the memory card and insert into the computer. Store photo files in JPEG format, small size (under 500 KB). Follow a consistent process for file & folder naming. Use numbers for date (YYYY.MM.DD) so files stay in order.
7.19 Delete images from the device by formatting the camera's memory card, or following the instructions for the device to permanently delete an image.
7.20 Store the device in a secure area (i.e. locked desk drawer)

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