

SENIORS FIRST



The Changing Face of Long Term Care

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State-of-the-Art Wound Care at Today's Nursing Facilities

- ✓ **Over the past three years, the Illinois legislature has been faithful in continuing its commitment to the five-year phase-in of the resident-centered MDS reimbursement system. We thank Illinois legislators for their ongoing dedication to quality care for Illinois seniors.**
- ✓ **We need to continue the fourth, phased-in installment of the groundbreaking, resident-centered MDS Medicaid reimbursement system at a cost of \$90 million (\$36 million GRF).**
- ✓ **The MDS reimbursement system has been extremely successful in enhancing resident health, independence and well being. We have made great advances in providing cutting edge health services to Illinois' elderly citizens. Illinois needs to build upon its track record of success.**

Editor's Note: In this story, the client's name was changed to protect her privacy and the confidentiality of her medical information.

With a medical history that includes type 2 diabetes, a varying appetite, peripheral neuropathy, cerebral vascular accident (stroke), peripheral vascular disease, dementia, and an inability to turn or position herself, perhaps it is no surprise Anna Mae Brown developed a dangerous pressure ulcer on her left foot which required emergency surgery to avoid amputation.

What may surprise many is where Anna Mae made her full recovery following her surgery. It was not a hospital. It was Sunny Acres Nursing Home, a 106-bed skilled nursing facility in Petersburg, IL.

"When Anna Mae joined us after her surgery, she required staff intervention for all her needs," says Karen Steinkruger, director of nursing at Sunny Acres. "We immediately followed all our wound care protocols and developed a plan for her healing, with the involvement of a physician."

This plan included regular visits by a specialized wound nurse and constant contact with her physician. Anna Mae was provided a pressure-relieving mattress and was put on a turn-and-position schedule. She wore special boots in bed. In addition to four months of IV antibiotics, her diet was enhanced with vitamin C, zinc, and a specialized diet supplement for wound healing.

A key component of Anna Mae's rehabilitation involved a wound care

treatment known as V.A.C. (Vacuum Assisted Closure) Therapy. The V.A.C. System (often referred to as a "Wound Vac") applies negative pressure to help draw wound edges together, while removing infectious materials, assisting tissue granulation in the wound, and promoting overall wound healing.

"Many people are surprised to learn the high level of care today's nursing home provides," says Steinkruger. "Wound Vacs are just one part of it."

Anna Mae's wound is now healed and her foot is healthy, but even with innovative technology and a rapidly changing long term care system, Steinkruger says there is no secret to providing quality care in today's nursing homes.

"It takes a caring staff, good communication, and team work to reach the highest quality of care for our residents," says Steinkruger.

The MDS reimbursement system provides specialized funding for wound care programs like the one benefiting Anna Mae. Illinois needs to continue with the fourth installment of this reimbursement system to help Illinois seniors achieve their independence and return home. **In FY 2008, 38,000 nursing home residents returned home because of this innovative system.** We must build upon Illinois' track record of success in promoting resident autonomy, health and well being.