VA Hospital Finds Leaf Healthcare Wearable Sensor Improves Compliance with Pressure Ulcer Prevention Efforts

Idaho Pressure Ulcer Prevention Coalition presentation also suggests sensor can boost nurse workflow and productivity.

Pleasanton, Calif. (November 13, 2014) — A Veterans Affairs quality improvement project with a unique pressure ulcer prevention technology found that a novel, wearable patient sensor from Leaf Healthcare, Inc., helps medical professionals improve pressure ulcer prevention efforts.

The project, part of a national VA hospital-acquired pressure ulcer reduction initiative, showed that using the device increased compliance with hospital turn protocols — a standard of care method to prevent pressure ulcers — to 89 percent after the monitoring system was deployed. This is marked increase in compliance rates, which national studies show range from 15 percent to 66 percent at different hospitals.

The VA project also found that Leaf sensors improve productivity by permitting nurses to easily identify when patients require a turn and track the amount of tissue decompression time each patient experiences to warn caregivers when additional intervention is needed.

In a presentation entitled “Drive to Zero” at last week’s Idaho Pressure Ulcer Prevention Coalition Consensus Meeting in Boise, Dr. Margaret Doucette, chief of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and director for Wound Care at Boise VAMC, said the Leaf sensors help healthcare providers to measurably improve the quality of care patients receive.

“We expected the sensors to help us increase compliance with patient turn protocols,” she said. “We had not anticipated the technology to be so sophisticated that it can track tissue decompression for individual patients and warn caregivers when they must intervene by repositioning those who are at risk or who return to a compressive position.

“Before using the Leaf system, our policy in at-risk units was to turn all patients regardless of their risk factors for pressure ulcers,” she said. “Leaf tracking reduces the resource burden required for patient turning by roughly 80 percent without compromising care or pressure ulcer prevention efforts. That ensures we provide the highest quality care, while allowing us to contain costs.”

Doucette said the medical center’s turn protocols will be rewritten to include the use of Leaf technology and that the system’s metrics will become part of the center’s monthly nursing quality criteria.
“Nurses and hospitals are searching for innovative ways to reduce pressure ulcers — which affect more than 2.5 million U.S. patients each year — and this presentation provided valuable insights into how that can be accomplished,” said Mark Smith, vice president, sales and marketing at Leaf Healthcare. “We are thrilled that Leaf technology is so useful in the prevention of this terrible condition.”

Institution-acquired pressure ulcers are a leading threat to modern quality healthcare. Research by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality shows that pressure ulcers cost the nation’s healthcare system more than $11 billion a year. The condition is both excruciatingly painful for patients and costly for providers since it is considered preventable and, therefore, does not qualify for reimbursement by government and other payers.

To help healthcare providers reduce these costs — while improving patient safety and clinical outcomes — Leaf creates wireless patient monitoring solutions.

The Leaf system is comprised of a small, lightweight, wearable sensor that electronically monitors a patient’s position and movements. Data collected by the sensor is communicated wirelessly to central monitoring stations or mobile devices so that caregivers can check on patient position and movement. The system provides alerts when necessary to ensure that all patients wearing a Leaf Sensor are repositioned according to their prescribed turning schedules to reduce incidence of pressure ulcers. The device has been cleared for sale by FDA 510(k).

About Boise VAMC

The Boise VA proudly serves veterans in the Boise, Idaho area in its main medical center and in community-based outpatient clinics/outreach centers. Boise is part of the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 20 that includes the states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon and most of the state of Idaho. The medical-surgical unit in which the quality improvement project was conducted is a 27-bed unit. The veterans admitted to this unit have complex medical and/or psychiatric diagnosis that compound their hospital stay. Surgical patients comprise a variety of specialties: orthopedic, general, vascular and urology.

About Leaf Healthcare, Inc.

Leaf Healthcare creates wireless patient monitoring solutions for health care providers seeking more efficient, cost effective ways to improve patient safety and clinical outcomes. The Leaf Patient Monitoring System wirelessly monitors a patient’s position and movement and uses that data to automate and document the management of prescribed turn protocols for patients at risk for hospital acquired pressure ulcers. The company continually seeks to incorporate more patient monitoring features and capabilities into its technology.
platform, enabling ever-broader improvements to patient safety, clinical efficiency and patient outcomes. To learn more, visit www.leafhealthcare.com

Leaf Healthcare is a proud supporter of the National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel (NPUAP). The NPUAP is an independent organization and does not endorse or promote the products or services of any of its supporters.

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