**2020 Year of the Nurse/Nurses Week**

**ONS Spotlight Nursing Story**

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Telehealth modalities afford Veterans with expedited diagnosis and treatment of wounds without the associated travel burden. TeleWound Care promotes Veteran satisfaction and restores Veteran trust while keeping medical management within VA.

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Diffusion of Excellence, Gold Status Fellow (GSF)

Chronic wounds (e.g., pressure injuries, diabetic foot ulcers) are a significant predictor of mortality among Veterans. Veterans who reside in rural areas often have difficulty accessing specialty wound care. One strategy for increasing access to wound care is delivering that care through telehealth. Care provided through the TeleWound Care Practice Program (TWCPP) allows Veterans to receive specialty wound care at nearby VA outpatient clinics, or directly in their home.

Dr. Mona Baharestani is a VHA nurse, leading the interprofessional national TWCPP and ***No Wound Left Behind Initiative (NWLBI)****.* She spearheaded the development of a TWCPP at the JHQVAMC. Within the first year of operation, the JHQVAMC TWCPP demonstrated greater than a 4.5-fold travel time savings, greater than a 7.5-fold decrease in miles traveled and 100% Veteran satisfaction with the service delivery.

Her practice was selected for replication through the VHA [Diffusion of Excellence](https://www.va.gov/HEALTHCAREEXCELLENCE/diffusion-of-excellence/index.asp) Shark Tank competition in 2016, where she stood up TWCPP at two additional sites. In 2017 the TWCP was slated for National Diffusion and the National TeleWound Care Workgroup was formed under a coalition of the following VHA Program Offices, led by Office of Nursing Services, Office of Telehealth Services, Spinal Cord Injuries and Disorders and Podiatry.

Currently, Dr. Baharestani is serving as a subject matter expert in an ongoing Partnered Evaluation Initiative facilitated by the Quality Enhancement Initiative (QUERI). The purpose of the evaluation is to identify issues related to the successful implementation of a TWCPP and to determine the extent to which TeleWound Care is successful in improving clinical and healthcare system outcomes when implemented at other VA facilities. In 2019, the TWCPP completed 1,872 Encounters and 532 Rural Encounters, providing care to 1,207 Uniques and 165 Rural Uniques.

The primary objective of the No Wound Left Behind Initiative is to disseminate the new standard of clinical protocols, embodied in the Supplement, to the field. The National TeleWound Care Specialty Supplement features the following advancements to the TWCPP: Pre-Implementation Readiness Checklist, WCUC Char 4 Code for capturing TeleWound Care across Specialty Services, TeleWound Care National Quantitative and Qualitative Dashboards, 3D wound imaging, Ankle Brachial Index (ABI) noninvasive testing to assess blood flow to the lower extremities, a just-in-time Telehealth Curbside Consult and Wound Care Mobile Applications.