

Pressure wounds – A Growing Problem in our Health Care System

TYSONS CORNER, VA, UNITED STATES, January 6, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Ever since the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in the US in the early months in 2020, many nursing home residents have physically declined in mobility, increasing the probability that they will develop pressure wounds or bed sores. This new reality, combined with reduced or limited visitation due to the pandemic, is putting our seniors at risk for pressure wounds, also referred to as bed sores or pressure sores.

Even before the pandemic, it was estimated that bedsores were developed by some 2.5 million patients annually, resulting in the death of some 60,000 Americans every year. "With increased immobility related to Covid-19, we can expect that statistic to rise," explains malpractice attorney Jeffrey J. Downey. A pressure wound is localized damage to the skin and underlying tissue based on constant pressure and friction, which cuts off the blood supply. Prevention often involves moving the patient frequently, which can require significant staff time. Amanda Owen, wound care specialist from John Hopkins hospital, explains that patients with breathing issues due to COVID-19 are often placed in a prone position (on their belly). Turning such patients to avoid pressure can be logistically challenging as it can involve multiple staff members. Owen explains that they try to prevent such pressure wounds by preemptively using a foam dressing to decrease pressure in targeted areas.

Many families with parents in a nursing facility know to check for pressure wounds and act as the patient's advocate. However, most visits have been limited in the last 6 months, cutting off access to important patient information, explains Downey. While facilities are supposed to notify family members of changes in condition including pressure wounds, that does not always happen. To compound the problem, many states including Virginia and Maryland have now enacted immunity statutes giving nursing homes immunity, if their negligence is tied to a lack of staffing or supplies because of Covid-19. ([Click here](#) to read more about my recent webinar on immunity statutes) These immunity statutes could be used as a shield by large nursing home chains to defend even the most egregious cases of nursing home neglect. After Congress changed Medicare reimbursement guidelines to financially penalize those facilities that allow pressure wounds to develop on their watch, the industry came up with creative ways to recharacterize these pressure wounds as blisters or skin tears. Further deregulation and fine reductions during the Trump administration led to less accountability from skilled nursing facilities and hospitals. For more information on pressure wounds, [click here](#).

If you or a loved one has suffered from skin breakdown or related infections, call our office for a free consultation. Act early to protect your rights. No attorney's fees are charged unless there is a settlement or recovery, so call now for your free consultation.

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