



The William W. Backus Hospital

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Director of Outpatient Services chosen as presenter at National Event

NORWICH — Patty Conwell, Director of Outpatient Services at The William W. Backus Hospital in Norwich, has been chosen as a presenter at the national Symposium on Advanced Wound Care and the 14th annual Medical Research Forum on Wound Repair. The event is May 2-5 in Orlando, Florida. The 41-year-old nurse oversees Backus' wound care, endocrinology/diabetes and pain management services.

"It's exciting," Conwell said, referring to her role as a national presenter. "Especially because of what we are presenting. For me, this particular poster means a lot for wound care. Hopefully this will help other patients get the treatment they need to become healthy again."

Conwell's poster presentation features two cases in which Backus' Wound Care Center of Eastern Connecticut has successfully treated patients for Pyoderma Gangrenosum, a disease that produces difficult-to-treat wounds. The presentation focuses on a local resident and 3-year-old California girl whose wounds were treated with Hydrofera Blue, a foam dressing manufactured in Willimantic.

The presentation, to be given in front of thousands of wound care clinicians across the country, is an extension of a previous study on Hydrofera Blue conducted by the Wound Care Center. Because of the success of that study, research was broadened to encompass a nationwide group of patients with Pyoderma. Conwell said Hydrofera Blue has had amazing results healing wounds that previously would have required steroids.


Conwell said the young California girl had the worst case of Pyoderma she has ever seen, with severe wounds on her extremities that developed after she was bitten by an insect overseas. Hydrofera sent its product to the girl, but because medical personnel in California were unfamiliar with how to use the product, the Wound Care Center provided assistance. Via phone and pictures, the center is providing the girl's father with advice and instructions on how to utilize the wound dressing. "Now she is doing really well," Conwell said.

Married with two boys ages 11 and 13, Conwell has worked in wound care for 12 years since graduating from Quinnipiac University in Hamden with Bachelor's Degrees in Science and Nursing. Before joining the Backus Staff in 2000, she worked at a wound care center in Hamden and a sub-acute facility before that, where she developed an interest in healing wounds.

"When you help heal your first few patients -- many of whom have had wounds that have been there for a real long time -- it really feels good to see how much you can change someone's life," Conwell said. "It's quite rewarding to see someone get their life back." She describes wound care work as "50 percent art and 50 percent science," as each wound is different and different approaches work for different people.

As Backus Hospital prepares to move its diabetes, endocrinology and wound care services under one roof at the former Ames Plaza in Norwich, Conwell says patients will benefit immensely. She said people with diabetes tend to develop difficult wounds, and a team of experts will treat them in

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one easy to access setting. Currently, the Wound Care Center is in a separate building of the Hospital, and the Diabetes Management Center is crunched for space within the hospital. With additional space at Ames, Conwell plans to begin community education programs for people with diabetes who could be prone to developing severe wounds.

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