

OASIS Alert

Reader Questions: CUT OUT SKIN ULCER IDENTIFICATION PROBLEMS

Question: In my agency, I find that nurses have a very difficult time differentiating skin ulcers. When I review their assessments, I see a lot of discrepancies. The clinicians don't seem to agree on what type of ulcer the patient has. When the referring physician doesn't specify the type of wound in the referral, I call to clarify the type of wounds, but I often don't get an answer or even the requested clinical notes. What should we do to help the nurses answer the OASIS wound questions accurately?

Answer: It sounds like staff education is the first step, says **Cheryl Pacella** with the **Visiting Nurse Association of Boston**. Here are some possible approaches:

- Consult with a Certified Wound Care Nurse, Pacella recommends. To locate someone near you, go to www.wocn.org and click on "WOC Nurse Referral."
- Consider asking your supply vendor or someone from a nearby wound care supply company to give a presentation on this topic, Pacella suggests.
- For a Webcast of a comprehensive wound care program the **Centers for Medi-care & Medicaid Services** presented in April 2004, go to <http://cms.internetstreaming.com/courses>, click on "Archived Web-casts" and then on "Wound Care." [Handouts are also available for downloading.](#)