

The Association for the Advancement of Wound Care

1995-2005

The History of an Association Created by Design and Driven by Passion

The Association for the Advancement of Wound Care seeks to bring together, in community and collaboration, all people with an interest in wound care. AAWC is a multidisciplinary organization made up of volunteers and members who aim to make the wound caring world a better place for its patients. In celebration of AAWC's 10th Anniversary, may you enjoy recounting the journey of the last decade, as AAWC's major milestones in the pursuit of this mission are recaptured in the following historical narrative.

The Beginning

In April of 1988, Health Management Publications, Inc. (now HMP Communications, LLC) sponsored the 1st Annual Symposium on Advanced Wound Care (SAWC). The Symposium was an immediate success. The SAWC became the forum for the multidisciplinary wound care community to meet, greet and share its research and clinical practice. The interaction among the attendees was and always has been one of collegiality – a meeting where all who attend feel a sense of community and collaboration.

Using the SAWC as a forum not only for education, but also as the optimal location for networking, a small group of like-minded colleagues began talking about how they could have more of an impact on wound management. With all the transitions in health care that affect both the patient and the health care professional, this visionary group felt it was time to organize.

On August 19, 1995, eleven interested colleagues gathered to meet and discuss the development of a new organization. HMP, under the direction of **Pat Scullin, CEO**, lent financial support and guidance to the group. The shared vision was an association of members, unified in purpose, supported with enough structure to influence the direction of wound care, yet one that empowered its members with the freedom to contribute in his/her own unique and creative way. Community, collaboration and equal partnership were paramount as the crafting of a new organization evolved.

Alas, the Association for the Advancement of Wound Care (AAWC) was officially incorporated on September 18, 1995 in the state of Pennsylvania as a 501(c)3 organization. The intent was to speak to the needs of our constituents and initiate change to impact the field of wound management. Fifteen members comprised the first AAWC Board of Directors. **Evonne Fowler, RN, CNS, CWOCN** was appointed as Founding President, and **Diane Krasner, PhD, RN, CWOCN, CWS, FAAN** was hired as the Founding AAWC Executive Director. HMP was chosen as the Association Management Firm.

Industry was solicited to provide financial support. The Association's Founding Corporate Sponsors would be a group of special Association friends, who would help develop a solid foundation for our mission. A one-time, start-up grant from each company was requested to help launch the new Association. The amount would fund administrative and promotional needs, as well as provide a cash reserve of working capital to supplement membership dues and the sale of Association products. Thirteen companies joined the Association as Corporate Founding Sponsors.

The AAWC appointed two corporate representatives to the Founding Board of Directors, **Louise Colburn, MS, RN** and **William O'Dell**. AAWC's goal was to ensure that industry needs and concerns were also heard.

1996

A news bulletin about the formation of the AAWC was released and the inquiries multiplied. The first official member to pay dues was **Sister Carole Bouchard**. By the spring of 1996, five hundred founding members were on board as the first AAWC Annual Meeting was launched at the 9th Annual Symposium on Advanced Wound Care in Atlanta, Georgia. The Symposium on Advanced Wound Care became the official AAWC Annual Membership Meeting Site, and *Wounds* and *Ostomy/Wound Management* were adopted as the official AAWC Journals. By unifying a symposium, an association of wound caring colleagues and providing members with the benefit of free and reduced rates on premier wound care journals, significant strides in the field of wound management were made.

In May of 1996, a membership survey was distributed, and forty-seven percent (47%) of the membership responded. The information was summarized and used as the basis for the first AAWC Strategic Planning Meeting.

To accommodate the entire Board of Directors, a two-day Strategic Planning Meeting was held on June 20, 1996 in Seattle and July 20, 1996 in Chicago. **Gary Ackert** of 3M acted as the facilitator. The Association's mission statement, goals and objectives were refined. The plan truly reflected the views of the membership.

1997

The idea of a "Canadian Association for Wound Care (CAWC)" was established at the Canadian Symposium of Wound Management in 1995. Under the guidance and direction of AAWC's International Board Member, **Gary Sibbald, BS, MD, FRCPC(MED), FRCPC(DERM), Med**, and with the sharing of important AAWC documents, policies and practices through 1997, CAWC eventually became incorporated, and an official "sister association" was born. Both organizations freely share organizational skills, best practice and evidence-based findings. The groups have continued to have an open dialogue and friendly, collaborative relationship.

Also by 1997, two AAWC Educational Image Slide Sets were created for purchase by members and non-members. These products were very important for generating non-dues revenue for the Association, but most importantly for meeting wound care professionals' needs for 35mm slides for lectures and in-services. AAWC also began to have tables in the exhibit hall at the SAWC and other shows to increase the visibility of the Association.

1998

In 1998, the first AAWC Board of Directors Election took place. In all the years of AAWC Board Member Elections since then, several renowned leaders in the field of wound care have contributed to AAWC's strides forward. Several Board Members have remained on the Board serving in different capacities throughout AAWC's history, while new members have continued to rotate in as well. The Board has always been multidisciplinary to represent the membership. The combination of fresh ideas as new Board members have taken office, coupled with long-time Board Members' collective AAWC Board experiences has always been beneficial to AAWC's progress.

1999

The AAWC Board of Directors has always designed and carried out plans to meet members' needs. AAWC only gained momentum over the years as several membership benefits and services were developed for its growing membership.

In early 1999, AAWC had almost 850 members. Knowing the importance of resources and networking for AAWC Members, the Founding President of AAWC, **Evonne Fowler**, surveyed wound clinics and compiled a directory. Evonne's vision was a free annual resource guide of wound care facilities, to be mailed along with the AAWC Membership Directory each year. AAWC's first Wound Care Clinic Directory was launched at the 1999 SAWC. Since then, it has been updated every year, and it is now available on CD ROM in addition to hard copy.

2000

By 2000, the Internet had undoubtedly become the wave of the future, and it was time for AAWC to ride with the swell. With the help of **Stanley Carson, MD, FACS, CWS**, Physician Board Member (2000-2002), the AAWC's website was updated from a simple web page, and www.aawcone.org was established. The site has continued to be a resource for clinicians, as it allows for e-commerce, such as membership renewals and other purchases, which can be made online. A variety of other information is found on the site, including information on manufacturers and meetings in wound care, and membership benefits, including an application for the AAWC Scholarship Program.

2001

It was truly inspiring the manner in which the AAWC Scholarship Program came to be. Under the direction of the Association's Treasurer, **Nick Przystawski, DPM, FACFAS**, AAWC transferred its funds into a new bank account in order to yield higher interest rates for AAWC. The goal in mind was that the money generated could be given back to the members in a way that would advance wound care practice and ultimately improve the lives of patients. It was to the credit of Dr. Przystawski who laid the foundation for an AAWC Scholarship Program for AAWC Members. As the program developed into a reality, three categories of awards emerged. Awards are given to those in need of help to finance research projects in the field of wound care, to finance further study in approved courses on wound care and related fields, and to finance travel costs for those interested in exchange-type programs at wound care clinics both nationally and internationally. \$25,000 has been given back to the Membership since the first scholarships were awarded in 2001.

Also by 2001, the Educational Slide Set Series of wound images were made available to the wound care community on CD ROM. Eventually, eight different slide sets had been created over the years and were provided to Members at half-price. And again, technology demanded that AAWC keep up with the changing times. Digital pictures became the demand, and costs associated with changing slides into digital images were high. AAWC heard the voices of its members and the community and responded with CD ROMs as a new valuable resource.

Later in 2001, the **John Boswick Memorial Award and Lectureship** criteria were developed. After discussions with HMP Communications, **Robert S. Kirsner, MD, PhD** brought this idea to the Board, and it was unanimously approved. The John Boswick Memorial Award and Lectureship is an annual SAWC session jointly sponsored by AAWC and HMP. As the title implies, it celebrates the memory of the late John Boswick, a burn surgeon who contributed immensely to the field of wound care. The vision for the award was outlined as "global selfless leadership in improving scientific understanding or care of persons with wounds." The first winner of this prestigious award was **Thomas K. Hunt, MD** in 2002. Other winners included **Martin Robson, MD** in 2003, **Terence Ryan, MD** in 2004, and **Barbara Braden, PhD, RN** in 2005.

2002

As a broad based organization, the AAWC's founding objectives were to hear, to be responsive, and to remain loyal to the needs members in order to ultimately have a positive impact on patients with wounds and their caregivers.

By 2002, AAWC's membership had risen to nearly 1200! AAWC had implemented many ideas and created valuable membership benefits, but one goal had seemed to be lagging behind. It seemed that those truly interested in the networking aspects of the Association were only able to meet once a year at SAWC. The Networking and Wound Care Clinic Directories were serving their purposes, but some members needed and wanted more interaction. Young leaders were emerging and wanted a chance to get involved. Members with tenure felt a desire to share their expertise.

It was time for AAWC to take action and answer members' requests for more interaction. Attributed to the ideas of **Robert S. Kirsner, MD, PhD** and **Dot Weir, RN, CWOCN**, and approved by the Board of Directors, four AAWC Task Forces were developed for Members only. The Task Forces were launched at SAWC in Baltimore in 2002. Each Task Force had a very specific, yet generalized goal that related to its

subject area: Research, Public Awareness, Government and Regulatory Affairs and Quality of Care. All AAWC Members were informed of the new committees and were given the opportunity to join the group best suited to their interests. It was up to the groups to decide which way to go with their respective missions.

A wonderful example of the success of the Task Forces is seen by the work of the Government and Regulatory Affairs Task Force. Guidelines for optimal care of patients with venous ulcers were a need to the wound care community. In 2002, under the leadership of **Laura Bolton, PhD**, and **Lisa Corbett, APRN, BC, CWOCN**, the Government and Regulatory Affairs Task Force began with a vision to complete an evidence-based and validated venous ulcer algorithm. A true testament of dedication and persistence, the Task Force obtained Board approval on the completed document entitled "Summary Algorithm for Venous Ulcer Care with Annotations of Available Evidence" in 2004. It was subsequently sent to the National Guidelines Clearinghouse for inclusion in 2005.

Another true example of success is the AAWC Network Newsletter. After a survey to members, it seemed this important vehicle of communication was lacking the educational value once envisioned for it. There had also been problems keeping the Newsletter on time. The Board of Directors decided that the oversight of the AAWC Network Newsletter would transition to the AAWC Secretary. This way, the subject of the Newsletter would always be a report on AAWC Board Teleconferences, and it seemed that oversight by the Association's Secretary fit within the scope of that Board position. **Teresa Conner-Kerr, PhD, PT, CWS, CLT**, became the first Secretary to take over as Editor of the Newsletter, while **Tina Thomas** became the managing editor at the Business Office. Teresa had such enthusiasm for the Newsletter and has continued to work hard to find column writers who will contribute articles to reach all disciplines. Tina customarily takes care of adding Association News and Membership Updates. With the help of several dedicated column editors, including **Harriett Loehne, PT, CWS; Elizabeth Hogue, Esq.; Cynthia Fleck, RN; Marge Groom, RN**; and others who have contributed articles, the Newsletter has truly turned out to be the valuable resource that it was envisioned to become.

A growing membership and continuous efforts to meet members' needs and streamline processes contributes greatly to an Association's credibility. It is no surprise that Industry and organizations have always recognized AAWC as a credible organization. Over the years, several partnership opportunities have arisen. In 2002, AAWC joined Johnson & Johnson in a Campaign entitled "Proper Treatment of Minor Wounds." AAWC also helped to form (and ultimately joined as a participating member) the Alliance of Wound Care Stakeholders, currently led by **Marcia Nusgart, RPh, Executive Director**. AAWC also became a collaborating organization with the NPUAP in late 2003.

2003

At a high of 1368 members in the year 2003, AAWC continued to recognize the needs of a growing society and an evolving community. There were several areas identified where there was too much restriction or not enough. The Board directed the Bylaws Committee, led by **John Macdonald, MD, FACS** to revise AAWC Bylaws, and a new version was adopted by the Membership during the 2003 AAWC Board of Directors Election. The new version addressed various issues under the old version and allowed for more flexibility in some areas, less flexibility in others. The success of an organization relies heavily on its ability to review, regroup and reorganize in order to keep moving forward.

Ensuring enough infrastructure to support an emergent association is equally as important to streamlining processes. The Association had been without an Executive Director since **Diane Krasner** stepped down from the position in 1997. AAWC knew it was time to seek out another Executive Director to move the Association to new heights, and a search ensued in the years 2002 and 2003. In the end, it was **Tina Thomas**, the Association Liaison since 1999 who was ultimately selected for the position. Tina was promoted to Executive Director on September 1, 2003. A few months later, after an extensive selection process to find just the right person for the job, **Cathy DiJohn** was hired by the management firm as new Liaison. A team of two had been established in the AAWC Business Office, and another leap forward had been made by the AAWC.

Knowing who you are is important as well. The Founders and Board Members of the AAWC had a clear view of whom and what AAWC was; however, there seemed to be confusion about AAWC's identity among other organizations in wound care, the SAWC and even HMP Communications. As a result, in 2003, AAWC designed a new logo in its mission to brand the Association. The new logo was first launched on a new membership brochure, and overtime, the new logo has been applied to all AAWC related materials, including stationary and the Association's web site.

2004

Spearheaded by **Dr. Robert S. Kirsner**, Past President of the AAWC (2004-2006), leaders from the AAWC and representatives from major corporations engaged in discussions about a non-branded, industry-wide campaign. The mission would be to optimize patient care and quality of life by increasing awareness, adoption, and advancement of wound care practices and technologies by wound care practitioners. Similar to the "Got Milk" campaign, this non-branded initiative entitled "Advancing the Practice" (ATP) would spread awareness about wound care as a specialty to ultimately advance the field. The campaign would be created to inspire those considering wound care as a career to become more empowered and determined to make the commitment. It would also provide resources for practitioners. Ten companies donated time and funding to participate in the planning phase of the campaign throughout 2004, and eight of those companies signed on to fund the campaign's pilot year (2005) with corporate support in the amount of \$50,000 each.

Planning also was underway in 2004 for the World Union of Wound Healing Societies Meeting in Paris. In July of 2004, AAWC participated in the World Union of Wound Healing Societies Meeting as a privileged partner and helped to fund the travel of 15 speakers who participated on AAWC's behalf.

Near the end of the year, AAWC participated in a North American Wound Care Council Meeting. The introductory meeting was initiated by AAWC's sister association, the CAWC, and held in November at the CAWC Annual Meeting in Calgary. Several wound care associations from Canada, the United States and Mexico had representatives in attendance. **Dr. Diane L. Krasner**, AAWC President, and **Tina Thomas**, AAWC Executive Director, represented the AAWC at this meeting, where a very specific mission for the group was created. The mission centers on collaboration and idea-sharing among wound care groups. Currently, all Associations who were represented at the introductory meeting are considering whether to formalize the NAWCC.

Happy Anniversary AAWC: 2005

As an Anniversary gift to all members, AAWC began in January to provide both of its official journals, *Ostomy/Wound Management* and *Wounds* as free benefits with membership. Members no longer have to choose between two of the best wound care journals available.

The Advancing the Practice (ATP) Campaign launched in February. An aggressive print campaign is underway and will continue throughout 2005. The advertisements, to be placed in several journals this year, will direct wound care practitioners to the Advancing the Practice Website, www.advancingtheppractice.org. The ATP Web Site is packed full of practical and professional enhancement tools, information on guidelines and standards, and educational resources – everything from journals and books, to associations and certification, to products and therapies. The web site helps professionals to find current resources in one easy-to-use location, and the content reflects the perspectives of an interdisciplinary wound healing team.

The ATP web site will only continue to include more and more information as the year continues. We thank the ATP Task Force for their hard work in compiling the site content. The ATP Task Force Members are: **Renee Cordrey, PT, MSPT, MPH, CWS; Robert Kirsner, MD, PhD; Diane Krasner, PhD, RN, CWOCN, CWS, FAAN; Pat Mertz, BA; Richard Rudman, BA, BS; and Pamela Scarborough, PT, MS, CDE, CWS.** A special thanks goes to **Renee Cordrey**, both an ATP Task Force Member and Physical Therapy Member on the AAWC Board of Directors, for her willingness to serve the campaign as web site editor.

The corporations who generously support the Advancing the Practice campaign are industry leaders who recognize the need to advocate Advanced Wound Care and educate its practitioners. Other corporations and organizations will be asked to join AAWC and current corporate partners in campaign efforts later this year. The hope is that this industry-wide campaign will be funded for several years. AAWC could not be prouder of this moment, an obvious milestone in AAWC history - one that speaks volumes about AAWC's mission for community and collaboration!

Exciting things will continue to happen as the year 2005 unfolds, including several 10th Anniversary plans and a Celebration to be held in conjunction with the Symposium on Advanced Wound Care in San Diego in April. AAWC is proud to announce that 76 long-standing Members have been honored as "Charter Members" and will be recognized during the Celebration at SAWC! Founding Corporate Partners and Board Members will be in attendance and acknowledged as well! AAWC also has received support from 10th Anniversary Corporate Friends, who will also be spotlighted at the party and throughout the year.

Happy Birthday and Congratulations to AAWC, now over 1600 members strong and growing! Please join us as we celebrate 10 years of success and look forward to the future of advancing wound care.

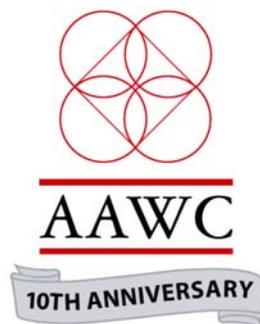
AAWC is...

- A source of support, information and education for all - from patients and lay caregivers to researchers and educators, to practitioners across all settings, including acute, sub-acute, long term care and at home.
- An advocate and voice for patient and professional issues related to quality wound care and appropriate guidelines, coding and reimbursement.
- An opportunity for networking and mentorship among all members.
- A partner with industry, and a collaborator with other organizations, which are formed to advance wound care.
- A place to be heard and to be helped; to give and to share.

Community & Collaboration

One Mission, Many Faces, One Family

One AAWC



1995 – 2005

Celebrating Ten Years of Advanced Wound Caring