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| <b>Title</b>                                  | <b>ACIA 015 - Maintenance of Skin Integrity by Support Workers in the Community</b>   |
| <b>Purpose</b>                                | <p>This guideline is to assist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service providers (organisations and individuals), participants, stakeholders and funders</li> <li>• Regarding safe and acceptable maintenance of skin integrity in the community by support workers.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Background</b>                             | <p>As the Community Service Industry has grown and a review of the competencies required to deliver safe care services has led to significant shifts in nursing, care and service delivery practices, particularly in the community. There are numerous clinical guidelines on best practice written by government departments that address aspects of these changes. Where available, these have been used as source documents for these guidelines (and are listed at the end of the document).</p> <p>This guideline provides clarity around the roles of the support worker, service provider and registered nurse in the maintenance a participant's skin integrity in the community.</p> <p>Furthermore, as participant involvement and service direction has increased it is imperative to involve the participant in all aspects of the service delivery and the direction of their services to their ability. It is further acknowledged that dignity of risk is an important part of this choice and control.</p> |
| <b>Scope</b>                                  | <p>This guideline applies to the provision of paid support and nursing service delivery in the community. They are relevant Australia-wide or when a participant is travelling oversea with their Australian team of support worker/s.</p>  |
| <b>Disclaimer</b>                             | <p>This guideline is provided to help guide best practice in the community service and support industry. This information does not in any way replace legislative, regulatory, or contractual requirements. Users of this document should seek appropriate expert advice in relation to their circumstances. ACIA does not accept any liability on the use of this guideline.</p>   |
| <b>Definitions and Supporting Information</b> | <p><b>Community Supports and/or Services</b> is defined as the provision of paid supports and services in a participant's home or community. It includes but is not limited to, the following activities of daily living:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal care or support</li> <li>• housework or domestic assistance</li> <li>• transport assistance</li> <li>• community access</li> <li>• social support</li> <li>• nursing services</li> <li>• clinical supports</li> </ul>   |

- gardening and home maintenance
- palliative care
- respite care

**Support Worker** is an individual who assists or supervises a participant to perform tasks of daily living to support and maintain general wellbeing and enable meaningful involvement in social, family and community activities in the person's home and community. The Support Worker is a paid person who has access to education, support and advice from the **Service Provider** line manager or team leader. **Support Worker** has been commonly known as attendant care worker, disability worker, aged care worker, community worker, homecare worker, care worker or paid carer.

**Service Providers** are organisation or a person who are funded for the delivery of supports and services to participants

**Carer** is a person that provides supports to the participant at no cost (generally family or friend).

**Competent** means having been trained and assessed by a registered nurse or enrolled nurse or approved assessor as competent to safely and appropriately perform a specified task.

**Infection Control** means infection prevention and control measures aimed at ensuring the protection of those who might be vulnerable to acquiring an infection both in the general community and while receiving care, in a range of settings. The basic principle of infection prevention and control is hygiene.

**Participant** means the client, consumer or person receiving the nursing or support.

**Plan** means a Care or Service Plan or Individual Plan (however titled – the plan) is a document developed in response to a request for service. It is developed by a registered nurse (or other appropriately, similarly skilled professional) from the service provider, prior to the commencement of service delivery. It outlines the expected outcomes of the requested care/services and the tasks, duties and interventions required to meet the care and service needs of the participant (within the parameters of the funding program). The plan guides and directs the individual support worker or registered nurse in their day-to-day delivery of the services.

**Skin** is the natural outer layer that covers a person. It comprises two layers of cells – the epidermis which is the thin outer layer and the dermis which is the thick inner layer.

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|                               | <p><b>Pressure Areas</b> are specific areas of the body that put greater pressure on the skin. These are usually bony prominence areas such as the buttocks, heels, elbows and shoulders. Pressure to these areas compromise the integrity of the skin causing painful reddening areas that without appropriate care and treatment will lead to pressure sores.</p> <p><b>Pressure Sore</b> is a neglected pressure area that rapidly deteriorates into a pressure sore (also known as an ulcer or wound). The skin is broken, tissue deteriorates and the wound continuous to enlarge.</p> <p><b>Registered Nurse</b> means a person who has completed the prescribed educational preparation, demonstrated competence for practice, and is registered and licensed with the Australian Health Practioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) as a registered nurse.</p> <p><b>Support Worker Competency</b> means a support worker who has been trained and assessed as competent by an occupational therapist (or other appropriately, similarly skilled professional) to safely and appropriately perform a specified task as a support worker.</p> <p><b>Wound</b> means skin tissue damaged by trauma. This may be deliberate, as in surgical wounds of procedures, or be due to accidents caused by blunt force, projectiles, heat, electricity, chemicals or friction.</p> |
| <p><b>Desired Outcome</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To maintain a quality and safe standard of care</li> <li>• To reduce confusion as to the role of support workers in the maintenance of good skin integrity of to participants in the community</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Guideline</b></p>       | <p><b><u>Service Provider</u></b></p> <p><b>As a part of any support service delivered by support workers the service provider will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess initial care needs with the participant. Including (if required) clinical assessment of participant’s skin condition and pressure sore risks</li> <li>• <b><i>Particular attention must be given to all diabetic participants in relation to skin integrity as there is a far greater risk of breakdown of skin ultimately leading to gangrene and limb amputation.</i></b></li> <li>• Determine the types of skin care interventions and maintenance tasks that the support worker may attend</li> <li>• Develop plans with identified outcomes</li> <li>• Provide written procedures on the provision of skin care, skin inspection and maintenance by the <b>support worker</b> – this may be included as part</li> </ul>  |

of the plan

- The Plan for pressure area or pressure sore management should be clearly documented in the home and only changed by the **doctor** or a **registered nurse** and access to policies and procedures made available to **support workers**.
- Identify education needs for **support workers**. Provide relevant competency-based education and assessment processes for the support worker/s to ensure they are competent to perform the prescribed duties, tasks and interventions
- Monitor, review, evaluate and adapt as required the service, plans and outcomes with the involvement of the participant

It is recommended that support worker duties be delivered under the direction and supervision of a registered nurse.

### **Service by a Registered Nurse**

**A paid registered nurse is required to:**

- Change the pressure sore dressing regime
- Perform surgical and/or chemical debridement
- Perform any pressure sore/wound/sinus packing

### **Support Workers**

**Support workers may NOT:**

- Perform any duties that must be attended to by a registered nurse (as outlined above)

**Support workers may:**

- Perform any task on the plan, apart from those that must be performed by a registered nurse (or other suitably assessed person), after having completed competency training and being signed off as competent in the task by the service provider. Examples include:
  - Observe skin regularly
  - Encourage or assist with repositioning
  - Ensure bed clothes, clothes, seats and cushions remain smooth
  - Encourage hydration
  - Ensure skin is kept clean and dry

**Support workers must:**

- Follow the plan as provided by the service provider
- Report to their supervisor of any changes or variations for advice
- Not change the plan
- Identify, and report to their supervisor, any gaps in their ability to deliver

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|                           | the required service including difficulties in completing the tasks within the allocated time.   |
| <b>Resource Documents</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACIA 002 - Provision of Paid Supports and Nursing in the Community</li> <li>• ACIA Guideline 004 – Administration of oral Medication in the Community</li> <li>• ACIA Guideline 005 – Administration of non-oral and injectable Medication in the Community</li> <li>• ACIA Guideline 011 – Administration of Insulin in the Community by Support Workers</li> <li>• Capability Framework for Support Workers – for supporting people of any age with brain injury and/or spinal cord injury, ACIA 2015: <a href="http://www.acia.net.au/education/acia-education-and-training">http://www.acia.net.au/education/acia-education-and-training</a></li> <li>• An Overview of Skin and Pressure Area Management – In Adults with Spinal Cord Injuries, Rural Spinal Cord Injury Project, June 2005</li> <li>• Guidelines for the Prevention of Pressure Areas, Royal North Shore Hospital (2003)</li> <li>• Skin Integrity – Its maintenance and support, Eastern Health 2008, Victoria Australia</li> <li>• Victorian Government Health Information, Skin Integrity at <a href="http://www.health.vic.gov.au/older/toolkit/10SkinIntegrity/index.htm">http://www.health.vic.gov.au/older/toolkit/10SkinIntegrity/index.htm</a> , last updated 21 January 2015.</li> <li>• Wound Care, Clinical Guidelines (nursing), The Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne, <a href="https://www.rch.org.au/clinicalguide/#tab-W">https://www.rch.org.au/clinicalguide/#tab-W</a> , last updated 2017.</li> <li>• Best Practice Statement: Care of the Older Person’s Skin (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) 2012, Wounds UK: <a href="http://www.woundsinternational.com/media/issues/622/files/content_10608.pdf">http://www.woundsinternational.com/media/issues/622/files/content_10608.pdf</a></li> <li>• NSW Health – Various documents <a href="http://www.health.nsw.gov.au">www.health.nsw.gov.au</a> then go to ‘Publications and Resources’ ‘Policy Directives and Guidelines’ then either "search by A to Z" or search specific word/s eg. Medication</li> <li>• Matching client needs and support worker skills in the New South Wales Motor Accidents Scheme, Motor Accidents Authority NSW August 2003</li> <li>• Guidelines for Levels of Attendant Care for People with Spinal Cord Injury, Lifetime Care Support Authority NSW 2007</li> <li>• Boarding Houses Regulation 2013</li> <li>• Pressure Injury Prevention and Management NSW Health. 24 March 2014</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• icare (Insurance and Care NSW) (2017), Guidance on the support needs for adults with spinal cord injury (3rd Ed). Lukersmith, Sue (ed), Sydney, Australia.</li></ul> |
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