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Jacksonville Contact Information:

Patti Langenbach
(800) 741-0110
(904) 733-8500

patti@ostomymcp.com

Support group meets the 3rd Sunday of each month 3 p.m.

4836 Victor Street

Next Meeting: **October 17th**

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<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/94640600811>

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or call +1 301 715 8592 US

Gainesville Support Group Contact info:

JoAnne Bell at 352-284-4214

Meets the 1st Sunday of each month (except Holidays)

at Hope Lodge 2121 SW 16th St
Gainesville, FL

Next meeting: **TBA**

Ocala Support Contact info:

Karen Franco 352-304-1309

Meets the 2nd Sunday of each month (except July & Aug) at 2 p.m. at the Sheriff's Station 3260 SE 80th Street between Ocala and Belleview.

Next Meeting: **TBA**

Citrus County Support Group

Meets third Sunday of each month at 2:00 PM in the Seven Rivers Regional Medical Center, 6201 N. Suncoast Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34428, in the Community Room of the Medical Office Building

Next Meeting: **TBA**

Amelia Island Area Ostomy Support Group

(904) 310-9054

Meets second Monday of each month at 6:30pm

Next Meeting: **TBA**

The Villages Ostomy Support

We meet on the 2nd Tuesday evening of each month at 6:00 PM at (except July & August)

Linda Manson

tvostomy@gmail.com

865-335-6330

Next Meeting: **via Zoom**

Contact Linda tvostomy@gmail.com

From UOAA August E-News

Advocating for more Ostomy Nurses

Our most recent Upfront with Ostomies column has been published in the August issue of the Wound Management Prevention Journal. It covers the need for certified ostomy nurses, a top priority that UOAA advocates for. It is entitled *The Value in Becoming a Certified Ostomy Nurse*.

For this article we partnered with the Wound Ostomy Continence Nurses Certification Board (WOCNCB). We are very grateful to this month's guest contributor Kristy Staebel, a certified WOC nurse, and Advocacy Committee Co-Chair Joanna Burgess-Stocks who contributed the introduction and closing remarks. It offers strong encouragement for people to get this certification and work in this specialty and also why they should be hired! Here is a [link](#) to the article.

UPFRONT WITH OSTOMIES

The Value in Becoming a Certified Ostomy Nurse

Kristy Staebel, MBA, BSN, RN, CWOCN, FACCWS, DAPWCA

Introduction and Closing Remarks by Joanna Burgess-Stocks, BSN, RN, CWOCN

August 2021

Patients with an ostomy continue to be an underserved population. There are between 725 000 and 1 million people in the United States living with an ostomy or continent diversion, and approximately 100 000 ostomy surgeries are performed each year.¹ The American Association of Colleges of Nursing reports that there are 3.8 million registered nurses in the United States.² According to a personal communication with the executive director of the Wound Ostomy Continence Nurses Certification Board (WOCNCB), there were 6177 nurses certified in ostomy care at the end of 2020. Those are staggering numbers that reflect a large gap between the patients who need a certified ostomy nurse and the number of available certified ostomy nurses. This gap is even greater in rural areas and exists in all health care settings, including acute care, home care, outpatient care, long-term care, and rehabilitation facilities. The goal of this article is to inspire more nurses to join this specialty profession.

Importance of certification. Of course nurses can go through the coursework to learn how to provide the physical and emotional aspects of ostomy care without pursuing certification. However, by taking the next step to certification, nurses demonstrate that they have acquired the additional knowledge, skills, expertise, and even attitude to provide high quality care to patients and their families. It also shows a current or future employer that the nurse is a lifetime learner who cares about quality and excellence in health care delivery. Certified ostomy nurses also have the confidence that they are providing the most up-to-date, evidence-based care. Recent studies show the value of care provided by wound, ostomy, and continence (WOC) nurses on patient outcomes, including a reduction in complications that develop in the home health care setting.³ Another study found patients experienced significant improvements in health-related quality of life when they received care from an ostomy nurse specialist in hospitals when compared with those who did not receive care by specialty nurses.⁴

A nurse certified in ostomy care can add value to the staff in a health care facility in the following ways:

- Assist the surgeon in siting a manageable place for independent and successful care of a stoma
- Teach staff nurses how to care for a patient with an ostomy
- Provide best practice standards of care as recommended in the Ostomy and Continent Diversion Patient Bill of Rights (<https://www.ostomy.org/bill-of-rights/>)
- Collaborate with industry in providing the best products for ostomy care
- Assess and treat peristomal skin and stoma issues that can result in hospital readmissions

- Ensure that patients have a reliably fitting pouching system to avoid leakages, thus improving patient outcomes
- Inspire and influence change; many ostomy nurses have influenced their facilities to start outpatient ostomy care clinics
- Provide ongoing expert knowledge and fill a role as a professional resource

In contrast, facilities that do not have a certified ostomy nurse may encounter the following difficulties:

- Higher rates of poorly placed stomas
- Higher incidence of pouch leakage and poor quality of life for the patient
- Higher incidence of stoma and peristomal skin complications leading to increased hospital readmission rates and emergency department visits
- Poor overall patient satisfaction with their hospital experience

A NURSE'S STORY

My name is Kristy Staebel, and I am a certified WOC nurse. Early in my adult life, I went through a period during which I had no idea what I wanted to do professionally. I obtained my first bachelor's degree in my early 20s, which was in Speech Communications. I jokingly look back and have determined that this was partly due to the fact that the only talent I felt I possessed was the gift of gab. My mother and grandmother were nurses, which may have been part of my inspiration to finally decide to go to nursing school. I was not completely confident that this career path would prove to be successful for me, not knowing if I had truly inherited the nursing gene. This, combined with my tendency to avoid anything deemed to be "gross" (which was quite a lot in my 20s), gave my family little hope that my nursing endeavors would prove successful. However, 18 years later, I have not been disappointed or swayed from my career choice.

Many nurses, friends, and members of my family have asked me throughout the years why I chose to further my career and specialize in wound and ostomy care. Wounds were my first passion, as I learned about caring for them from the physical therapists that I worked with as a part of my clinical experience during nursing school. I found I was fascinated by them. However, I was not prepared for how much I would fall in love with the world of ostomy and this patient population, which started upon my entry into the WEB WOC Nursing Education Program (<https://webwocnurse.com>).

In wound care there are many health care professionals, such as registered nurses, physical therapists, podiatrists, and medical doctors, who have specialized to care for patients with wounds. However, there are very few health care professionals who have the skills and expertise of a certified ostomy nurse, such as a Certified Ostomy Care Nurse (COCN) or Certified Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse (CWOCN), to provide ostomy care. We are truly needed by the person facing ostomy surgery or currently living with an ostomy, their caregivers, and other health care providers.

While working with this patient population, I began to realize what a traumatic experience it can be to go through this surgery. I also began to understand my vital role, which includes being not just a care provider, but being a counselor as my patients and their family members share their stories and try to navigate their concerns for living life with an ostomy. I help them to set goals for moving forward and try to instill in them a confidence that they still can lead a good and full life, enjoying things just as they did before the ostomy surgery. I have been so blessed and happy to provide the much-needed care and comfort to some of the most vulnerable patients. Becoming a CWOCN has been the most rewarding certification that I have obtained, and I highly encourage other nurses to also obtain this certification.

CLOSING REMARKS

United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc. and the WOCNCB encourage more nurses to consider becoming a certified ostomy nurse to better help this patient population heal and thrive successfully. Patients who have the

experience of being cared for by a certified ostomy nurse adapt more easily to an ostomy, have more success with self-care (which leads to their independence), and are more confident in their ability to self-advocate.⁴ They are also better able to return to the functions they love in their community and are more likely to be mentors to others who face ostomy surgery.^{5,6}

Join us in raising awareness about this type of nursing. Any nurse who has known and observed a certified ostomy nurse is quite amazed at their ability to combine both art and science into patient care. If you are already a certified ostomy nurse, help to increase visibility for this profession by speaking at nursing schools, writing for professional journals, and educating and mentoring others to become certified ostomy nurses. Many certified ostomy nurses say that being an ostomy nurse is one of the most fulfilling and rewarding things that they do in their lives. They are able to help patients who have faced a life-altering illness that affects them physically, emotionally, and spiritually. These patients often feel lost, overwhelmed, depressed, and cannot imagine how they can live with what has happened to them. Certified ostomy nurses are able to help them grieve, cope, adapt, and finally thrive as they learn and finally believe that their ostomy saved their life.

LEARN MORE

In a WOCNCB podcast, Jeanine Gleba, the Advocacy Manager at United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc. discussed the value of specialty nursing with Joanna Burgess-Stocks, CWOCN. They addressed the positive difference access to a certified ostomy nurse has on patients, families, and the health care facility staff. Listen to it here: <http://wocncb.org/get-involved/wocncb-certification-inspiration/episode-9>.

For more information about this specialty nursing certification, please visit the WOCNCB at www.wocncb.org.

Kristy Staebel is a certified wound, ostomy, and continence nurse and is a volunteer with the Wound Ostomy Continence Nurses Certification Board. Joanna Burgess is a co-chair of United Ostomy Associations of America's (UOAA) Advocacy Committee. Inquiries can be made to: advocacy@ostomy.org. Information in this article was provided by UOAA. UOAA does not endorse particular products, manufacturers, providers, or other sellers of ostomy products.

This column was not subject to the Wound Management & Prevention peer-review process.

FASHION WITH AN OSTOMY



Ostomates often struggle with fashion and feel their options are limited. Without a doubt, part of the journey to adjusting to your ostomy is finding ways to dress yourself that is both comfortable and still allows you to express your individuality. This was no different for Deirdre, who felt that her passion for fashion and style were taken away from her after her ostomy procedure.

Fortunately, clothing designers have recognized that women come in all shapes and sizes, so you can now find pants with a variety of waistline heights. This allows you to find a style to fit your body and your needs. For active wear, consider wearing yoga pants or stretch pants to help support the pouch during exercise. You might also try biker-style shorts since they can be worn alone or layered under shorts, exercise pants or other stretch pants.

Part of adjusting to an ostomy also includes finding the right pouching system that fits you as well. With the help of her stoma care nurse, Deirdre found a pouching system that worked for her, and she regained the confidence to go out, go to work, socialize with her friends, and do all the other activities she dreamed of being able to do when she was in the hospital. For Deirdre, fashion and style are important aspects of her life, so having a pouch that works with different outfits allowed her to feel like herself again. Her journey with chronic illness and living with a stoma has become so much more

about self-esteem, body image, and loving herself. According to Deirdre, “Once I went out and started getting back to normal life again, no one ever would’ve known that I had a stoma, because the bag was so easy to wear and was hidden under my clothes.”

Deirdre found a discreet [pouching system](#) that fit her well and gave her a feeling of security, which helped her regain the confidence to leave the house in skinny jeans, or even sports leggings. Finding a pouching system with the right fit to Deirdre’s body meant having the confidence to socialize again. Although there may be some styles of clothing you want to avoid after surgery, you still have many choices open to you. See which styles you like the best, and which you find most comfortable. Every body is different and finding the right fit can make the difference between confidence and insecurity.

**Deirdre is a Coloplast product user who has received compensation from Coloplast to provide this information. Each person’s situation is unique, so your experience may not be the same. Talk to your healthcare provider about whether this product is right for you.*

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Prior to use, refer to the product ‘Instructions for Use’ for intended use and relevant safety information.

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<https://www.ostomy.org/event/uoa-8th-national-conference/>

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<http://psag-consumer.wocn.org/#home>

UOAA COVID-19 UPDATES

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