

Improving care for veterans: project SOS



*Bhasker Patel, Maya Pate,
Chris Chittell and Adam
Fielding presented awards at
the W4H gala dinner*

Woundcare4heroes (W4H) was founded in 2012 to bridge the gap in trauma aftercare services, provide lifelong care pathways for veterans, and be a single point of contact transitioning into the NHS following injury during military service. The charity has spent almost 4 years exploring the needs of veteran trauma aftercare services, raising awareness among practitioners and the veteran community, developing care and wound prevention pathways, and providing clinical services, education and advice to healthcare practitioners, veterans and their families.

W4H has just launched an exciting new clinical service called Project SOS at a 220-veteran facility in Chelsea and Westminster. Project SOS, which is based within the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation, is a unique coalition between the NHS, charity and industry. It is sponsored by URGO Medical UK. Project SOS aims to triage each veteran at Stoll in order to plan a lifelong care bundle. At the same time, it supports its NHS partners, providing clinical advice, access to expert specialists and rapid referrals where necessary. It also provides educational support and training events locally.

ANNUAL W4H CONFERENCE

The third annual W4H conference was held on Saturday 1 August 2015 in partnership with the University of Huddersfield's Skin Institute of Integrity and Infection Prevention. It attracted 120 delegates from a variety of clinical specialities.

This year, the programme offered greater holistic insight into veteran trauma aftercare, covering mental health needs and family considerations, as well as addressing initial trauma and haemorrhage, wound infection, debridement, scar management, camouflage, nutrition, and vascular and lymphatic implications. Sixteen speakers from a variety of disciplines — military and civilian, national and international — delivered sessions and practical workshops. Other areas of interest highlighted in delegate feedback will be incorporated into next year's programme.

Between sessions, delegates were able to wander

around the stands and talk to exhibitors. Exhibitors included JWC, Lindsay Leg Club Foundation, British Association of Skin Camouflage, URGO, Activa, Crawford Healthcare, ConvaTec, H&R Healthcare, Smith & Nephew, Advancis Medical, Coloplast, ReCell, Infirst Healthcare, BioMonde, Celox, Physiquipe and Medstrom. W4H would like to thank the University of Huddersfield for its hospitality; Mole Productions for filming the sessions, which are available on the W4H website; the exhibitors, whose support allowed us to put on the event; and the delegates.

The educational event was followed by an evening of celebration and fundraising at the black tie gala dinner. Everyone had a fantastic, fun-filled evening. W4H presented Made A Difference awards to Justin Cole, Ian Staples, URGO Medical UK, Mole Productions, MA Healthcare, Simon Barrett and the cycle team, and Cacia Griggs. Karl Hinnett and Bob Barrett also received awards for veteran recognition and support. The awards ceremony was supported by cast members from *Emmerdale*. We would like to extend our special thanks to actors Chris Chittell, Bhasker Patel and Adam Fielding for making the evening a night to remember.

The gala event raised approximately £17,000, which will go a long way to helping more of our veterans. Jenny Lewis of WC4H said: "I am so pleased with the event, the money we raised and the buzz we created around the charity. I've been overwhelmed by the comments and feedback that delegates, exhibitors and speakers have expressed."

FUNDRAISING

We have come a long way in the past 12 months. We have had many companies take us on as their chosen charity, complete arduous challenges, bike rides, parachute jumps, and endurance challenges. Very special thanks go to Simon Barrett and team, the URGO three-peaks team, the Coloplast team, and the BioMonde duo. We continue to require support as WC4H grows and offers more clinical care. If you would like to help, please email jenny@woundcare4heroes.org.uk or visit www.woundcare4heroes.org.uk.

