



# The Skinny on Skin Substitutes

MAY 2025

*An Action Plan for Primary Care Providers*

The National Association of Accountable Care Organizations (NAACOS) explained [in a recent report](#) that some **ACOs are finding that use of skin substitutes does not align with clinical need**. Wellvana has a plan on how to proceed.



## The Background

As you may have seen [in the news](#), Medicare spending has soared on wound care for patients. According to an analysis done for The New York Times by Early Read, **spending on skin substitutes exceeded \$10 billion in 2024, more than double the figure in 2023**. The Times article reveals several unusual cases, uncovering billing records that showed Medicare spent \$14 million on skin substitutes over the course of a year on a single patient in Nevada.

## Supporting Your Patients

Healthcare providers must be vigilant in tracking the treatment plans and progress for patients who may be receiving skin substitutes for venous ulcers, Mohs procedure, and other wounds. **Being proactive is key.**

For primary care providers, here are several actions to consider:

1. [Review CMS's coverage guidance](#) and familiarize yourself with the LCD list of potentially lower cost alternatives. While this guidance is specific to lower extremities, please note that the issue extends beyond just foot and leg ulcers.
2. Contact your affected patient and confirm status.
3. Ask the provider who prescribed the product to send you updated and timely notes so you can monitor progress.
4. Stay in contact with the patient and the prescriber to ensure the wound is healing.
5. Ask to be alerted if there is an expected change in the dressing product.
  - *If yes, ask the prescriber if the product is new and if they expect the cost to be high.*

## The Power of Having a Good Partner

For providers who participate in a Wellvana ACO, we have been tracking the issue since late summer 2024 and identifying patients who may need monitoring. **We keep a close eye on spend trends and flag patients when they need attention.**

This nuanced approach is just one of the many ways we make primary care life-changing for patients and providers.

## About Wellvana

Wellvana is a leader in value-based care enablement, serving nearly a million patients across 40-plus states.

With an expansive accountable care network of Rural Health Clinics (RHCs), Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs), and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Wellvana helps future-forward organizations take the right risks, unlock new revenue, and deliver better patient outcomes.

See how Wellvana makes it life-changing at [wellvana.com](https://wellvana.com).

