



# *Mobile* Clinical Photography for Wound Care and *Beyond*

by Christopher Cabell



**From its inception in 2010, the Soffer Health Institute (SHI), a multidisciplinary medical practice in South Florida, has relied upon clinical photography as an integral part of its practice for pre- and post-operative tracking of treatment, provider collaboration and insurance billing. As technology for the diagnosis and treatment of various diseases has improved vastly in the ensuing years, so too have the fields of photography and mobile communication. But with this new technology comes a greater expectation for applying these advancements to health care.**

In 2011, SHI founder Dr. Ariel Soffer saw a need within his own practice for a mobile solution that would streamline clinical photography and provider collaboration. Dr. Soffer partnered with a team of established iPhone developers to form AppwoRx™.

The brainchild of a physician's medical knowledge and a developer's technical savvy, AppwoRx is a powerful HIPAA-compliant mobile application that provides medical professionals and patients alike with the ability to document and discuss treatment for a variety of medical concerns. Since its initial development, AppwoRx has grown to include in its clientele a number of physicians worldwide who use the suite daily to catalog patient records and images, track treatment progress, collaborate with other providers and market their services to prospective patients. Most importantly, the app allows consumers to take an active role in their own treatment.



While the software was first designed to serve vein practices and their patients, the technology provided by AppwoRx appeals to physicians in a variety of other specialties, including wound care. By nature, this field relies significantly on clinical photography to illustrate the progress of treatment and healing, and to monitor for any potential complications. A 2010 study conducted by Neal Sikka, an emergency physician at George Washington University, found that doctors were able to accurately diagnose a patient's condition by viewing images of wounds taken by the patient on their own mobile phone in 90 percent of cases. This data alone speaks compellingly to the value of clinical photography tools in the field of wound care.



Aside from its benefits to patients, providers also stand to make gains in productivity and accurate record-keeping with the use of this tool. In the past, physicians used disposable wound rulers to measure a wound's dimensions, as well as to notate patient data prior to photographing. Recent updates to the AppwoRx system have streamlined this tedious process. Doctors can now use the Draw & Annotate feature to mark photos with brushes, drawing tools and custom shapes to highlight areas of concern or make notes. The updated Enhanced Image Gallery also allows providers to compare before and after images side by side to observe and note patient progress.

The solutions available to varied practices and healthcare facilities have been customized. Earlier this year, AppwoRx partnered with Miami Children's Hospital, which was ranked fifth in the nation in the 2013 *InformationWeek 500* survey of technology innovators, to create a custom platform that would allow on-call emergency physicians and staff to document information on patients in their care and share this information with other providers using a physician directory accessed via their mobile device. It proved to be successful. On-call providers were able to instantly access patient data and collaborate with onsite attending physicians to provide an enhanced level of diagnosis and treatment. This resulted in better overall patient care.

In an age where technology is advancing at an exponential rate, there is hardly an industry that does not stand to benefit from mobile applications being made available to businesses and their consumers. The possibilities offered by these applications are critical to healthcare. High-quality images and the ability to connect with healthcare partners does more than market business and sell products, they can often improve patient health and save lives. The potential of the AppwoRx software is limitless in this regard. Kandy Hammond, RN, of the Midwest Vein and Laser Center in Dayton, Ohio, agrees. "One of my favorite features is being able to easily send before and after comparisons to referring physicians. This is a case when a picture is truly worth a thousand words." Using the features provided by AppwoRx, a physician's library of knowledge no longer needs to be confined to the medical textbooks on his bookshelves. With a few clicks on a mobile device, he can broaden his horizons far beyond the doors of his own ER. **W**