



Leadership Lifts

“The Lincoln Ostomy Association holds a special place in my heart—the only community of its kind in Lincoln. I’m grateful that we are welcoming respected community members and longtime friends of our group onto our Board of Directors to help guide us into the future. Their leadership allows our gatherings to stay focused on what matters most: support, encouragement, education, and community for ostomates.” *-Amy Fairchild, LOA president*

Treasurer Joe Frey

Respected business leader and owner of Triumph Home Health Joe Frey joins the Lincoln Ostomy Association as treasurer. Joe started his business in 2003 to better serve the durable medical supply industry. Triumph is a full service durable medical re-supply company specializing in catheter, ostomy

Director Jacques Izard

Jacques Izard, Ph.D. is a faculty at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. His research focuses on the gut microbiome and its impact on the quality of life of ostomates. As a member of multiple research centers in Omaha and Lincoln, he uses a holistic view of the intersection of biology and well-being

Director Rhonda Soucek

Rhonda R. Soucek, RN BSN, CWOCN, has devoted more than 30 years serving the ostomy community, in Lincoln and surrounding communities. “It’s just been so rewarding and so fulfilling, that I can’t imagine doing anything else,” Rhonda Soucek, a nurse at CHI Health

Director Tera Norris

Also joining the LOA board of directors is Tera Norris, who serves as president of the Nebraska Chamber Foundation. Tera grew up in Peru, graduated from UNL and lives in Lincoln. She is married to Jerry and has two sons. The 10-year cancer survivor, has achieved major roles

Lincoln Ostomy Leaders continued



...Joe

and incontinence. Triumph's expertise in ostomy, enteral, compression, urological, wound, and incontinence allows clients to stay in their homes longer and enjoy the lifestyle they have created for themselves.

Besides his steadfast support of the Lincoln Ostomy Association, Joe has served as Chairman of the Board for the Lincoln Independent Business Association, Chair of the Midwest Association of Medical Equipment Suppliers and even volunteered for the Peace Corps teaching English in Russia in 2002.



...Jacques

to ultimately improve quality of life. Dr. Izard joins Lincoln Ostomy Association leadership as director. His research was published in the National Library of Medicine and includes the Lincoln Ostomy Output Consistency Scale for jejunostomy, ileostomy and colostomy to overcome the limitations of the BSFS for qualifying ostomy outputs. Dr. Izard personally presented these findings to LOA. His appointment as LOA director brings valuable science to members.



...Rhonda

St. Elizabeth said. "I'll do this for the rest of my life, God-willing." Rhonda often consults and speaks with LOA as a group and personally cares for many members. At St. Elizabeth, she suggests LOA participation as a good way for new ostomates to connect with others who have "traveled the road a bit." She earned the Daisy Award for Extraordinary Nurses in 2018 and by the Lincoln Journal Star as a top nurse during Celebrate Nurses for Nurse's Week during the challenging year of 2020.



...Tera

like President of the Nebraska State Chamber Foundation and President of Junior Achievement of Lincoln.

We'd like to meet you too!

Lincoln Ostomy Association is growing and we'd love to meet more people with ostomies and those who support them. Connect through meetings published on the back of this *Sparrow* and at <https://ostomynebraska.com/lincoln>. Go to the website and sign up for all announcements and issues of the Sparrow as well. Your information remains confidential and is never shared for outside marketing purposes.



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Adjusting to a different life after ostomy surgery

In the weeks following surgery, it's normal to feel confused, angry, sad, or frustrated. These emotions usually fade as you adapt to life with an ostomy. Here are some tips to help ease the transition:

- **Be patient:** Recovery takes time. Some days will feel better than others.
- **Keep talking:** Share your feelings with loved ones or your ostomy nurse. Open communication can help.
- **Stay active and social:** With your doctor's approval, try a new hobby or join an activity group.
- **Express yourself creatively:** Writing, painting, or crafting can provide an outlet for emotions and help refocus your mind.
- **Educate yourself:** Knowledge empowers decision-making. Your ostomy nurse and support groups are great resources. Patient support like Convatec's Me+ program offer helpful information.
- **Connect with others:** Talking to people living with an ostomy can reassure you that you're not alone and provide practical tips.
- **Join support groups:** Local or on-line communities can offer encouragement.
- **Watch for depression:** Feeling "blue" for a short time is normal, but prolonged sadness, hopelessness, loss of appetite, or thoughts of suicide require immediate medical attention. If you have these feelings, connect with your healthcare professional as soon as possible.

Conclusion

Adjusting to life after ostomy surgery is a journey, and it's okay to experience ups and downs along the way. By staying informed, seeking support, and

**"A good name is more desirable than great riches."
-Proverbs 22**

**"A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor."
- Franklin D. Roosevelt**

**"The best way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."
— Walt Disney**



monitoring your emotional health, you can regain confidence and live a fulfilling life. Remember, help is always available; reach out when you need it.

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Proper stoma cleaning care for your ostomy

Caring for the skin around your stoma is fundamental to a healthy, comfortable ostomy experience. Proper cleaning techniques prevent complications like skin irritation, infection, and pouching system failure.

The UOAA Standard Approach

United Ostomy Associations of America's official colostomy care guide, said proper stoma cleaning involves using warm water and a washcloth or cleansing material while avoiding baby wipes, oils and lotions, as these will prevent adherence of the new appliance. A simple water-based approach is often recommended during pouch changes.

After cleaning, it's essential to dry the skin thoroughly before applying a new skin barrier, as moisture prevents proper adhesion.

Cleaning Dos:

- Clean with warm water during each pouching system change and pat the skin dry with a clean towel
- Keep a towel handy to manage any output during changes
- Address skin irritation immediately
- Discuss with your WOCN

Cleaning Don'ts:

- Don't use baby wipes, oils, or lotions on peristomal skin
- Don't use soaps with moisturizers (interferes with adhesion)
- Don't scrub aggressively
- Don't ignore signs of skin breakdown



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AI & ostomy care: A new frontier

For many LOA members, the journey from surgery to daily management is paved with a steep learning curve.

Mastering pouching techniques and skin health is tough but 2026 marks a turning point. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming a practical, daily tool for ostomates across Nebraska.

From personalized education to “smart” sensors that detect leaks before they happen, AI is providing a new level of autonomy and peace of mind.

Bridging the Knowledge Gap

Recent 2025 research published in the Journal of Advanced Nursing found that AI models like ChatGPT-4 are now being used to create patient education materials which, when used correctly (see below), can be accurate and easy to follow.

In testing, AI-generated guides scored over 85% for actionability, meaning the instructions were clear enough for patients to perform complex care tasks on their own. AI tools cannot replace our WOCN nurses, but they can provide 24/7 support for those “how-to” questions that arise long after the clinic has closed for the day.

Tips in Your Pocket: Identify Probs

Predictive Diagnostics could help with peristomal skin complications

(PSCs). New deep-learning tools can analyze a simple photo of your stoma area taken with your phone and detect early signs of discoloration or leakage with up to 95% accuracy.

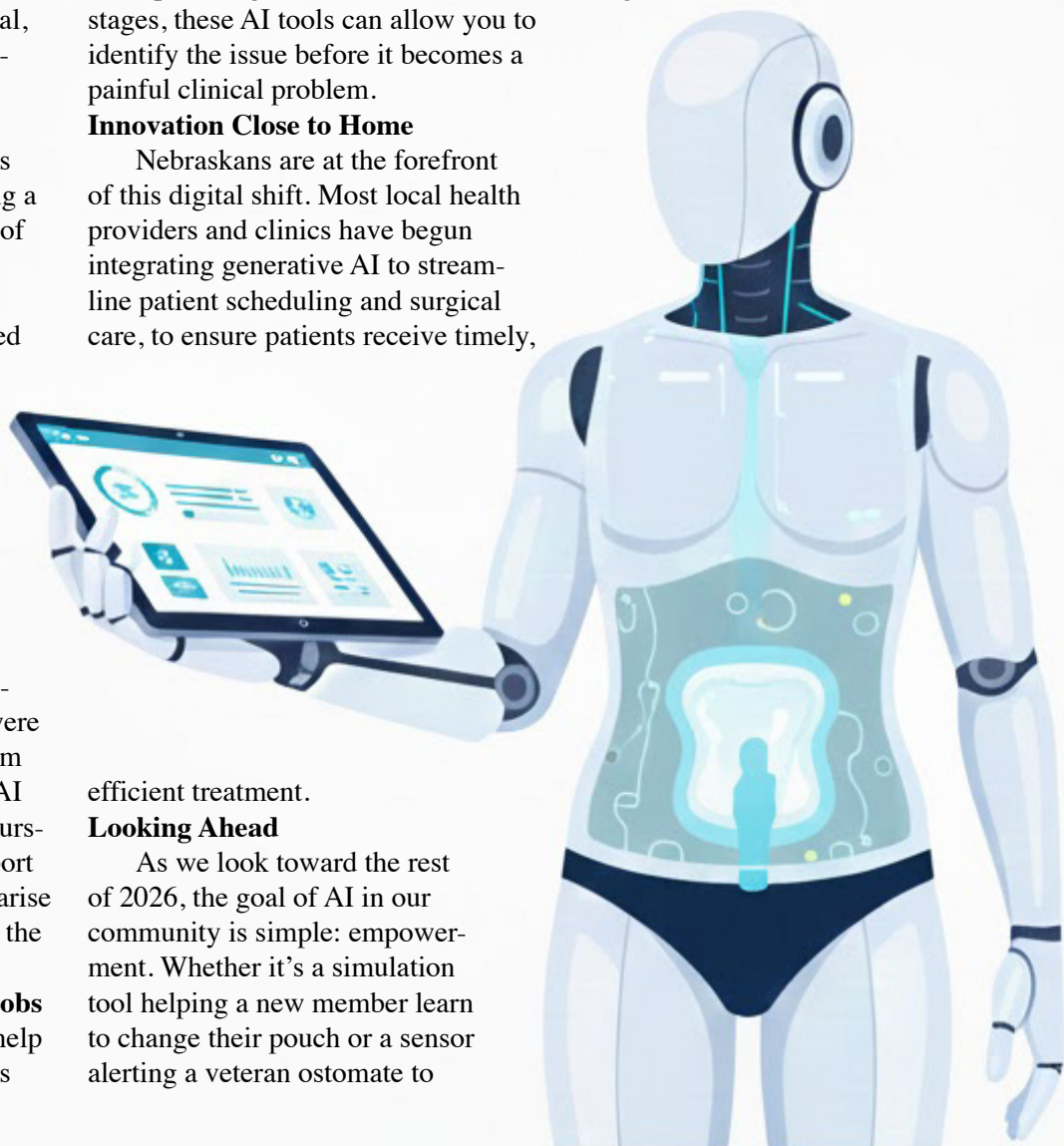
By identifying irritant dermatitis or pouching failure in its earliest stages, these AI tools can allow you to identify the issue before it becomes a painful clinical problem.

Innovation Close to Home

Nebraskans are at the forefront of this digital shift. Most local health providers and clinics have begun integrating generative AI to streamline patient scheduling and surgical care, to ensure patients receive timely,

a skin issue, technology is helping us move toward a future where the ostomy is just a small part of a much larger, fuller life.

Stay tuned to the *Sparrow* and LOA website for more update as AI use grows.



efficient treatment.

Looking Ahead

As we look toward the rest of 2026, the goal of AI in our community is simple: empowerment. Whether it's a simulation tool helping a new member learn to change their pouch or a sensor alerting a veteran ostomate to

Good AI questions make all the difference

In a 2024 study in the Journal of Medical Internet Research, researchers tested three AI models on their ability to retrieve accurate academic references. The hallucination rates (guesses based on unreliable logic) were 39.6% for GPT-3.5, 28.6% for GPT-4, and 91.4% for Google Bard. When asked for scientific references, these AI systems fabricated or provided incorrect citations at high rates—with Bard inventing over 9 out of every 10 references it cited. The difference between sketchy guesses and trustworthy data often comes down to one critical factor: **prompt quality**.

Bad Prompt: Tell me about ostomy care (too vague)

AI Response: “Ostomy care involves cleaning the stoma twice daily with soap and changing bags every 24 hours. Most people return to normal activities within two weeks...”

This vague prompt produces confident-sounding but inaccurate answers. Without specific guidance, AI can fabricate details about care frequencies, recovery timelines, or protocols that don't align with medical standards.

Good Prompt: “Search for current ostomy care guidelines from the United Ostomy Associations of America. What are their evidence-based recommendations for stoma cleaning frequency and pouch changing schedules?”

AI Response: “Let me search UOAA... [searches] According to UOAA, stoma cleaning should be done during each pouch change, not on a fixed daily schedule. Pouch changing frequency varies by individual needs and ostomy type, typically ranging from every 3-7 days for colostomy and ileostomy pouches...”

The difference is striking. The improved prompt explicitly requests information from a trusted source—UOAA—and asks the AI to search for current guidelines rather than rely on potentially outdated training data. This approach yields verifiable, source-attributed information that healthcare providers and patients can trust. Perhaps the best practice is to be open to new technology, then verify actions with your doctor and/or WOCN.



Freezing can ruin barriers/adhesives

Do you store an emergency ostomy kit in your car? Extra supplies in a garage? Consider cold Nebraska winters.

Ostomy barriers and adhesives do have temperature limits, though the critical threshold is typically well above 0°F.

Most ostomy products should be stored at room temperature (around 59-86°F). The adhesives can become less effective if stored in very cold conditions because:

- The adhesive may become stiff or brittle
- The barrier material itself can lose flexibility
- Application becomes more difficult when products are cold
- Products generally work fine once applied, even if you're going out in freezing temperatures, because they're warmed by body heat.
- Apply products at room temperature -



- don't try to apply a cold barrier directly from a cold storage area
- If products have been stored in cold conditions, warm them to room temperature before use (you can hold the pouch against your body for a few minutes)
- The barrier won't adhere as well to cold skin, so make sure your skin is at normal body temperature

While there isn't a hard cutoff at 0°F, extreme cold during storage (like

leaving supplies in a car during winter) can potentially damage the adhesive properties. Most manufacturers recommend avoiding freezing temperatures during storage.

Multiple manufacturers like Convatec and Hollister say ostomy products should be stored at "USP Controlled Room Temperature" which is defined as 68°-77°F, with permitted excursions between 59° and 86°F.

Ostomy resources in Lincoln and surrounding

LINCOLN OSTOMY ASSOCIATION

- > <https://ostomynebraska.com/lincoln/>
- > Sparrow news
- > Education & Networking

SUPPLIES

- Triumph Health Supplies
- > <https://triumphhomehealth.com/>
- > Local ostomy supplies

CHI Health St. Elizabeth Home Medical Equipment

- > <https://stander.com/store/chi-health-st-elizabeth-home-medical-equipment/>
- > Local ostomy supplies

MEDICAL FACILITIES

- Bryan Health Wound & Ostomy
- > <https://www.bryanhealth.com/services/specialty-clinic/wound-clinic/>
- > Ostomy nurses & clinic

Beatrice Community Hospital

- > <https://beatricecommunityhospital.com/woundostomy-services>
- > Ostomy nurses & clinic

CHI Health St. Elizabeth Ostomy Outpatient Clinic

- > <https://www.chihealth.com/services/wound-care>
- > Ostomy nurses & clinic

Columbus Community Hospital

- > <https://www.columbushosp.org/>
- > Ostomy nurses & clinic

York General Specialty Clinic

- > <https://www.yorkgeneral.org/york-general-hospital/specialty-clinic/>
- > Wound & ostomy clinic

MEDICAL OFFICES

- Gastroenterology Specialties PC
- > <https://www.gidocs.net/>
- > Gastroenterology

Nebraska Surgery Center

- > <https://www.nebraskasurgery.com/>
- > Surgery
- General Surgery Associates
- > <https://www.gsaincoln.com/>
- > Stomach/Gastric surgery

OSTOMY NURSES

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Cindy Skinner RN, BSN, CWOCN

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General Surgery Associates
Amanda Paprocki, RN, BSN, CWOCN

Meaningful 2026

While those with ostomies have plenty of self-care to consider, science says helping others can boost your own health.

A systematic review published in *JAMA Network* analyzing 30 studies found that pro-social activities were associated with improved health outcomes among vulnerable groups.

The science confirms what many Lincoln Ostomy Association members already know from experience: engaging in pro-social behaviors is associated with greater happiness, better psychological wellbeing, and better interpersonal relationships.

Goals might focus on supporting neighbors—whether through mentorship, advocacy, or sharing experiences.

Strong evidence also supports setting personal health goals. A comprehensive analysis published in *Medical Care Research and Review* examined 99 studies and found considerable evidence linking goal setting to improved health outcomes.

Studies show that 90% of participants use goals to manage their health. When patients work collaboratively with health-care providers, and set ambitious targets: an average goal of losing 16.8 pounds, reducing blood sugar levels by 1.3%, and lowering blood pressure by 9.8 mm-Hg.

Proactive or avoidance goals also matter. The type of goal matters significantly. A Swedish study tracking over 1,000 adults for a full year found that approach-oriented goals achieved 59% success rates compared to only 47% for avoidance-oriented goals. This means setting a goal to “walk three times weekly” works better than “avoid sitting all day.”

Imagine taking stock Dec. 31, 2026 and saying: I made three new friends; I volunteered to help with childcare at church; I shared 12 very memorable moments with my spouse. Ready. Set. Go!

Positive results from positive actions

Forgiveness

A 2003 study in *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* said that the trait of forgiveness is associated with lower levels of blood pressure and reduced cardiovascular reactivity during stress

Gratitude

An attitude of gratitude was measured in a 3-year study of women who saw a 9% lower risk of death due to cardiovascular disease, cancer and more. From 2024 *JAMA Psychiatry*

Prayer & Meditation

A 2020 study by *American Journal of Cardiology* found that those who practiced prayer and meditation saw a 51% lower coronary artery disease risk. Wow...

Altruistic Volunteering

There's a difference between volunteering for self-oriented reasons and those who volunteer as an altruistic value according to 2012 study by *Health Psychology*. Helping others can result in lower depression, better physical well being and a lower mortality risk.



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Reference: 1. Clinical Summary: Osmose Study, Multinational Evaluation of the Peristomal Condition in New Ostomates Using Moldable Skin Barriers. Maria Teresa Szewczyk, MD, PhD; Grazyna Majewska, RN, ETN; Mary V. Cabral, MS, FNP-BC, CWOCN- AP; and Karin Hölzel-Piontek, RN; The Effects of Using a Moldable Skin Barrier on Peristomal Skin Condition in Persons with an Ostomy: Results of a Prospective, Observational, Multinational Study. *Ostomy Wound Management* 2014;60(12):16-26.

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LINCOLN OSTOMY ASSOCIATION

President Amy 620-341-3811
 Secretary Beverly 402-525-9271
 Communications John 402-310-3496
 Treasurer Joe Frey
 Director Rhonda Soucek
 Director Jacques Izard
 Director Tera Norris

Lincoln Ostomy Home

LOA welcomes calls from ostomates, especially new people, with questions on everything from, "how do I shower?" to "what about clothes?" Start with an email lincolnostomy@gmail.com

Meetings (Let's meet, shall we?)

In person meetings are at a church at 8230 South St., starting at 2 p.m. updates at ostomynebraska.com/lincoln

March 1, 2026

"Ostomates Helping Ostomates" Ostomy 101 + Friends of Ostomates Worldwide

June 7

Andrew Kauffmann from Convatec

September 13 & December 6

(TBA)

Contact, Advertise

Contact or visit LOA to learn more about support group meetings, ostomy products and educational opportunities. Sparrow is a quarterly publication for the Lincoln Ostomy Association. If you'd like to advertise or to submit an article, email lincolnostomy@gmail.com

Ostomy Nurse Contacts

[Beatrice Community Hospital](#)

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LOA Communications Director John, below, faithfully accepts supplies and brings them to LOA meetings for members before arranging shipment to Friends of LOA. Supplier friends like Na'Scent, left, often send samples to members as well.



Extra supplies!

Those visiting the Lincoln Ostomy Association often see a table full of supplies brought by LOA member John who collects donations and ensures they reach LOA members and ostomates world-wide through the Friends of Ostomates Worldwide.

Extra supplies often occur when ostomates change styles, or if a loved one no longer needs them. Rather than letting them go to waste, supplies can be donated to help others.

The LOA offers the most convenient local option for members with extra supplies. At each quarterly meeting, a donation table accepts unused ostomy products that members can take for free. This peer-to-peer exchange helps fellow ostomates in the Lincoln area while keeping supplies in the community.

Watch for these meetings at ostomynebraska.com/lincoln

Another group called HELP Equipment (<https://helpequipment.org>) accepts donations in Omaha. They are open Monday-Friday at 8522 Park Drive in Omaha.

(Thanks to LOA Director Jacques Izard, Ph.D. for contributing to this article)