

## WHAT'S IN YOUR WAY? IPAC ROADBLOCKS

### #8 - Failure to Keep Tabs on Equipment

While each of the 10 items talked about in this spin-off series come from Wallander's original text, SWOICN Consultant, Christine has taken the liberty in each e-focus to cater the content to our reality here in Ontario and also to apply it to a larger sector than just the ambulatory care setting. Wallander's roadblock #8, however, does not easily lend itself to modification and really speaks specifically to an issue unique to ambulatory care.



Her roadblock #8 - Absent or incomplete monitoring logs - emphasizes the importance of keeping track of the use, care, and condition of medical devices in the ambulatory care setting. Creating a system such as this ensures you are always up-to-date on the status of your equipment and don't end up being caught short with devices requiring repair or replacement when you need them most. If you are an ICP responsible for the ambulatory care areas in your facility, consider checking with these departments to see if they regularly review the status of their medical devices. Suggest that they consider creating a monthly log that captures the condition of each medical device used in the clinic on a regular basis. Assigning the maintenance of this log to a clinic staff person ensures accountability and requires that clinic staff take responsibility for the proper care and maintenance of their devices.

This roadblock also has applicability in the long-term care setting and larger acute care setting, where staff should consider creating similar logs for equipment such as wheelchairs, commode chairs, vital sign monitoring devices, and even furniture. What does this have to do with infection prevention and control, you ask? We all know that when the condition of medical devices, surfaces, and furniture are compromised, items can become a breeding ground for organisms capable of causing infection. Also, compromised surfaces become more difficult to clean and disinfect. The next time you see a torn mattress, a bath chair held together with icky tape, or a medical device with a cracked or broken handle, ask around to see if the unit or clinic is checking their equipment on a regular and ongoing basis.