

■ CONFERENCE REPORT

Shaping the Future of Wound Care: Highlights from APWCA Tissue Repair Summit Spring and Advanced Wound Care Summit 2026

Published: 15 July 2026

Held side-by-side in Austin, Texas, on 14–15 May, 2026, the American Professional Wound Care Association (APWCA) Tissue Repair Summit Spring (TRSS) and the Advanced Wound Care Summit (AWCS) 2026 offered attendees a comprehensive view of the evolving wound care landscape. Across two days, delegates explored advances in tissue repair, limb salvage, diagnostics and artificial intelligence, while also addressing business strategy, reimbursement, market access and innovation. Together, the events showcased the power of collaboration in driving the next generation of wound care solutions.

APWCA TRSS

APWCA TRSS brought together clinicians, researchers, educators and industry partners from across the wound care community to exchange ideas, challenge conventional thinking and explore the future of tissue repair. Across two days of presentations, panel discussions and networking events, attendees examined the latest clinical evidence while also addressing the practical realities of delivering wound care in an increasingly complex healthcare environment.

APWCA TRSS Day One: Innovation, Limb Salvage, and the Rise of AI

The summit opened with breakfast and a sponsored presentation from headline sponsor Tiger Wound Care, highlighting interim findings from the TigerCAMP randomized controlled trial, focusing on the use of caregraFT™ in diabetic foot ulcers. This set the tone for a day centered on innovation and clinical progress.

Session 1 explored current and emerging innovations in advanced wound care, with expert speakers Dr. John Lantis, Dr. Kenneth Burhop, and Mitch Sanders discussing current and future therapies shaping the field.

The focus then shifted in Session 2 to the important topic of limb salvage, with speakers including Brock Liden, Dr. Lynnette Morrison, Dr. Walaya Methodius-Rayford, Dr. Brett Chatman and Dr. Jeffrey Ross. Presentations addressed





surgical pathways for limb preservation, strategies to challenge the need for amputation, and the growing recognition of limb salvage as a specialty. The session also highlighted the psychological impact experienced by patients facing limb loss or preservation, emphasizing the importance of holistic care.

A recurring theme throughout the summit was the rapid integration of artificial intelligence into wound care workflows. Topics in Session 3 included AI-driven clinical documentation, imaging technologies, and the broader implications of AI adoption in healthcare. A panel discussion featuring Desmond Bell, Sean Agnew, Nancy Morgan, Zwelithini Tunyiswa, and Sandeep Gopalakrishnan reinforced the consensus that AI is already transforming practice and will continue to do so rapidly.

The day concluded with Session 4, which focused on mobile wound care services and operational considerations. Zwelithini Tunyiswa shared insights into establishing mobile services, Bill O'Malley discussed navigating audit cycles, and Martha Kelso explored alternative reimbursement models in the mobile setting. The final session was a presentation sponsored by Venture Medical, where Howard Walthall discussed how to create documentation that meets the requirements of AI review tools, including WISer and prior authorization processes, as well as audit reviews.

Attendees then had the chance to attend the Wine and Wounds poster reception, where they could enjoy a drink while learning about the latest wound care research.

Later that evening, everyone moved to the rooftop Zanzibar bar to socialize with old friends and network with new contacts.

Day Two: Diagnostics, Business Strategy, and Future Models of Care

Day two began with a session on diagnostics and innovations, with Dr. Jeffrey Niezgoda highlighting advances in assessing wound perfusion and identifying infection through optical and molecular tools, and Dr. Marcus Gitterle exploring the use of platelet-rich plasma and other blood-based therapies. The session finished up with a presentation sponsored by Biolab Holdings, where Isaac Rodriguez provided an overview of the evidence behind the APIS product from SweetBio.

The program then transitioned to the business of wound care, addressing sustainable clinical and financial models with Martha Kelso, compliance challenges with Moira Sykstus, and the evidence behind CAMPs with Dr. Thomas Serena. The morning wrapped up with a sponsored symposium from Cellution, where Dr. Michael Desvigne gave a presentation.

The afternoon sessions focused on reimbursement, with Kris Flinn from SmartTRAK giving an overview of the state of the market in the new reimbursement world. Dr. Justin Gooden and Dr. William Tettelbach then launched the NCD Consensus Document by giving an overview of why the document is needed to ensure patients get the care they need. Jennie Feight discussed the economic aspects of modern wound care delivery and reimbursement pathways.

The summit concluded with a dedicated session led by the Wound Reconstruction Plastic Surgery Society (WRPPS), examining the role of cellular, acellular and matrix-like products (CAMPs) in reconstructive surgery, their impact on treatment pathways, and ongoing debates regarding their application. A final panel discussion with Dr. Michael Desvigne, Dr. Abigail Chaffin and Dr. Mark Suski looked at future directions for the field.

AWCS 2026

Designed as a business-forward complement to the clinical program of APWCA TRSS, AWCS brought together innovators, investors, clinicians, and industry leaders for two days of high-value networking, collaboration, and strategic discussion.

A Platform for Partnership and Growth

From the outset, AWCS positioned itself as a meeting point for connection. The opening panel, “What’s Coming in Wound Care?” featuring Kris Flinn, Mitch Sanders, and Kevin Richardson, set a forward-looking tone, highlighting emerging trends and reinforcing the importance of collaboration across sectors to drive the industry forward.

Throughout the summit, sessions were deliberately structured to facilitate interaction between stakeholders. Discussions on topics such as CMS policy, market access, and partnership strategy provided a shared framework for conversations between clinicians, entrepreneurs, and commercial leaders.

Focused on Business Development

A core strength of AWCS was its emphasis on practical business growth and relationship building. Sessions including “What Strategics Look for in Partnerships” – a panel including Michael Anselmo, Jack Schlechtweg, John Fritz and Melissa Bailey – and “What Start-Ups Need to Know About Getting to \$50 Million in Revenue” with Kevin Richardson and Ankit Agarwal provided valuable insights into scaling organizations and aligning with strategic partners.

The program also explored investment trends and pathways to market, with dedicated discussions on funding, product development, and regulatory strategy. These sessions created opportunities for attendees to connect over shared challenges and identify potential collaborations across the innovation lifecycle.

John Fritz’s session on How CMS Policy Shapes Wound Care Business Strategy provided key insight into the regulatory process. Dr. Arati Bhasale, Dr. Thomas Serena and Zwelithini Tunyiswa gave attendees an overview of how to modernize evidence. A panel session with Nick Frame, Kevin Richardson, and Nick Triantafyllides looked at the future of investment in wound care, a key consideration for start-ups and those looking to scale.

Getting a Product to Market was a popular session, where panelists Dr. John Lantis, Carrie Powers and Dr. Jeffrey Niezgoda discussed the commercialization of products and the impacts on patients.

While clinical innovation remained a central theme, discussions increasingly focused on the commercial and regulatory factors that determine whether new technologies successfully reach patients.

Interactive Networking at the Core

Beyond traditional presentations, AWCS distinguished itself through highly interactive formats designed to maximise engagement:

- Innovation Showcase sessions allowed companies to present new technologies directly to potential partners and investors.
- Rotating Roundtable Debates encouraged dynamic, small-group discussions, enabling attendees to exchange ideas and perspectives in a more personal setting.

These elements ensured a continuous flow of networking opportunities throughout both days.

Driving Innovation Through Collaboration

Day two continued the focus on connectivity and innovation. Sessions on clinical trials, reimbursement strategy, and market access highlighted the collaborative effort required to bring new technologies from concept to clinical practice.

Mitch Sanders, Mark Creagan and Bent von Eitzen’s talk “From Bench To Bedside: Navigating Phase 1-3 Trials in Wound Care Innovation” helped to demystify the clinical trial process. Preeya Pinto and Deborah Samenow provided an update on strategic reimbursement strategy. Jay Merkel gave an overview of how changes in health insurance for millions of Americans could affect the wound care space.

A panel session on cold plasma with Jay, Howard Walthall and Weston Quinn explored how this new technology may impact patients. Distribution strategies were discussed by Jack Schlechtweg and Rob Odell, and Mitch Sanders, Bruce Davey, and Chris Broderick looked at what may become the next big healing technology in wound care.

Interactive formats such as the “Shark Tank” session created a platform for innovators to pitch ideas and engage directly with potential investors and partners, reinforcing the summit’s role as a catalyst for new ventures.

The summit concluded with extended networking sessions, ensuring attendees left with strengthened connections and tangible opportunities for collaboration.



Left image: Innovation Showcase winner Kristof Balliu (R) being congratulated by Kris Flinn. Right image: Shark Tank winner Andrew Cameron giving his pitch.

Award-Winning Innovation

Innovation took center stage at AWCS, where two winners were recognized for their contributions to advancing wound care. In the Shark Tank competition, Andrew Cameron, Founder and CEO of FeelTect, earned top honors after impressing an expert panel of judges with his innovative technology designed to help clinicians monitor wound healing and improve patient outcomes. In the Innovation Showcase, Kristof Balliu and the Yarrow Wound Brush captured the audience vote, demonstrating the strong clinician interest in practical solutions that support effective wound bed preparation and wound care. Together, these award-winning innovations highlighted the creativity, ingenuity, and patient-centered focus driving the future of the industry.

Conclusion

APWCA TRSS and AWCS 2026 highlighted the breadth of activity currently shaping the wound care sector, from advances in tissue repair, limb salvage, diagnostics, and artificial intelligence to discussions surrounding reimbursement, market access, and commercialization. Across both meetings, speakers emphasized the importance of evidence generation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and innovation in addressing the evolving needs of patients and healthcare systems.

The meetings also demonstrated the increasingly interconnected nature of the wound care community, bringing together clinicians, researchers, industry representatives, investors, and policy experts to exchange perspectives and explore emerging opportunities. Through scientific presentations, panel discussions, and networking sessions, attendees examined both the clinical and business considerations influencing the future direction of the specialty.

As wound care continues to evolve, forums such as APWCA TRSS and AWCS provide an important platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaboration across the field.

Acknowledgement

The conference was supported by Tiger Wound Care, Venture Medical, Biolab Holdings, Cellution Biologics, Engage Health Solutions, Kerecis, Merakris Therapeutics, ProDevLabs, Reprise Biomedical and Stability Biologics, together with partner organizations including The APWCA, GCRI, SmartTRAK, Wound Reconstruction Plastic Surgery Society, the Wound and Hyperbaric Association, The American Healthcare Accountability Alliance, the American College of Hyperbaric Medicine, the Academy of Physicians in Wound Healing, Boswick Burn & Wound Symposium, and the Independent Wound Specialist Society.