



DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE CARE OF OLDER ADULTS

The John A. Hartford Foundation

Great Health Care Story Ideas from The John A. Hartford Foundation

1. From kitchen table to clinic: Communication improves serious illness and end-of-life care

People with serious illness get better, more patient-centered care if they have better communication with their families and their health care providers about the treatment they do (and perhaps do not) want. Surveys co-commissioned by The John A. Hartford Foundation show that patients want these conversations and physicians think they are a good idea, but many don't feel comfortable initiating them or know what to say. The good news: better communication can be taught.

2. Too old for the Emergency Department?

ED visits by older adults doubled in the last ten years and more than half of Americans 65+ visit the ED in the last month of their lives. Their special needs are usually not well addressed and the experience can be dangerous and unnecessarily costly. A growing number of hospitals are creating special "geriatric EDs," but some appear to be marketing ploys rather than delivering real changes in care. The American College of Emergency Physicians will soon set accreditation standards for these unique facilities to ensure quality, and a learning network of EDs has developed to collect data and build the evidence base.

3. Broken hip, shattered life: How geriatrics can help put it back together

One in three women will break a hip in her lifetime and one in five hip fracture patients dies within a year. About the same number move to a nursing home, for a year, if not permanently. A new hospital-based intervention adds co-management by geriatricians to pre- and post-surgical care and has reduced complications such as delirium, dehydration, and chronic disease flare-ups; reduced overall costs by 66 percent; and reduced deaths in the first 30 days by 70 percent.

4. Dementia caregiving: Better tools for a tough job

About 8.5 million family caregivers provide care for a person with dementia at home, often compromising their own health and financial security in the process. Caregiver support programs are desperately needed but hard to find, despite the fact that numerous tested, evidence-based programs exist. This is deeply frustrating for both clinicians and families. A new collaboration between the Family Caregiver Alliance and the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging, funded by The John A. Hartford Foundation, will produce a database for professionals to research and locate these badly needed interventions.

5. Age-Friendly Health Systems: Needed now

As the U.S. population ages, our health system must take steps to provide more age-appropriate care. This can include training more geriatrics specialists; infusing geriatrics into the training of clinicians in other specialties; and spreading evidence-based care models: hospital-based programs like HELP (Hospital Elder Life Program, which prevents delirium and maintains older adults' function); primary care-based programs like Independence at Home; and community-based programs like the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). The John A. Hartford Foundation supports these programs and is also working with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and five health systems across 40 states to develop a more comprehensive, health systems-wide prototype of care for older adults that incorporates the essential elements of those models of care.



www.johnahartford.org

DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE CARE OF OLDER ADULTS

The John A. Hartford Foundation

Contact Information

Marcus Escobedo
Senior Program Officer and
Director of Communications

The John A. Hartford Foundation
55 East 59th Street, New York, NY 10022
212.832.7788
marcus.escobedo@johnahartford.org



DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE CARE OF OLDER ADULTS

The John A. Hartford Foundation

Great Health Care Story Ideas from The John A. Hartford Foundation

6. Elder mistreatment: As harmful as domestic or child abuse

An estimated one in ten older Americans suffers elder mistreatment (defined as physical, psychological, or sexual abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, or abandonment), but the abuse frequently goes undiagnosed and unreported. A new intervention under development will ensure that older people seen in hospital settings, including ED's, will be assessed and receive appropriate treatment and referral.

7. Geriatric Surgery: New standards protect older patients

People aged 65+ get almost 40 percent of all surgical procedures and are undergoing surgery at more advanced ages than ever before. Older surgical patients can be at higher risk for complications due to physiological changes related to aging and chronic disease. To address these challenges, the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and The John A. Hartford Foundation have gathered consumer and health professional groups to develop the first hospital-level surgical care standards for older adults. The standards range from better pre-operative physiological screening and assessment of cognitive impairment to discussion of goals of care and realistic expectations for recovery, and will be used in a new ACS quality verification program, similar to ACS-verified Trauma Centers.

8. Independence at Home: Realizing the potential of home-based primary care.

About four million homebound older people have trouble getting to medical appointments and live with multiple chronic conditions and functional impairments that put them at high risk of avoidable hospitalizations and nursing home placement. Home-based primary care can help. A federal demonstration project, Independence at Home, saved more than \$25 million in its first year and is now part of the Chronic Care bill (the major first bipartisan health bill of the new Congress), with a chance to serve 2 million frail Medicare beneficiaries, at home.

9. Who will care for an aging America?

Someone in America turns 65 every eight seconds—a wonderful longevity success story. But at the same time, proposed cuts to HHS's health professions workforce training budget make it harder to see how we will create the geriatrically skilled health care workforce an aging population will need. The Title VII and VIII Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) is the only federally-funded program dedicated to training health professionals in the unique needs of older adults. The 44 GWEPs in 29 states are community-based partnerships between health professional schools and community-based organizations that train the primary care workforce to deliver high-quality care to older adults and maximize patient and family engagement. These GWEP training centers are also taking an active role in educating direct-care workers, along with patients and family caregivers.



www.johnahartford.org

DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE CARE OF OLDER ADULTS

The John A. Hartford Foundation

Contact Information

Marcus Escobedo
Senior Program Officer and
Director of Communications

The John A. Hartford Foundation
55 East 59th Street, New York, NY 10022
212.832.7788
marcus.escobedo@johnahartford.org