

FIVE TAKEAWAYS



AGE-FRIENDLY HEALTH SYSTEMS: IMPROVING CARE FOR OLDER ADULTS

An age-friendly health system is one where every older adult gets the best care possible.

An esteemed panel of experts, including Terry Fulmer of The John A. Hartford Foundation, Kedar Mate of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Marie Cleary-Fishman of the Health Research and Educational Trust, Julie Trocchio of the Catholic Health Association of the United States, and Denise Lyons and Patricia Curtin of the Christiana Care Health System came together on August 7, 2019, for a webinar which can be accessed at www.ModernHealthcare.com/AgeFriendlySystems.

The Age-Friendly Health Systems 4Ms framework is a reliable set of evidence-based geriatric best practice interventions for older adults.

Focusing on What Matters allows a healthcare team to know each older adult's specific outcome goals and care preferences. Using age-friendly Medication that doesn't interfere with what matters to the older adult is important if medication is necessary. Mentation describes preventing, identifying and managing dementia, depression and delirium across settings of care. The fourth "M" stands for Mobility, ensuring that older adults move safely every day to maintain function and do What Matters.

Implementation of the 4Ms has been successful in large part due to action communities.

An Action Community tests the 4Ms in hospital and ambulatory settings, measures the impact and shares the information across the community. In September 2018, the first age-friendly Action Community started with 131 care teams at 73 organizations. Today, the age-friendly initiative has engaged nearly 350 care teams across more than 40 states. With the continued implementation of the 4Ms, action community participants across the nation are seeing reduced emergency visits, increased mobility and a reduced falls rate. Register now at IHI.org/AgeFriendly.

When the 4Ms framework was applied, health leaders noticed this model created a feasible and actionable plan across the care continuum.

The 4Ms address older adults' core issues are built on a strong evidence base and create synergistic relationships between the patients and their caregivers to reduce the burden on the care team. This social movement is driving change across the nation, making sure that older adults are consistently getting what matters to them.

Creating an age-friendly health system requires an interprofessional approach.

The 4Ms need to be applied across the care continuum and involves interprofessional team care. Health system leadership, physicians, nurses, social workers, pharmacists, physical therapists, office practice managers, and others may all be involved. The systemwide campaign puts an emphasis on having every health care team member focus on "what matters" most for their older patients across the care continuum.

So, what are the cost benefits from implementing age-friendly care?

Early results are showing that fewer patients spend ICU days in the hospital, have fewer adverse drug events and falls, less problems associated with bed rest, as well as reduced costs associated with delirium, which is an extremely costly complication in the hospital setting. The business case for the 4Ms framework is geared toward saving money, but it also directly correlates with the case for quality care. Delivering better care means better outcomes, and hopefully clearing the way for more health systems to convert to age-friendly care.

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