

# The Hartford Change AGENTS Initiative

The **Hartford Change AGENTS Initiative** accelerates sustained practice change that improves the health of older Americans, their families, and communities. It does this by harnessing the collective strengths, resources, and expertise of the John A. Hartford Foundation's community of more than 3,000 scholars and health system leaders.

During the last two decades, the Hartford Foundation has supported a dynamic group of researchers in geriatric medicine, nursing and social work. Its efforts have built a developing knowledge base that is critical to how our health care system cares for the growing number of older patients. Today, older adults are a core business of health care, and there is an increasingly urgent need to restructure how care is delivered in all settings. We desperately need health care institutions and systems that deliver better outcomes and manage costs effectively.

The Change AGENTS Initiative is an interdisciplinary effort to leverage the Foundation's powerful network, help its scholars and grantees learn from and support one another, and work directly on changes in practice and service delivery that improve the health of older Americans.

## Key Elements of the Change AGENTS Initiative

The Change AGENTS Initiative has two main programmatic components:

1. The **Change AGENTS Community** supports and connects thousands of Hartford-associated researchers and health system leaders to build their capacity to improve the care for older patients. This effort includes a variety of career and leadership development activities such as an online membership platform with a searchable database of Community members, a small grant programs to support promising ideas in practice change, and a rich array of skills-building trainings, consultancies, and webinars.
2. **Change AGENTS Practice Networks** are smaller, interdisciplinary groups of scholars focused on the Foundation's priority areas related to practice change. Modeled after the MacArthur Research Networks and the Hartford-funded Practice Change Fellows program, the first two Change AGENTS Practice Networks will focus on dementia caregiving and patient-centered medical homes. Each network of 12-14 scholars will develop its own practice change and advocacy agenda.

## A Diverse Leadership Team

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) manages the Change AGENTS Initiative, guided by a leadership team consisting of the Hartford Foundation; representatives from GSA; SCP, a socially responsible communications consulting firm; and two national experts in interdisciplinary practice change: Laura N. Gitlin, PhD, director of the Center for Innovative Care in Aging at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing; and Nancy Whitelaw, PhD, a former GSA President.

## Coming Soon from Change AGENTS

### • **Small grant opportunities**

The Centers of Excellence in Geriatric Medicine/Change AGENTS collaborative pilot grants (5 grants/\$40,000 each) are now available, offered through the American Federation for Aging Research. Additional Change AGENTS small grants will be offered through GSA. Details are forthcoming in early 2014.

### • **Change AGENTS Web site**

The Change AGENTS website URL is **changeagents365.org**. This new resource will feature a searchable database of Community members and a wide array of electronic tools and resources to help AGENTS move their work forward.

### • **Skills-development Webinars**

The project will sponsor an ongoing series of webinars on skills development for practice change, the first of which will be held in February 2014. Topics will be developed based on interest from the Change AGENTS Community and will likely cover issues such as developing value propositions, presenting evidence in practice environments, participating in collaborative groups, and honing advocacy skills.

## For More Information

To learn more about the Initiative, please visit: **changeagents365.org**. Or contact Julia Meashey, Director of Operations, Change AGENTS Initiative, at GSA: [changeagents365@geron.org](mailto:changeagents365@geron.org).