Frequently Asked Questions: Recognition by IHI of Age-Friendly Health Systems

Q: What does it mean to be recognized as an Age-Friendly Health System?

A: An Age-Friendly Health System is one in which clinical care settings reliably implement four geriatric care practices (4Ms: What Matters, Medications, Mentation, Mobility) in a manner consistent with evidence-based best practice. The 4Ms are defined, and examples of how to implement them, are featured in the Age-Friendly Health System Guide to Using the 4Ms in the Care of Older Adults. Recognition is given at the hospital or practice level.

Q: How can my hospital or practice be recognized by IHI as an Age-Friendly Health System?

A: There are two levels of recognition by IHI:

1. An Age-Friendly Health System Participant is recognized for being on the journey to becoming Age-Friendly and has submitted a description of how it is working towards putting the 4Ms into practice.

   To be recognized, complete the 4Ms Description survey with how you plan to adopt the 4Ms into your health care setting.

   For 4Ms survey submissions received by the 5th of each month, IHI will respond on the 15th of that month (or the Friday before, if the 15th falls during a weekend). The response will be sent from AFHS@ihi.org. If you have become an Age-Friendly Health System Participant, the email will include a Participant badge and a communications kit so you can celebrate this recognition in your local community.

2. An Age-Friendly Health System Committed to Care Excellence is a recognition for being an exemplar in the movement based on 4Ms work that is aligned with the Age-Friendly Health System Guide to Using the 4Ms in the Care of Older Adults AND at least three months’ count of older adults reached with evidence-based, 4Ms care.

   For 4Ms survey submissions received by the 5th of the month, IHI provides feedback and/or approval on whether the Description is aligned with Age-Friendly Health System Guide to Using the 4Ms in the Care of Older Adults on the 15th of the month (or the Friday before, if the 15th falls during a weekend). To gain this level of recognition, review the feedback provided in the email from AFHS@ihi.org.
   
   • If your Description was NOT approved, make adjustments to your Description and resubmit via 4Ms Description survey.
   
   • If your Description was approved, use the same survey to submit your monthly counts of older adults benefitting from evidence-based 4Ms care, as outlined in your Description. You will need to submit at least three months of counts to reach this level of recognition.

   Once you have submitted three months of counts, IHI will send you an email from AFHS@ihi.org that will include a Committed to Care Excellence badge and a communications kit so you can celebrate this level of recognition in your community. For 4Ms survey submissions received by the 5th of each month, IHI will respond on the 15th of that month (or the Friday before, if the 15th falls during a weekend).
As an exemplar in the movement, IHI and partners may invite you to share your story and support other health systems.

For both levels of recognition, IHI may celebrate your achievement on our website (www.ihi.org/agefriendly) and via media releases.

Q: Will my whole health system be recognized as an Age-Friendly Health System?

A: IHI will recognize the individual hospitals and practices in your health system that meet the two levels of recognition outlined above. For example, if one of the hospitals in your health system submits its description of how it is putting the 4Ms into practice, that hospital will be recognized as an Age-Friendly Health System Participant. If your Annual Wellness Nurses use the 4Ms and submit to IHI a description of how they are putting the 4Ms into practice, each of the practices where the Annual Wellness Nurses conduct visits will be recognized as Age-Friendly Health System Participants.

IHI looks forward to the spread of the 4Ms across your entire health system and the accumulation of recognition by all of your hospitals and practices.

Q: Do I have to take any steps to sustain my recognition as an Age-Friendly Health System?

A: The Participant and Committed to Care Excellence recognitions will be valid for one year from the date you receive your badges from IHI. You will receive instructions on how to renew recognition status from AFHS@ihi.org.