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WHY AGE-FRIENDLY HEALTH CARE MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE

New resource from IHI offers guidance for health systems looking to optimize value of age-friendly care for all stakeholders

Boston, MA — April 3, 2019 — By the year 2030, the number of people age 65 and older in the United States is expected to [exceed the number of children](#) for the first time in history. It's no surprise then, that Medicare spending growth is projected to [exceed growth of other health care spending](#) in the coming decade as health care organizations work to serve the needs of an older population.

Mindful of these trends, the [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#) (IHI), a leader in health and health care improvement worldwide, has released a new resource for health care organizations looking to provide age-friendly care for older patients in the context of moving from volume to value in all areas of health care delivery. [The Business Case for Becoming an Age-Friendly Health System](#) helps health systems leaders calculate the return on investment from putting evidence-based care into practice for older adults.

The business case resource, and companion return on investment calculator tools, are part of [Age-Friendly Health Systems](#), an initiative of The John A. Hartford Foundation and IHI in partnership with the American Hospital Association and the Catholic Health Association of the United States. Age-friendly care focuses on four essential elements: what matters to patients, age-friendly medication use, attending to mentation, and mobility — collectively known as the 4Ms Framework. An Age-Friendly Health System reliably implements the 4Ms, creating a health care environment in which every older adult's care is guided by an essential set of evidence-based practices, causes no harms to the older adult, and is consistent with what matters to the older adult and their family.

“Older adults often have complex health care needs, and while we have extensive knowledge about how to improve their care, currently, there is a gap between what we know and what most health care systems are actually reliably doing for this population,” said **Leslie Pelton, MPA**, Senior Director at IHI. “The Age-Friendly Health Systems initiative is all about spreading evidence-based practices so that all older adults will receive safe, effective, and person-centered care.”

Why the need for a business case?

Putting evidence-based, age-friendly care into place may require changes to workflow, practices, and even the electronic health record (EHR). Potential financial benefits could include avoiding the costs of poor-quality care, delivering care in a cost-effective manner, and enhancing revenue by providing additional needed services or, conversely, freeing up capacity to allow for treating greater numbers of individuals.

(more)

“The benefits tend to fall into different categories depending on care setting. In inpatient care, we might expect to see reduced costs as a result of fewer complications and undesired medical interventions, shorter hospital stays, and improved patient safety,” says **Victor Tabbush, PhD**, Adjunct Professor Emeritus, UCLA Anderson School of Management, and lead author of the new work. “In outpatient care, the benefits may come from added revenue by expanding appropriate ambulatory services.”

The Business Case for Becoming an Age-Friendly Health System includes case studies from St. Vincent Medical Group in Indiana and Hartford Hospital in Connecticut. IHI also released two accompanying [Age-Friendly Health Systems ROI Calculators](#), one for hospitals and one for ambulatory settings, to help finance and clinical teams work together on collecting and analyzing relevant data.

Tabbush and colleagues will present this work at the [2019 IHI Summit on Improving Patient Care](#), being held in San Francisco, April 11–13.

The goal of the Age-Friendly Health Systems initiative is to spread the 4Ms to 1,000 hospitals and 1,000 ambulatory practices by the end of 2020. Just last month, 124 sites representing 70 health systems in 30 states completed their work with IHI in the first Age-Friendly Health Systems Action Community, a seven-month program that offered the teams content and coaching in conducting their own age-friendly interventions, as well as support in measuring success and a network for sharing and testing ideas. More than 150 teams have enrolled in the second Action Community and began work together this week.

You can learn more about the Age-Friendly Health System initiative at: ihi.org/AgeFriendly.

The Business Case for Becoming an Age-Friendly Health System was supported by a grant from The SCAN Foundation. The SCAN Foundation is an independent public charity in Long Beach, Calif., dedicated to creating a society where older adults can access health and supportive services of their choosing to meet their needs. Its mission is to advance a coordinated and easily navigated system of high-quality services for older adults that preserve dignity and independence. For more information, visit www.TheSCANFoundation.org.

About the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) is an independent not-for-profit organization based in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. For more than 25 years, IHI has used improvement science to advance and sustain better outcomes in health and health systems across the world. IHI brings awareness of safety and quality to millions, catalyzes learning and the systematic improvement of care, develops solutions to previously intractable challenges, and mobilizes health systems, communities, regions, and nations to reduce harm and deaths. IHI collaborates with a growing community to spark bold, inventive ways to improve the health of individuals and populations. IHI generates optimism, harvests fresh ideas, and supports anyone, anywhere who wants to profoundly change health and health care for the better. Learn more at ihi.org.

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