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**AGE-FRIENDLY HEALTH SYSTEMS ON TARGET
TO IMPACT 1,000 HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS IN 2020**

Response to COVID-19 pandemic in older adults helped by the 4Ms Framework

Boston, MA — July 21, 2020 – Halfway through 2020, the [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#) (IHI) is pleased to announce that by the end of the year, Age-Friendly Health Systems is on track to achieve its goal of recognizing the work of 1,000 hospitals, office practices, retail clinics, and post-acute care facilities for improving care of older Americans. [Age-Friendly Health Systems](#) is an initiative of The John A. Hartford Foundation and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in partnership with the American Hospital Association (AHA) and the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA). As of July 21, [779 health care organizations](#) have earned either level 1 (Participant) or level 2 (Committed to Care Excellence) recognition in the movement. It's a distinction based on an [evidence-based framework known as the 4Ms](#): asking what **M**atters to older adults; making sure **M**edications are helpful, not harmful to patients; attending to **M**entation, including delirium, depression, and dementia; and ensuring **M**obility so older adults can maintain their function. Level 1 teams have successfully developed plans to implement the 4Ms; level 2 teams have three months of verified data to demonstrate early impact of using the 4Ms.

“This work is a dream come true and IHI has taken us to a new level of impact. The rapid expansion of the Age-Friendly Health Systems movement means more older adults are reliably getting the evidence-based care they need,” said **Terry Fulmer, PhD, RN, FAAN**, President of The John A. Hartford Foundation. “We are proud to see such high levels of commitment from health systems across the country, commitment that now includes using age-friendly care to address the COVID-19 pandemic.”

When COVID-19 began to spread in the US in March, Age-Friendly Health Systems care teams, already engaging with older patients, were determined to adapt the 4Ms to the crisis at hand. “What Matters” turned out to be key in a myriad of situations and circumstances, from weighing the risks and benefits of treatments if someone was infected with the Coronavirus and quite ill, to making sure [caregivers were prepared to respond to delirium](#), which is a significant risk for hospitalized elders. Many AFHS teams quickly got into the virtual space, converting programs that relied on face-to-face encounters with older adults into virtual visits that succeeded in maintaining connection. One physician developed [a model script organized around the 4Ms](#) that other providers can use to conduct telehealth visits with older adults.

Mary Tinetti, MD, is a Professor of Medicine (Geriatrics) and Public Health, and Chief of Geriatrics at Yale School of Medicine and Yale New Haven Hospital. As Faculty and Advisory Group founding co-chair for Age-Friendly Health Systems, she stated, “I heard from health care organizations that had experience with the 4Ms that they felt better equipped than they expected to respond to COVID-related challenges in both the hospital and clinic. The 4Ms framework could be adapted to the crisis situation — responding to the large increase in agitated delirium associated with COVID, rapid adoption of medication optimization strategies to reduce nurse-patient direct contact, and implementation of a 4Ms structure for telemedicine visits. Teams accustomed to working

together implemented necessary changes quickly. The Age-Friendly Health Systems movement is proving invaluable during the pandemic and should remain embedded in the fabric of care as health care opens back up.”

Teams have gotten used to working together by taking part in one of the movement’s major entry points, [Age-Friendly Health Systems Action Communities](#). Over a period of several months, these communities offer health systems from across the country opportunities to learn from one another and expert faculty how to rapidly adopt the 4Ms across their organizations.

According to **Leslie Pelton, MPA**, Senior Director, IHI, “Our experience has been that the Action Communities are excellent springboards for teams to build on their existing evidence-based care for older adults to achieve reliable practice of the 4Ms. This year’s pandemic has underscored the importance and urgency of knowing how to adapt and maintain the best care when there are significant disruptions in usual services, especially impacting vulnerable populations. The 4Ms have become part of emergency preparedness. We invite all who care for older adults to join us in this initiative.”

Age-Friendly Health Systems Action Communities are available for individuals and teams each fall and spring. The next opportunity to join a community, run by IHI’s partner, [AHA](#), is September. Once the goal of recognizing 1,000 hospitals, office practices, retail clinics, and post-acute care facilities by the end of 2020 is reached, the work continues. IHI and its Age-Friendly Health Systems partners hope to recognize 2600 such organizations by June 2023.

For more information, visit ihi.org/agefriendly. On social media, follow and join the age-friendly conversation by using the hashtag #AgeFriendlyHealthSystems.

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.

About the John A. Hartford Foundation

The John A. Hartford Foundation, based in New York City, is a private, nonpartisan, national philanthropy dedicated to improving the care of older adults. For more than three decades, the organization has been the leader in building a field of experts in aging and testing and replicating innovative approaches to care. The Foundation has three areas of emphasis: creating age-friendly health systems, supporting family caregivers, and improving serious illness and end-of-life care. Working with its grantees, the Foundation strives to change the status quo and create a society where older adults can continue their vital contributions. For more information, visit johnahartford.org and follow [@johnahartford](https://twitter.com/johnahartford).

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