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**COVID-19 PANDEMIC FAR FROM OVER; US HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS PRIORITIZE
IMPROVEMENT OF OLDER ADULT CARE**

*Growing number of care locations join the Age-Friendly Health Systems movement
to improve care for older adults*

Boston, MA – February 9, 2021 – Rising rates of COVID-19 infections, deaths, and a sluggish vaccine rollout are combining to increase the urgency for health systems to prioritize age-friendly health care and implement the 4Ms framework, which improves care for older adults. Today the [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#) (IHI) released a new piece of data that reflects this heightened urgency: From March 2020 through December 2020, 1,671 US care sites joined the [Age-Friendly Health Systems](#) movement, representing an 85 percent jump in overall participation. This brings the total number of care locations involved in the movement to 1,956.

People aged 65 years and older have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, putting into new perspective the impact of this population's size and distinct medical needs on the US health care delivery system. For this age group in particular, COVID-19 can lead to serious and rapid declines in health and exacerbate known social concerns that can contribute to poor health outcomes. These include social isolation (which is associated with cognitive decline, harmful falls, and decreased mobility), as well as isolation in health care settings, which helps to reduce virus spread but can also amplify emotional distress among patients and their families, friends, and caregivers. Faced with this challenge, primary care clinics, hospitals, nursing homes, and convenient care clinics have increasingly turned to the Age-Friendly Health Systems movement, funded by The John A. Hartford Foundation, and its [4Ms framework](#) as the evidence-based solution.

"There has perhaps never been a more critical time to prioritize rapid improvement in older adult care," said Dr. Kedar Mate, President and CEO, IHI. "We are incredibly heartened by the ever-increasing number of providers actively participating in the Age-Friendly Health Systems movement and to our funders for their generous support. Through this work, we are learning and sharing difficult but important lessons that will help us improve care for older adults now, during this pandemic, and fortify our systems for later so we are ready whenever the next crisis arrives."

Age-Friendly Health Systems is actively recruiting participants, offering three ways to join and requiring no fee to participate.

- **Age-Friendly Action Communities**, led by expert faculty, help health system leaders and improvers accelerate reliable practice of the 4Ms, while learning with and from fellow participants. Now open for enrollment, the 2021 action communities will run from March through October. Interested providers can read more in this [2021 IHI Age-Friendly Action](#)

[Community invitation to join](#), which includes details about an upcoming informational webinar, taking place February 23, 2021 at 1 PM EST.

- **Do-It-Yourself (DIY) pathway** offers an on ramp to systems that want to start independent work on the 4Ms right away and at their own pace. Health systems can sign up for this pathway via the [Age-Friendly DIY participant form](#).
- **Scale-up Accelerator** is designed for larger health systems seeking system-wide Age-Friendly implementation. This pathway provides specialized support for system leadership, clinical leadership, and point-of-care operations to adopt the 4Ms. Interested systems can email afhs@ihi.org for more information.

“Health care provider interest in age-friendly care has greatly accelerated during COVID-19, increasing awareness of the reliability and adaptability of the 4Ms framework and creating an inflection point for change,” said Terry Fulmer, PhD, RN, FAAN, President, The John A. Hartford Foundation, a partner in Age-Friendly Health Systems. “We are thrilled to work with so many health care providers across the continuum, and we look forward to furthering our collective impact in 2021.”

The Age-Friendly Health Systems movement is an initiative of The John A. Hartford Foundation and IHI in partnership with the American Hospital Association (AHA) and the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA).

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.