Institute for Healthcare Improvement

Age-Friendly Health Systems

Age-Friendly Health Systems: Evidence-Based Care for All Older Adults

August 2026

Age-Friendly Health Systems is an initiative of The John A. Hartford Foundation, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, and the American Hospital Association.

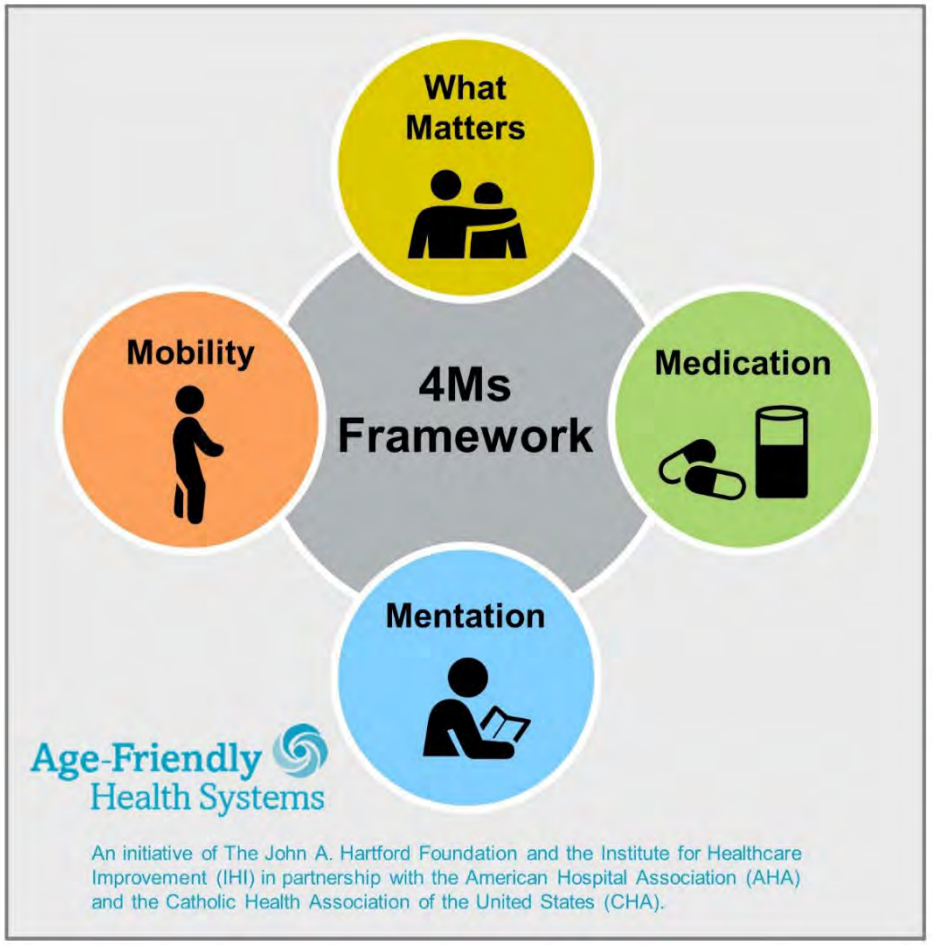
IHI.org/AgeFriendly

Our Mission

Build a movement so all care with older adults is age-friendly care:

- Guided by an essential set of evidence-based practices (4Ms);
- Causes no harms; and
- Is consistent with What Matters to the older adult and their family.

The 4Ms of Age-Friendly Care



What Matters

Know and align care with each older adult's specific health outcome goals and care preferences including, but not limited to, end-of-life care, and across settings of care.

Medication

If medication is necessary, use Age-Friendly medication that does not interfere with What Matters to the older adult, Mobility, or Mentation across settings of care.

Mentation

Prevent, identify, treat, and manage dementia, depression, and delirium across settings of care.

Mobility

Ensure that older adults move safely every day in order to maintain function and do What Matters.

Age-Friendly Health Systems

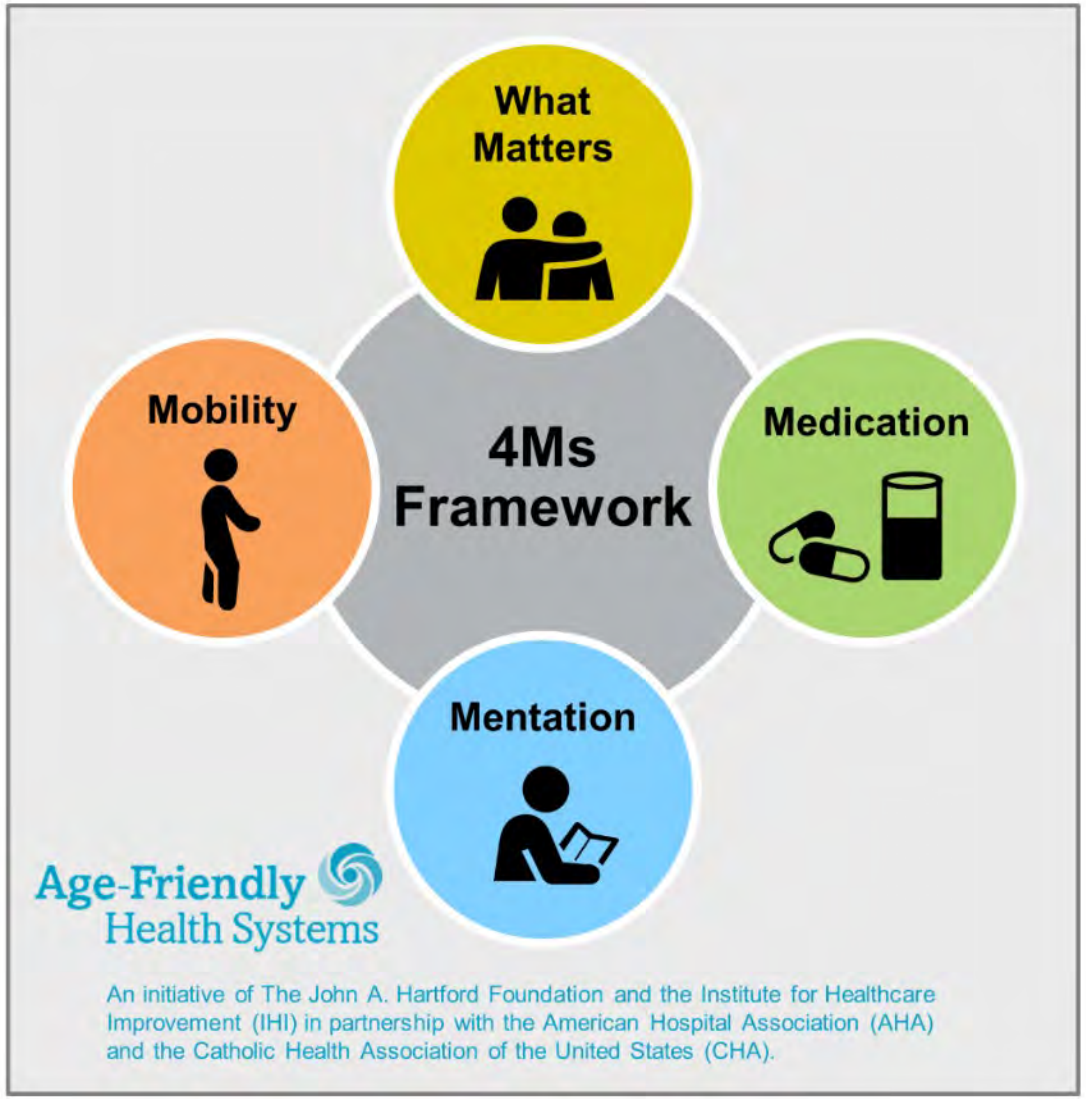
Why the 4Ms?

Represents core health issues for older adults

Builds on strong evidence base

Simplifies and reduces implementation and measurement burden on systems while increasing effect

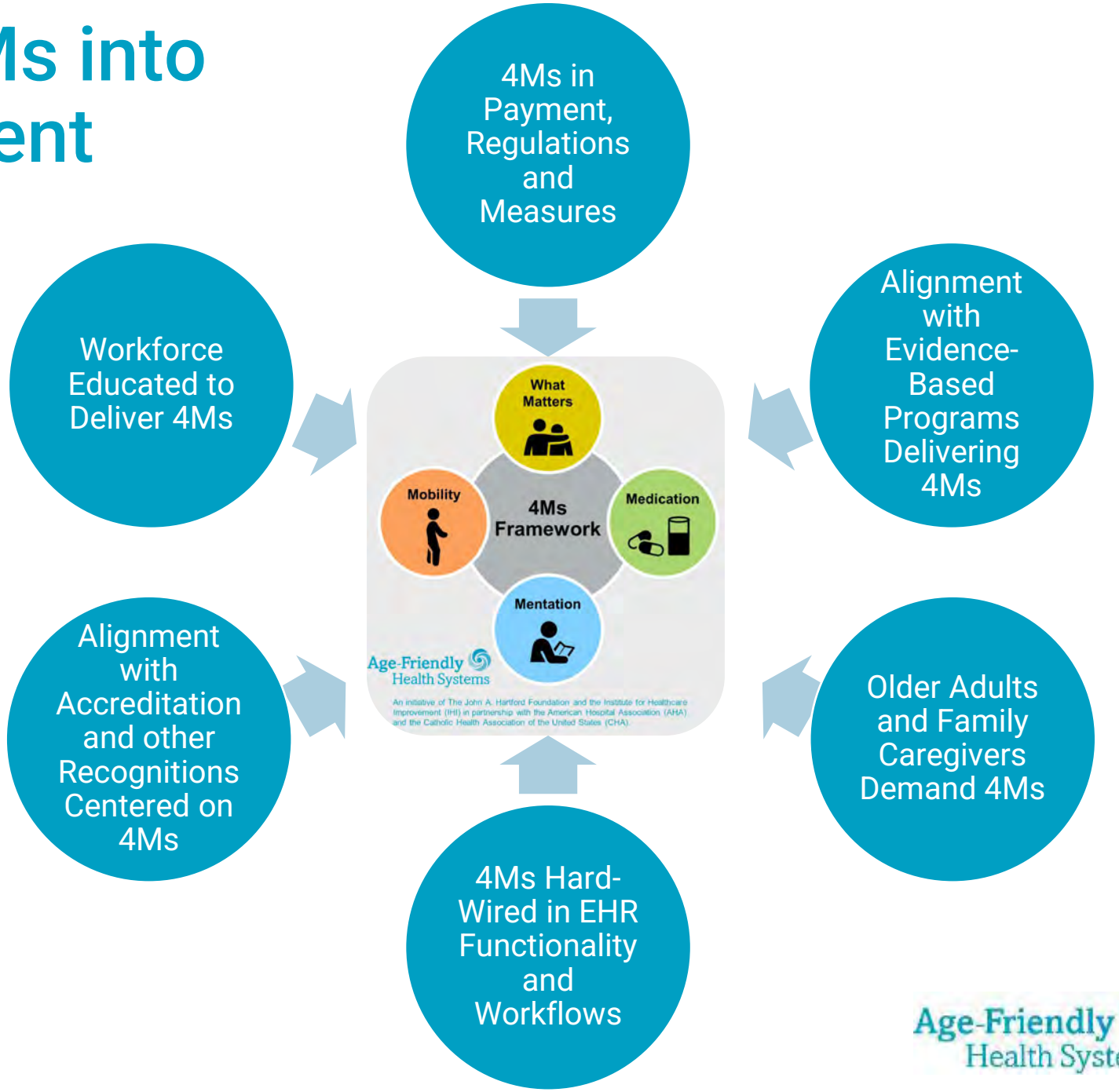
Components are synergistic and reinforce one another



Age-Friendly Health Systems

IHI Integrates 4Ms into Macro Environment

Aim is for 4Ms to become standard of care provided across the health care system and demanded by older adults and family caregivers



Age-Friendly Health Systems

Download Guidance for Your Care Setting

Age-Friendly Health Systems

Two Levels of Recognition

Participant (Level 1)

Teams have completed a 4Ms Care Description to afhs@ihi.org to outline how they will assess, document, and act on all 4Ms.

Committed to Care Excellence (Level 2)

Teams have achieved level 1 and have submitted at least three months of counts of the number of older adults that received care that included all 4Ms.

Recognition overview video

Find your setting-specific Care Description

Two Levels of Recognition from IHI

6974

Hospitals, practices, convenient care clinics, nursing homes, home health care organizations, and hospice organizations have described how they are putting the 4Ms into practices

3444*

Hospitals, practices, convenient care clinics, nursing homes, home health care organizations, and hospice organizations shared the count of older adults reached with 4Ms care for at least three months

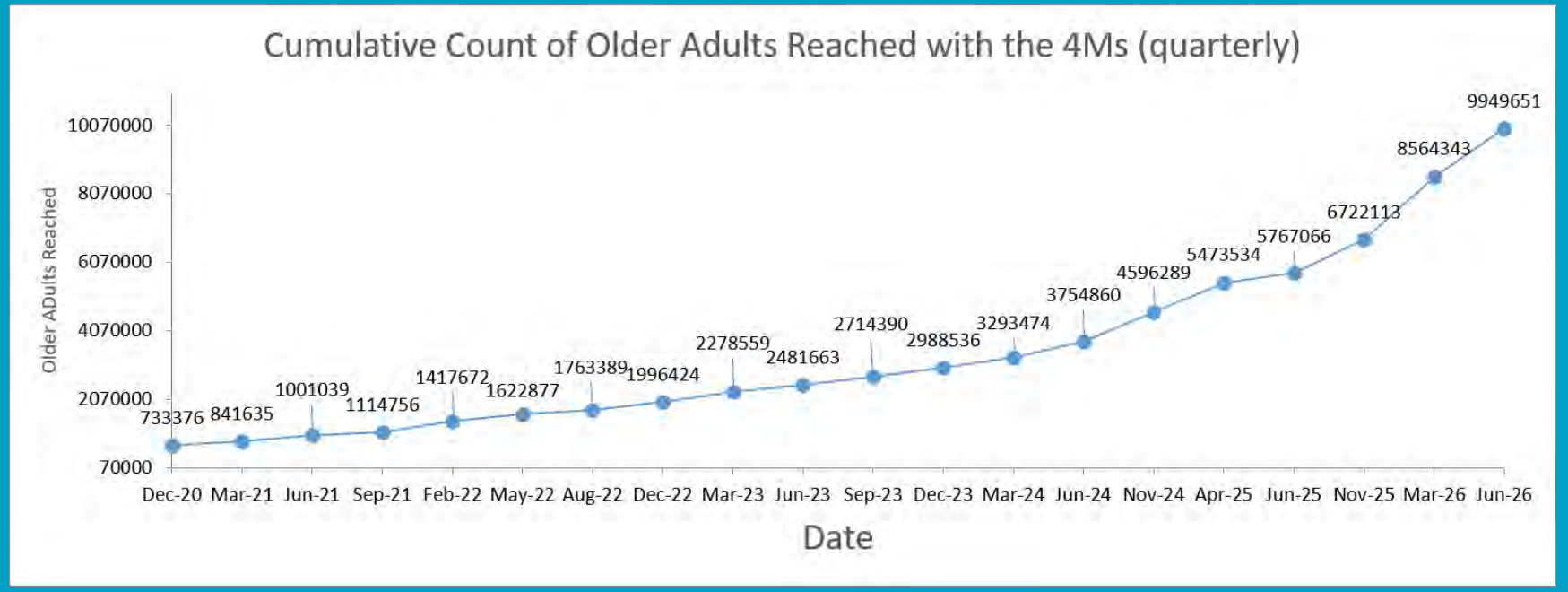
**Age-Friendly Health System-Participants* count is inclusive of hospitals and practices that went on to be recognized as *Age-Friendly Health Systems-Committed to Care Excellence*

Updated as of August 1, 2026

Age-Friendly Health Systems

As of June 2026:

More than 9,945,000 older adults have been reached with 4Ms care.



Age-Friendly Health Systems

Global Reach of Age-Friendly Health Systems

IHI is connecting teams around the world to engage in global age-friendly health and care. Email DBehrhorst@ihi.org and ask to stay informed about the latest global news and the Global Healthy Aging Initiative.

Learners from **60 countries** have taken IHI's Age-Friendly Health Systems Open School course

Age-Friendly Health Systems

Interactive Map of Recognized Age-Friendly Health Systems

[View Map]

Age-Friendly System-wide Spread Resources

Available at ihi.org to support spread of the 4Ms in your system!

Age-Friendly Health Systems

Age-Friendly Health Systems System-Wide Spread

Tested Theory of Change

S

System-wide leadership

Shared vision and sustainable adoption of the 4Ms

P

Patient/older adult and caregiver engagement

Equitable care aligned with the 4Ms

R

Reliable workflows and documentation

Consistent interdisciplinary 4Ms care

E

Everyday measurement & stratified data

Improvement and spread of the 4Ms

A

Aligning with health system priorities

Impact of the 4Ms on what matters to the health system

D

Dedicated interdisciplinary champions

Embrace implementation of the 4Ms

CMS Age-Friendly Hospital Measure – Built on the 4Ms of Age-Friendly Care

- FY2025 attestation window has closed
- Participating hospitals required to report on:
  - **Eliciting Patient Healthcare Goals (What Matters)**
  - **Managing Medication**
  - **Implementing Frailty Screening (Mentation & Mobility)**
  - **Assess Patient Vulnerability**
  - **Designating Age-Friendly Care Leaders**
- CMS QualityNet resources include Specifications document, Attestation Guide
- Data will be public on Medicare Care Compare
- More resources available at ihi.org/agefriendly

CMS
CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES

bit.ly/CMSGuide_AgeFriendlyMeasure

Age-Friendly Health Systems

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An Example!

Age-Friendly Health Systems is an initiative of The John A. Hartford Foundation, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, and the American Hospital Association.

Houston Methodist Age-Friendly Journey

Kathryn Agarwal, MD

HOUSTON Methodist LEADING MEDICINE

History of HM Delirium/Age-Friendly Programs

2012 to 2016

- In 2012, The Center of Medicare and Medicaid Services grant to develop a delirium mitigation program with interdisciplinary team.
- **Safe Prescribing Focus**
- **Delirium Screening Implemented**
- **Volunteer teams for patient education**

2016 to 2019

- The Delirium Program branches out
- **Each hospital with Inter-disciplinary Delirium Committee**
- **Moved to 4AT Delirium Screen**
- **Synergy with Fall Prevention**
- **Expanded Pharmacy Efforts**
- **Three hospitals - volunteer programs**

2020 to present

- In 2019, all Houston Methodist Hospitals adopt **Age-Friendly Health System model.**
- In 2020, HMH, HMSL and HMWB awarded the **Committed to Care Excellence** designation; **the five remaining hospitals obtain this designation by 2024.**

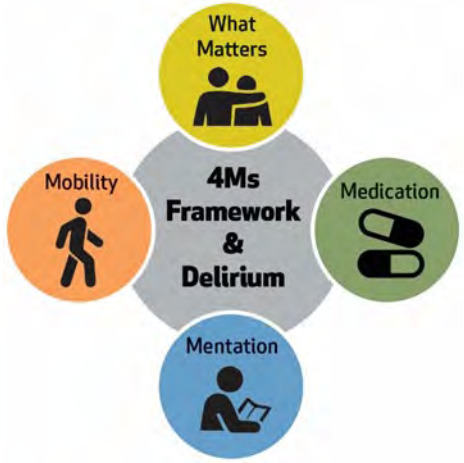
HOUSTON Methodist

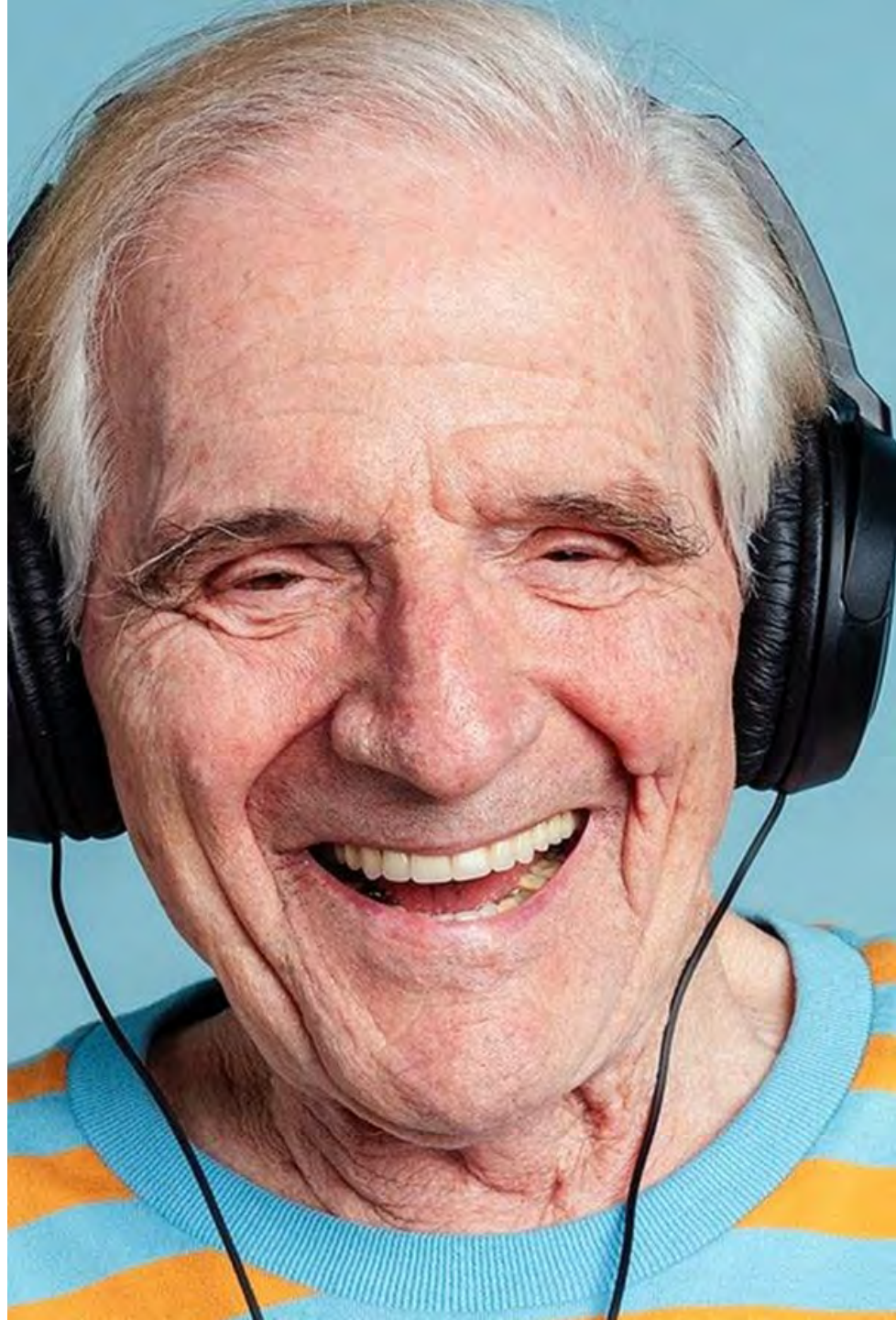
Recognition

As Of 2024, all Houston Methodist Hospitals are recognized as an Age-Friendly Healthcare System and practice the 4M'S of Care.

*HM Cypress, our newest hospital, in progress

Age-Friendly Health Systems
Committed to Care Excellence for Older Adults





HOUSTON Methodist LEADING MEDICINE

How did we get from Delirium Focus to the 4M's?

- Delirium is a clinical syndrome
  - Multiple risk factors / mitigators
  - Management & Prevention Requires Interdisciplinary 4Ms Approach

4Ms Care Evolution at HM

Quantifiable care that is provided consistently and reliably for all older adults

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Medication	Mentation	Mobility	What Matters
• CPOE & Ordersets • Therapeutic interchanges • Alerts to Pharmacists			
	• 4AT • CAM-ICU		
	• Delirium Pathway & BPA to Nurses • Hearing amplifiers		
		• Fall risk Tool • BMAT – Mobility Assess • Mobility documentation • Create Mobility Dashboard	
			• Matters Most initiative

- Joined Action Community in 2019 to learn about Age-Friendly
- Inventory of Interventions
- Highlighted Areas needed Improvement in 2020 to improve care and to be recognized as Age-Friendly

Overview – Mobility Initiatives

HOUSTON Methodist LEADING MEDICINE

Goals

Encourage early & safe mobility to maintain independence, promote discharge to home, reduce LOS, prevent delirium, VTE & pressure injuries.

Prevent Falls.

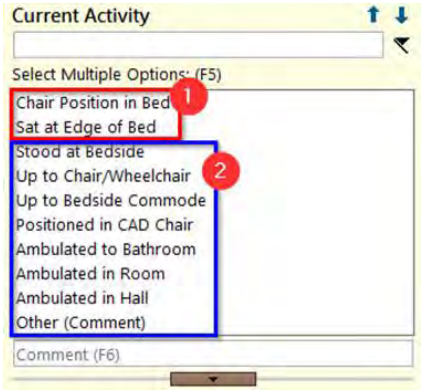
Multi-layer interventions

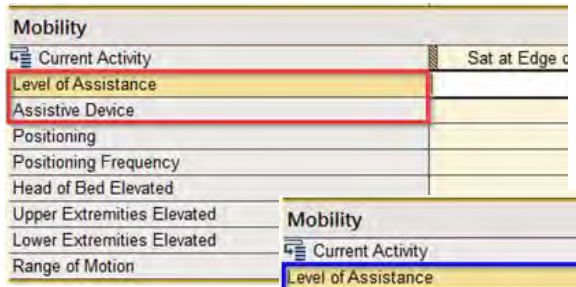
- Delirium Awareness & Huddle Education
- Mobility Collaborative
- Documentation optimization
- Tableau dashboard
- Volunteer Fall Prevention Programs

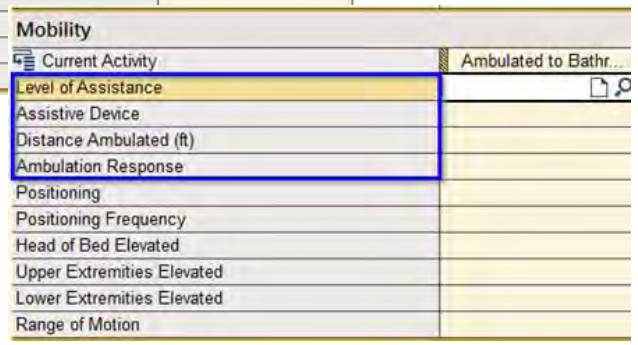
Mobility Initiatives

Delirium Awareness

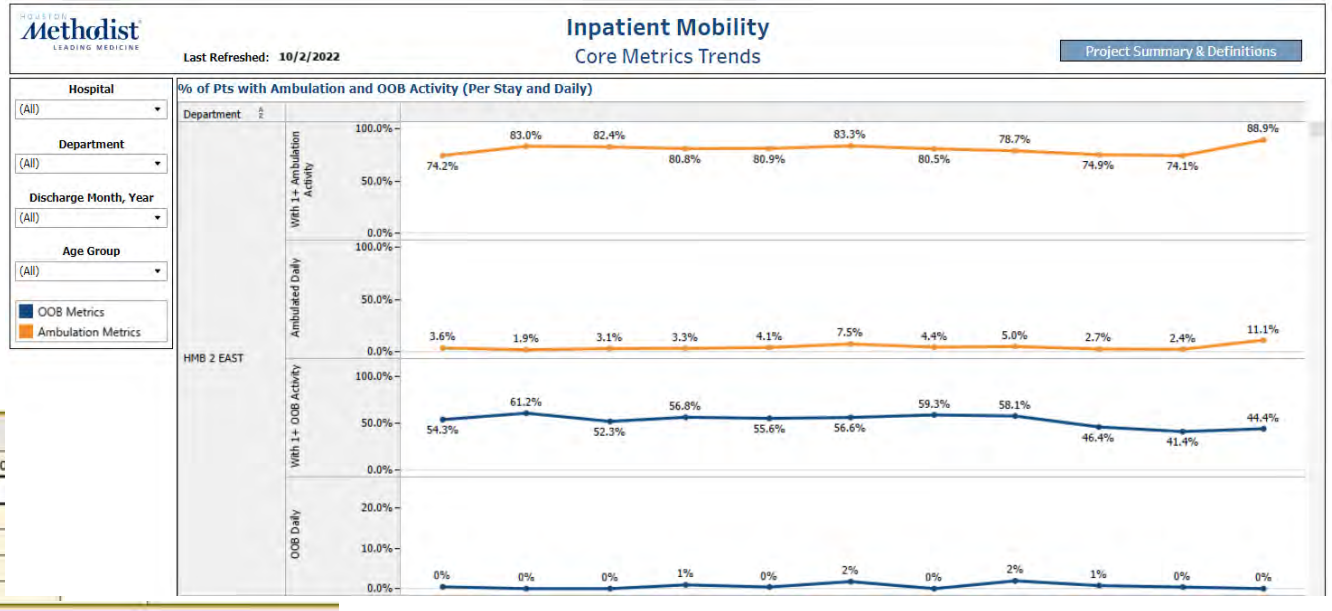
Documentation Optimization







Data Collection & Trending - Dashboard



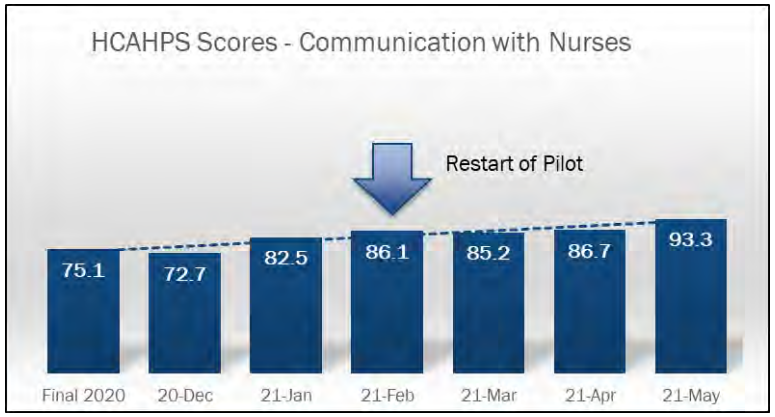
Nguyen L, Agarwal KS, Wilson KT, et al. Empowering Mobility in Age-Friendly Health Systems: **Development and Impact of a Mobility Dashboard. J Gerontol Nurs. 2026;**52(2):17–21.

Overview – Matters Most

Goals

- Ask patients what is most important to them during this stay/this day
- Align the care plan with patient goals/wishes
- Matters Most should anchor the care plan for all patients

1 acute care pilot unit



From Pilot to Scale

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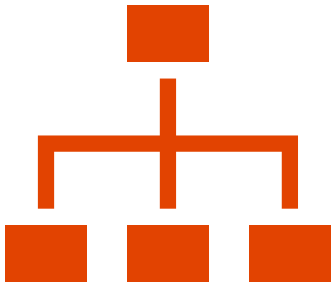
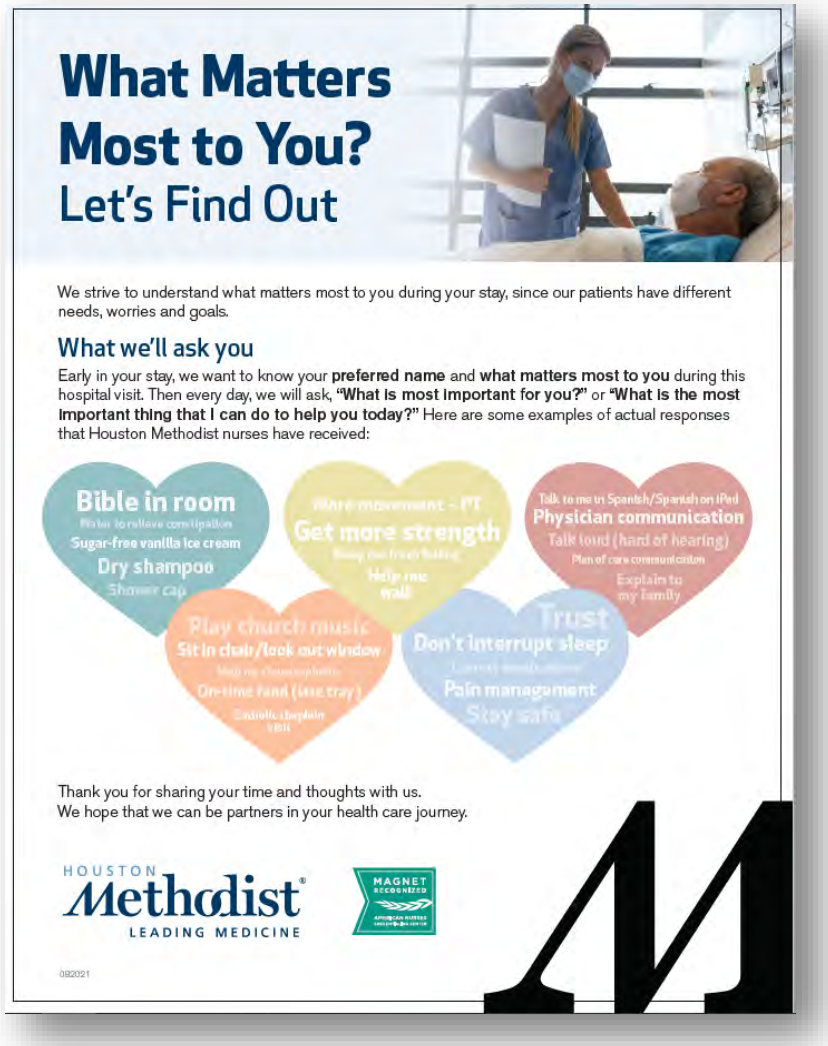


Adoption as Magnet initiative

Incorporation of whiteboard



Admission packet education

Overview – Mentation Initiatives

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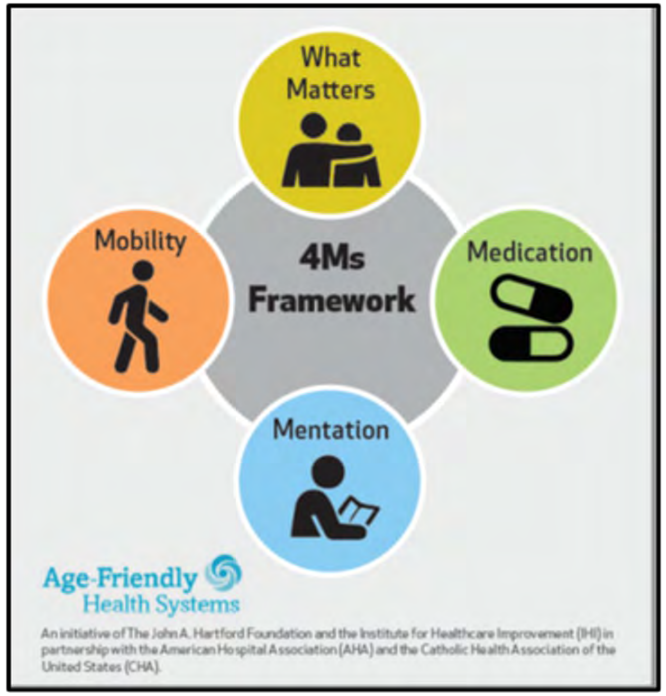
Goals

Identify delirium early to avoid falls and long-term consequences.
Support prevention, management & mitigation of delirium.

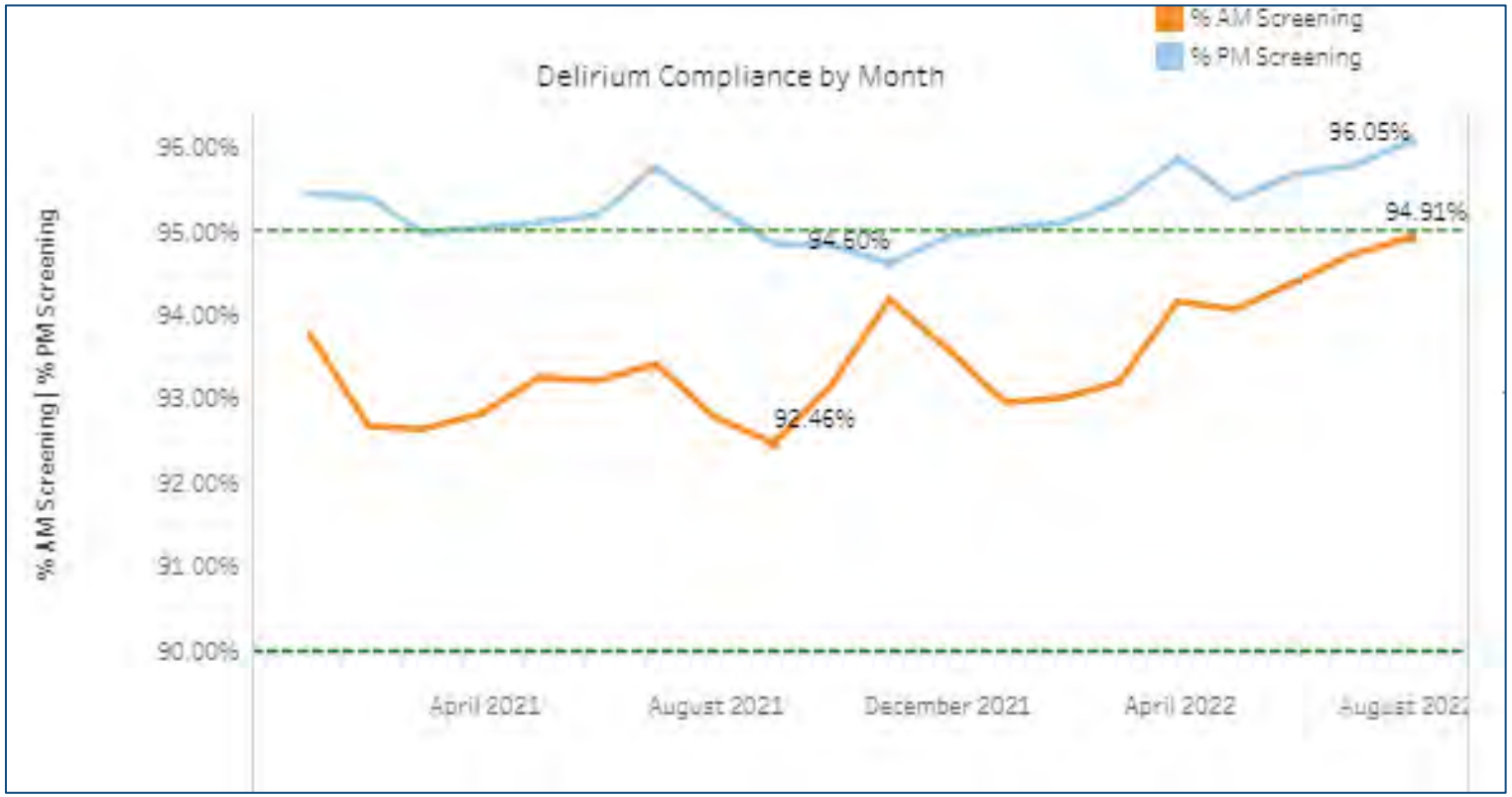


Multi-layer interventions

- Delirium Screening (4AT & CAM-ICU)
- Monitoring of Compliance
  Monitoring of Rates
- Delirium & Fall Prevention Pathways
- Addressing Hearing Impairment

System 4AT compliance graphs

	% AM Screening	% PM Screening	% AM Mismatched	% PM Mismatched
2019	93.80%	96.04%	2.14%	2.25%
2020	93.61%	94.85%	2.18%	2.19%
2021	93.17%	95.10%	2.00%	2.09%
2022	93.92%	95.51%	2.45%	2.61%



Education Pathways

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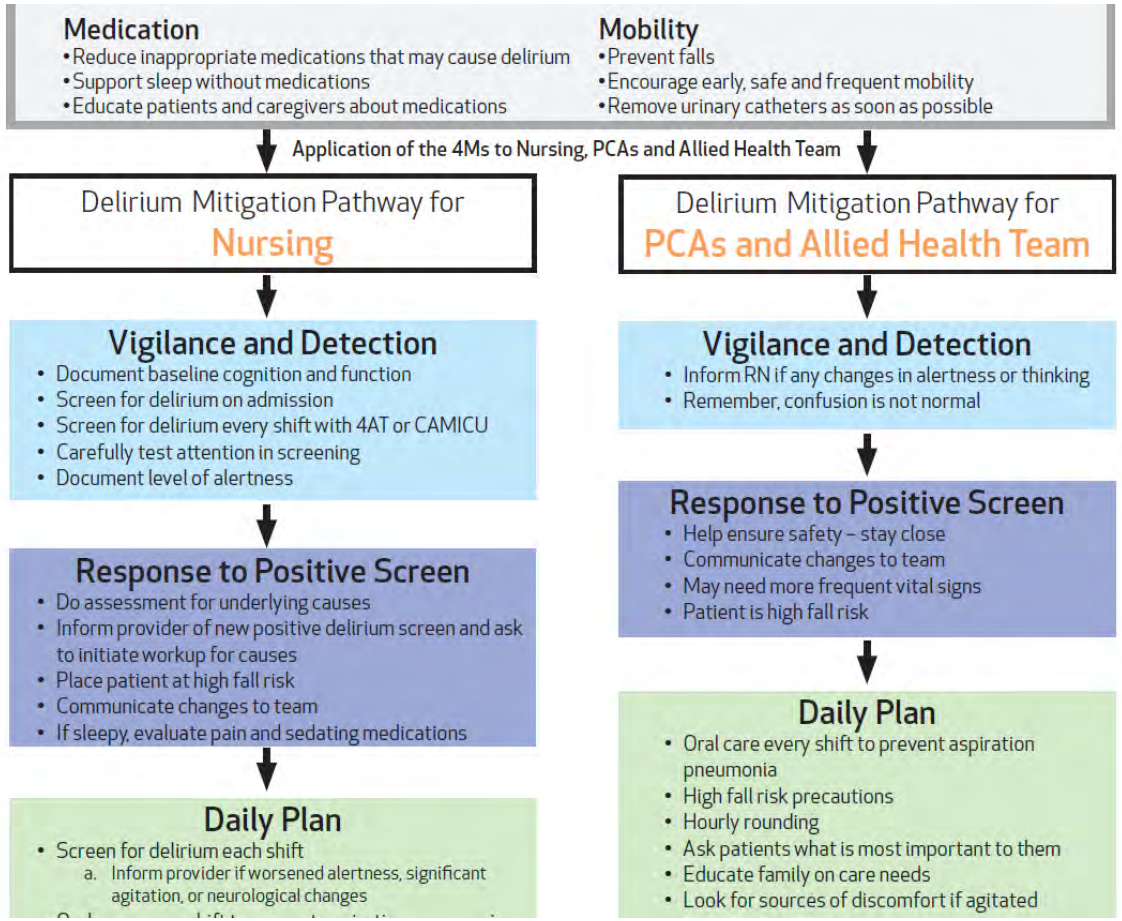
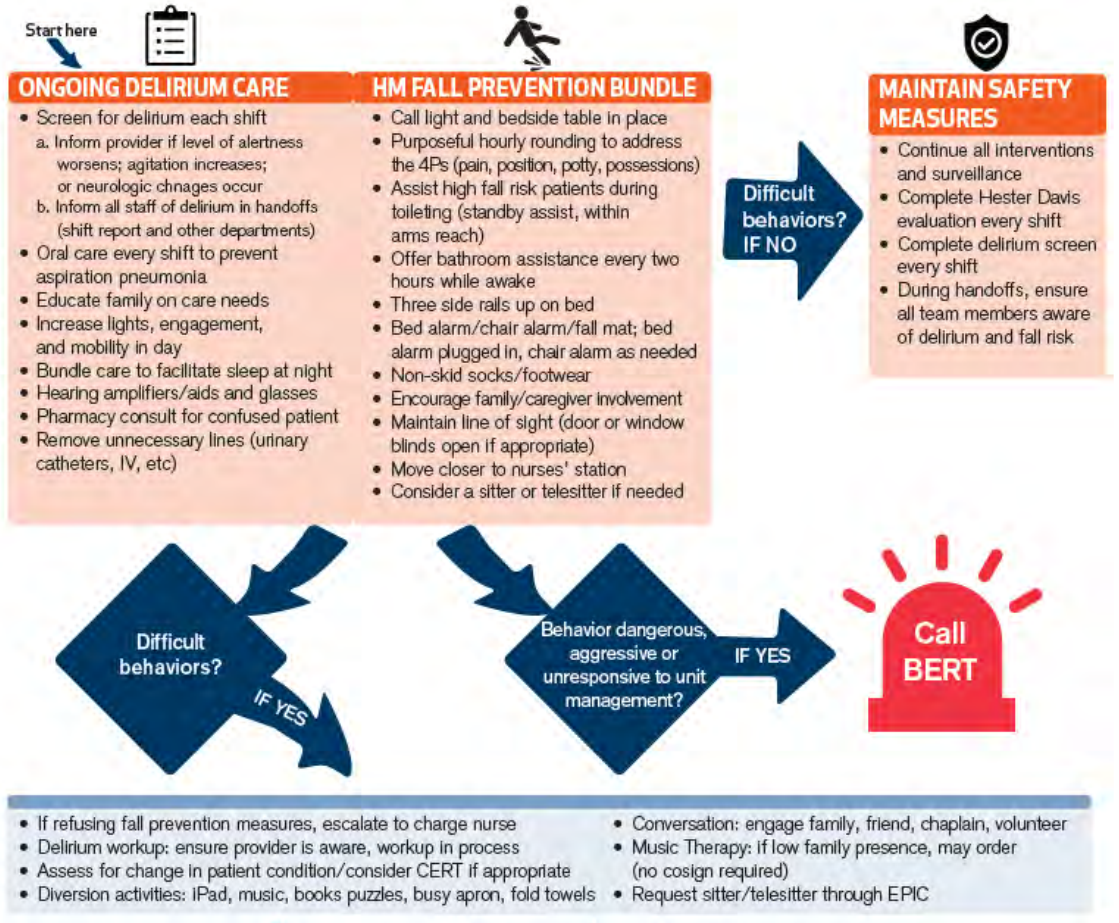
Delirium Prevention



Safety & Fall Prevention



Overview – Medication Initiatives

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Goal

Reduce inappropriate medication usage rates & support provider medication decision making to reduce burden of delirium.

Multi-layer interventions

- Geriatric context interventions to medication orders in Epic
- Warnings to pharmacists if inappropriate medications ordered
- Warnings to providers if PIMs re-ordered at discharge
- Order set changes; Age-dependent pain management orders

Geriatric Context Warnings

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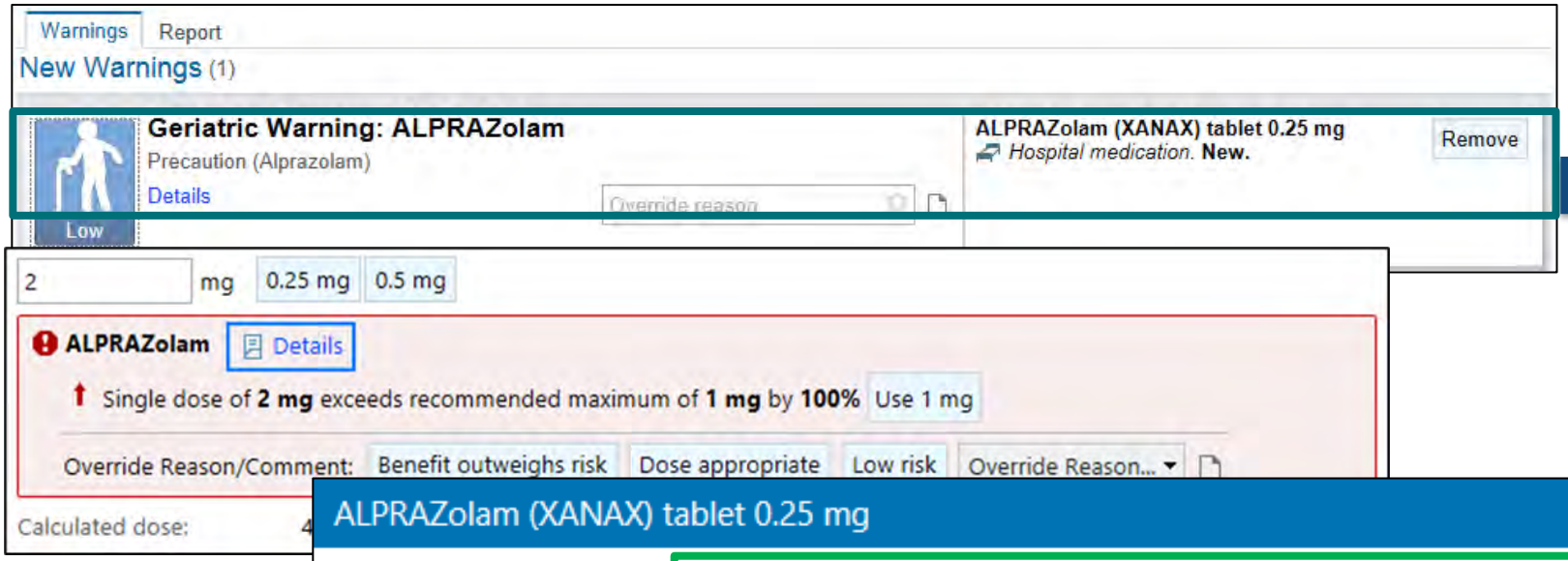
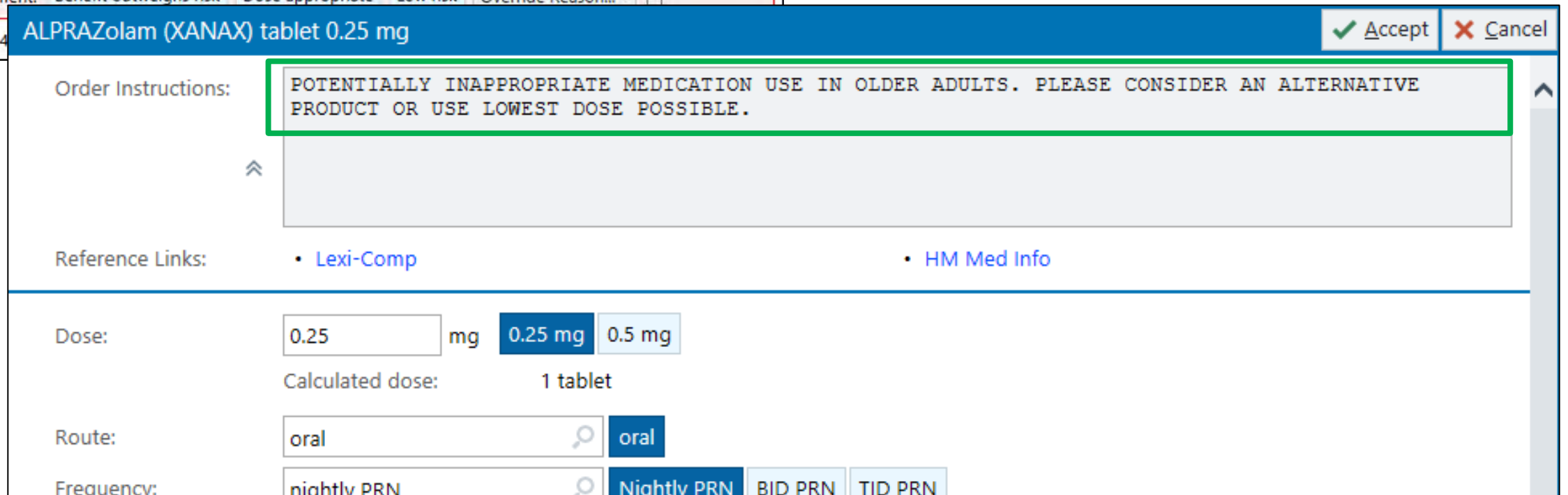
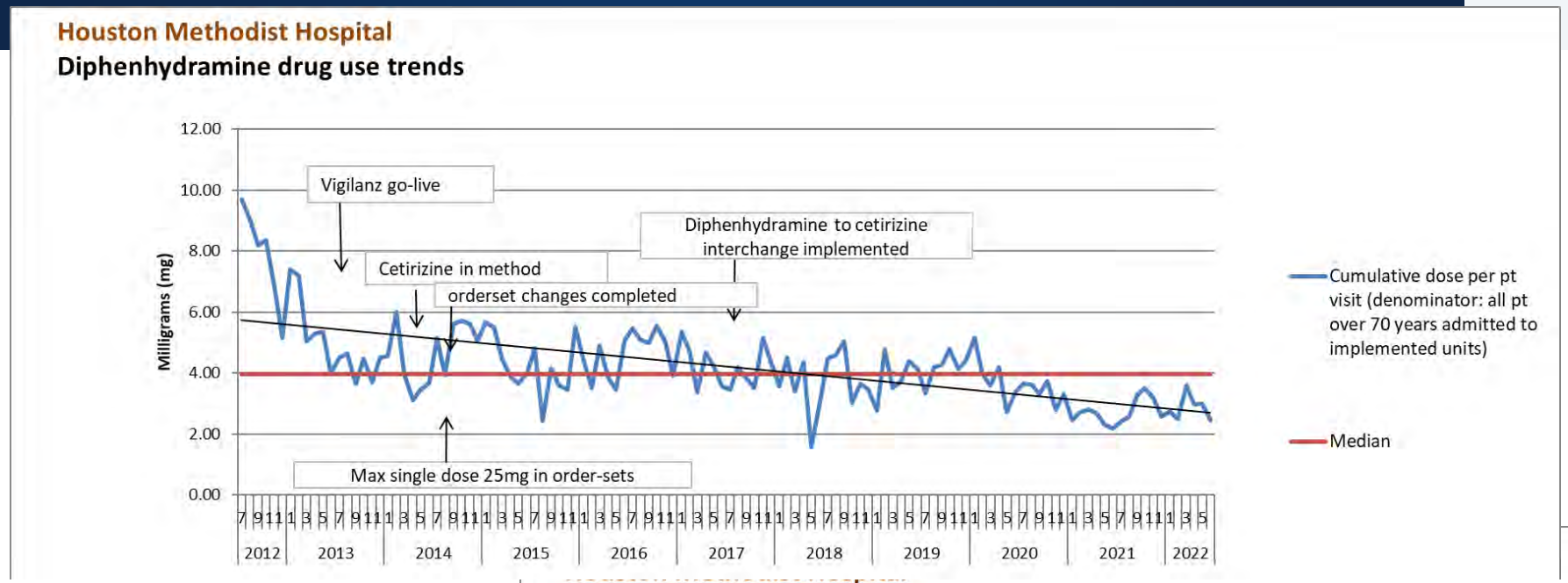


- Warning at order entry
- Suggested doses and frequencies visible
- Provider may order other doses if typed in

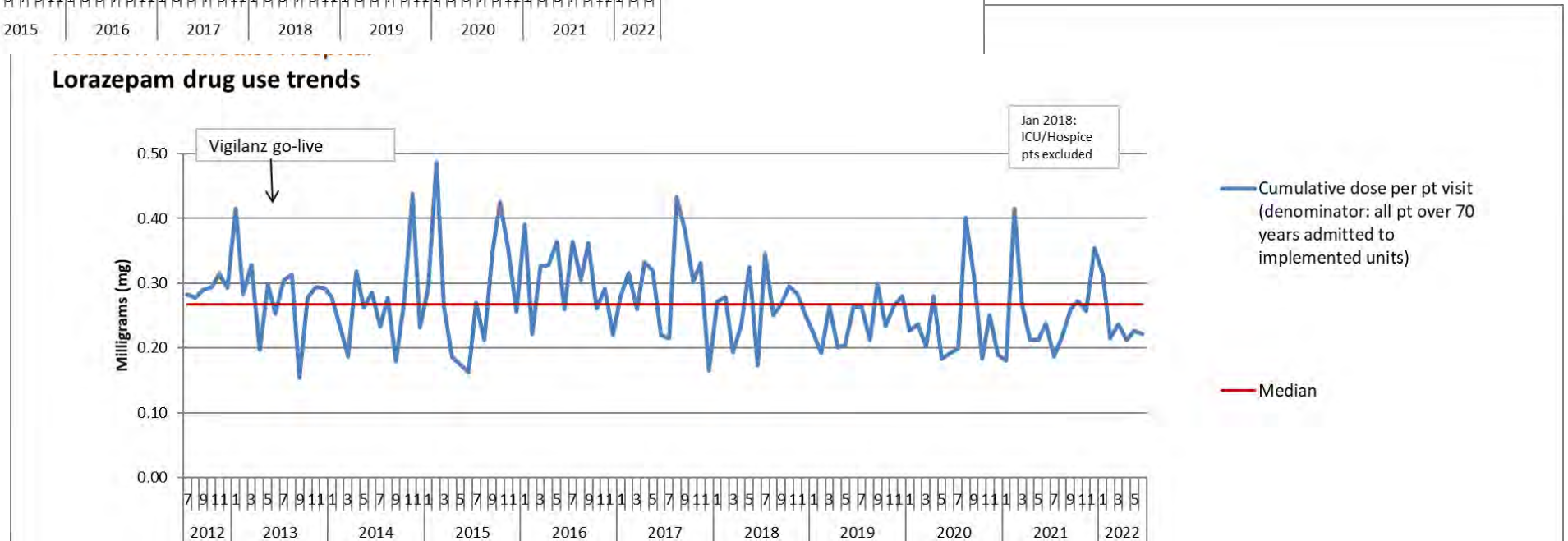


Results



Some meds with great reductions in usage like diphenhydramine & zolpidem

Some like lorazepam – smaller reductions



Does 4Ms Care Really Matter?

HOUSTON Methodist
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> J Aging Health. 2021 Feb 8;898264321991658. doi: 10.1177/0898264321991658. Online ahead of print.

Evidence for the 4Ms: Interactions and Outcomes across the Care Continuum

Kedar Mate [1], Terry Fulmer [2], Leslie Pelton [1], Amy Berman [2], Alice Bonner [1], Wendy Huang [3], Jinghan Zhang [3]

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 33555233 DOI: 10.1177/0898264321991658

Free article

Age-Friendly Health Systems—Original Research

Effect of Age-Friendly Care on Days at Home Post-Hospital Discharge for Traditional Medicare Patients: A Cross-Sectional Study

Kathleen Drago, MD[1], Bryanna De Lima, MPH[1], Sophie Rasmussen, MBA[2], Alaina Ena, RN, MN[1], Elizabeth Eckstrom, MD, MPH[1], and Ella Bowman, MD, PhD[1]

DOI: 10.1111/jgs.19083

MODELS OF GERIATRIC CARE, QUALITY IMPROVEMENT, AND PROGRAM DISSEMINATION

Journal of the American Geriatrics Society

Early clinical and quality impacts of the Age-Friendly Health System in a Veterans Affairs skilled nursing facility

Sarah E. King MD[1,2] | Marcus D. Ruopp MD[1,3] | Chi T. Mac PharmD[1] | Kelly A. O'Malley PhD[1,3,4] | Jordana L. Meyerson MD, MSc[1,3] | Lindsay Lefers PT, DPT[1] | Jonathan F. Bean MD, MPH[4,5,6] | Jane A. Driver MD, MPH[1,3,7] | Andrea Wershof Schwartz MD, MPH, AGSF[1,3,4,7,8]

Short Stay (Rehab)	Long Term Care
↓48% ED utilization	↓73% ED utilization
↓30% rehospitalization (30d)	↓64% hospitalizations
↑19% discharge to community	

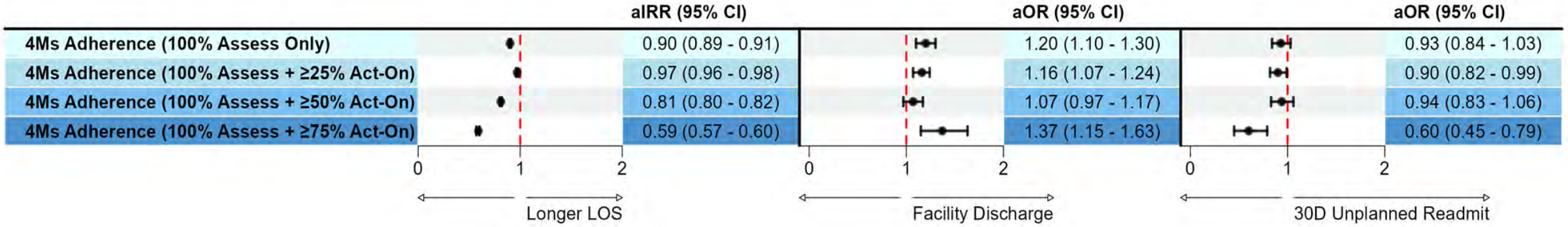
Patients receiving at least 3Ms spent significantly fewer days in a facility within 30 days of hospital discharge

Age-Friendly Health Systems

HM Research on Outcomes with 4Ms Care

Key Findings – Review of 1 year System-wide care in patients age 70 and older

Higher 4Ms adherence was associated with reduced readmissions and shorter hospital length of stay (LOS),
Higher levels of Assess + Act-On adherence were associated with progressively better outcomes, suggesting that reliable delivery of Age-Friendly care may provide additional benefit beyond assessment alone.
Provisionally Accepted to NEJM Catalyst Innovations Journal



Methodist
LEADING MEDICINE

Age-Friendly Hospital Measure – Built on the 4Ms of Age-Friendly Care

The John A. Hartford Foundation

- FY2025 Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting Program (pay-for-reporting)
- All participating hospitals required to report on all elements within 5 domains:
  - **Elicit Patient Healthcare Goals (what Matters)**
  - **Manage Medication**
  - **Implement Frailty Screening (Mentation and Mobility)**
  - **Assess Social Vulnerability**
  - **Designate Age-Friendly Care Leaders**
- Data collected will be publicly available on Medicare Care Compare
- Age-Friendly Health Systems and related initiatives can help hospitals meet measure

bit.ly/CMS_AFMeasure

Overview: CMS Age-Friendly Care Measure for IQR

Expands on the 4 Ms framework

Helpful Info from CMS - Attestation Guide for the Age Friendly Hospital Measure in CMS Quality Reporting -

5 Domains: Get 1 Point for each domain

- Must answer “yes” to every element in a domain to get the point
- Reporting only- no minimum number of points to fulfill requirement

Domain scores publicly reported on Care Compare starting in 2026

Expect continued focus on Age-Friendly and Delirium issues

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CMS Measure Domain	Crosswalk to the 4Ms
Eliciting patient healthcare goals: This domain focuses on obtaining patients' health-related goals and treatment preferences, which will inform shared decision-making and goal-concordant care. **Includes Matters Most – Personal Health Goals**	What Matters
Responsible medication management: This domain aims to optimize medication management by monitoring the pharmacological record for drugs that may be considered inappropriate in older adults due to increased risk of harm.	Medication
Frailty screening and intervention: This domain aims to screen patients for geriatric issues related to frailty, including cognitive impairment/delirium, physical function/mobility, and malnutrition, for the purpose of early detection and intervention where appropriate. **Includes ED LOS and Screening for Delirium**	Mentation, Mobility, and Medication
Social vulnerability: This domain seeks to ensure that hospitals recognize the importance of social vulnerability screening of older adults and have systems in place to ensure that social issues are identified and addressed as part of the care plan.	What Matters, Mentation Plus Burden Scale for Family Caregivers; Rush University Caring for Caregivers Program
Age-friendly care leadership: This domain seeks to ensure consistent quality of care for older adults through the identification of an age-friendly champion and/or interprofessional committee tasked with ensuring compliance with all components of this measure.	All 4Ms, including measuring the 4Ms and sustaining 4Ms care

HM Current Efforts

Moving from AFHS Recognition to CMS Attestation

- **Social Vulnerability** – new SDOH requirements –
  - IT build to modify admission SDOH questions in progress
- **ED LOS and Delirium** –
  - Monitoring ED LOS > 65 yrs
  - Working toward screening high risk patients for delirium
  - Active Monitoring % of pts age 65 and older with LOS > 8 hrs in ED
- **Matters Most** – personal health goals
  - Workgroups in place
  - Efforts to move with digital white boards

HOUSTON Methodist LEADING MEDICINE

Thank you

- Questions?
  - ksagarwal@houstonmethodist.org

Join the Movement, Recognition, and Providing 4Ms Care

Age-Friendly Health Systems

On-Ramps to Join the Movement

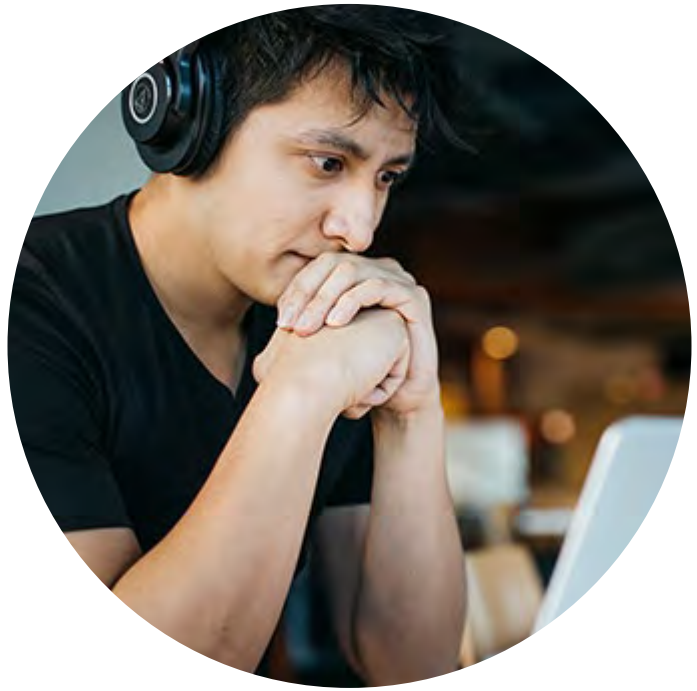
Action Communities for teams to learn about and practice the 4Ms with the support of expert faculty and a community of peers. Action Communities are facilitated by IHI, AHA, and other movement partners.

DIY Pathway for teams to learn about and test the 4Ms on their own using Age-Friendly Health Systems resources.

ihi.org/AgeFriendly

Age-Friendly Health Systems

Providing Age-Friendly Care to Older Adults Open School Course



The Open School course is completely **free.** It is available here (PFC 203) and through IHI's main page under "New Education Platform." For details, please refer to our user guide.

The course outlines:

- Age-friendly care
- 4Ms Age-Friendly Health Systems Framework
- Assessment of and action on the 4Ms

Learners from 45 countries have taken the course.

Age-Friendly Health Systems

Recognition Sprint

The Recognition Sprint is a three-month learning and improvement program designed to accelerate the adoption of the 4Ms Framework, open to paired teams of nursing homes and their pharmacy partners.

The Sprint combines structured learning, practical testing, peer exchange, and coaching support within a condensed timeline. **Participating nursing homes and pharmacies enroll as partner teams**, working side-by-side to strengthen age-friendly care delivery while pursuing separate, setting-specific recognition pathways through IHI and the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP).

Learn more and express interest by August 31, 2026.

Age-Friendly Health Systems

CMS Attestation Experiences

CMS Age Friendly Hospital Measure: Preparing for Successful Attestation. In this video, Caitlin Gillooley, Director, Behavioral Health and Quality Policy at the American Hospital Association, provides an overview of CMS Age-Friendly Hospital Measure attestation.

CMS Age-Friendly Hospital Measure Attestation: Banner Health Perspective. Mark Patton, Quality Director at Banner Health, provides an overview of CMS Age-Friendly Hospital Measure attestation efforts within their system.

Age-Friendly Health Systems Online Course with Coaching

- Live virtual coaching calls and asynchronous learning
- Designed for individuals and teams:
  - Advice for championing age-friendly care in your organization
  - Building the business case
  - Developing leadership buy-in
- Scholarships available — apply by September 23, 2026

Begins September 23, 2026

Age-Friendly Health Systems

Certified Professional in Age-Friendly Health Care

Recognizes excellence in older adult care, grounded in the evidence-based 4Ms Framework (What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility) and affirms your ability to deliver safe, person-centered care across settings.

Each year, a limited number of need-based scholarships are awarded to support professionals committed to improving care for older adults. Thanks to support from the John A. Hartford Foundation, additional scholarships are available for 2026.

Upcoming Review Course Live Webinars

- September 17-18, 2026
- February 17-18, 2027

How to Stay Connected

- Sign up for the Friends of Age-Friendly newsletter
- View recordings of Friends of Age-Friendly webinars
- Explore different pathways to join the movement or deepen your involvement

Thank You

Age-Friendly Health Systems