Team-based change can start with one driven and dedicated person

Dr. Ella Bowman was driven to fix a problem dangerously threatening the welfare of older adults. Delirium was the threat she saw from her earliest days in medicine. She had a goal as the new Section Chief of Geriatrics at Birmingham VA.

Dr. Bowman teamed with like-minded Birmingham VA colleagues. First, they set a goal to update the EHR with a newly written delirium standard of practice. Coding proved a problem, so they created a manual work-around that maintained progress.

A discovered resource seemed like a custom-made solution: IHI’s Age-Friendly Health Systems movement. Success inspired new goals. They expanded from clinic and in-patient to home-based care.

The team realized scaling to home health was going to be a challenge. (There were satellite teams around the entire state.) Using the 4Ms, the Birmingham VA Team recognized: It was easier than expected to create change in multiple sites.

About Age-Friendly Health Systems

According to the US Census Bureau, the US population aged 65+ years is expected to nearly double over the next 30 years, from 43.1 million in 2012 to an estimated 83.7 million in 2050. These demographic advances have left our health systems behind as they struggle to reliably provide evidence-based practice to every older adult at every care interaction.

Age-Friendly Health Systems is an initiative of The John A. Hartford Foundation and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), in partnership with the American Hospital Association (AHA) and the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), designed Age-Friendly Health Systems to meet this challenge head on.

Age-Friendly Health Systems aim to: Follow an essential set of evidence-based practices; Cause no harm; and Align with What Matters to the older adult and their family caregivers.

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We are a global movement of health systems, working together to deliver quality care that is meaningful to people in the areas we serve and gives them dignity, choice, purpose, and control over their lives.

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