



St. John's Riverside Age-Friendly Multidisciplinary Team

Overview

At St. John's Riverside Hospital, two-thirds of the patient population is over the age of 65, and older adult care has been a strong priority. In 2020, CEO and President Ron Corti and the leadership team made age-friendly care a mission goal, after the hospital joined the AHA Age-Friendly Health Systems Action Community in fall 2019. St. John's Riverside achieved recognition as a program "participant" in June 2020 and as being "committed to care excellence" in October 2020.

Located in Yonkers, the fourth largest city in New York with a population of more than 200,000, St. John's Riverside also serves Dobbs Ferry, Hastings, Ardsley, Irvington and the North Bronx and has three inpatient facilities. The hospital, which opened its doors in 1869, is committed to improving care and the quality of life in its community by offering excellence in medical care, nursing, state-of-the-art technologies, continuing education and preventive services.

Approach

Throughout the journey to become age-friendly, the St. John's Riverside team implemented the initiative's evidence-based approach, called the 4Ms framework:

what matters, medications, mentation and mobility. To effectively implement the 4Ms, an age-friendly multidisciplinary committee was formed, with representatives from nursing, medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy and IT. The team started meeting in November 2019 and continues to meet to discuss and improve age-friendly care.

The 4Ms were adopted at St. John's Riverside in the following ways:



What Matters. When the hospital joined the AHA action community, care teams already were asking their patients, "What matters?" The hospital's social work and case management teams conducted daily

rounds with every patient to discuss goals of care, special needs and discharge planning. The nursing staff also recorded patient goals for the day on a white board located at the patient's bedside. These strategies have evolved over time as the team developed a series of questions to further explore goals of care and what matters with every patient on admission and to document responses in the electronic medical record. The nursing staff continues to be responsible for updating the white boards beside patient beds every shift.



Medications. Prior to implementing age-friendly principles, there were no alerts for providers to check high-risk medications or raise awareness of the specific risk of polypharmacy in patients age 65 and older.

Currently, all physicians and nurse practitioners speak to patients and their families and develop a plan of care which they document in their portion of the EMR. Care teams perform a medication reconciliation on admission. Pharmacy and IT teams labeled all Beers Criteria medications in the label comment section of the medication administration record with a warning that these drugs are to be avoided in patients age 65 and older. These comments are visible to nurses and medical providers. If a drug is sufficiently concerning, pharmacists will put the medication order in pending status, alert the nurse and contact the provider via microblog or phone call.



Mentation. Since 2019, nurses have performed mental status assessments and neurology checks when ordered on admission of a patient. Delirium screening was done with the Confusion Assessment

Method (CAM) delirium scoring algorithm and used in the intensive care unit but not in any other unit. Currently, patients continue to be evaluated with the CAM algorithm in the ICU; the Nursing Delirium Screening (Nu-DESC) tool has been implemented for all non-ICU inpatients.



Mobility. St. John's Riverside has an established physical therapy program, and the nursing staff uses a bedside mobility assessment tool (BMAT) when patients are admitted. The hospital has now

increased focus on physical therapy consults for all patients age 65 and older when appropriate, which includes writing physical therapy goals on white boards.

The hospital also aims to be a "diaper-free" facility by addressing the needs of incontinent patients when they are mobilizing.

Impact

At the start of St. John's Riverside Hospital's age-friendly journey, care teams were already collecting a good amount of 4Ms information, but they were documenting in silos without the ability to view the information centrally. Nursing staff, social work and case management teams, medical providers, palliative care specialists and spiritual care teams all communicated separately with patients and documented in different parts of the EMR.

After implementing age-friendly care strategies, the hospital's IT department developed a centralized dashboard for every patient age 65 and older called the Age-Friendly Clinical Panel. This panel incorporates the input of multiple disciplines on the 4Ms and includes notes from medical providers; nursing documentation on delirium and wounds; pharmacy notes on high-risk medications; physical therapy notes from every patient encounter; and notes on palliative and spiritual care interactions and nutritional consults. Hospital staff have responded very positively to this initiative, with teams including nurses, physical therapists and pharmacists being universally supportive.

Next Steps

To continue providing quality, age-friendly care to all older adult patients, the next steps for St. John's Riverside teams include:

- Spreading age-friendly strategies to the inpatient facility at Park Care Pavilion.
- Pursuing certification from the American College of Emergency Physicians and the Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation program for emergency departments at the hospital's Andrus and Dobbs Ferry inpatient facilities.
- Extending additional documentation requirements to nonteaching providers to increase their awareness of high-risk medications and the risk of polypharmacy in the patient population.

Lessons Learned

- Leadership buy-in has been vital for driving the Age-Friendly Health Systems initiative and spreading it throughout St. John's Riverside. This work continues to be driven by the St. John's Riverside executive leadership team and has received unanimous support of the hospital's medical board. This initiative also was presented to the hospital's board of trustees in March 2021 and was well received.
- Collaboration across multidisciplinary professions has helped the hospital integrate the 4Ms by breaking down communication silos. The Age-Friendly Clinical Panel serves as a 4Ms data hub for all teams. An age-friendly multidisciplinary committee was created to effectively implement the 4Ms, and members continue to meet monthly.

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