



## Age-Friendly Care: It Matters to You

Medical organizations and practitioners everywhere are embracing the concept of age-friendly care to help ensure the best possible wellbeing and quality of life for older adults.

Age-friendly care is designed to give older adults and their caregivers input into their care, as they partner with practitioners to align health care, supports, and services with their personal wishes, needs, and goals.

### The Age-Friendly Story

Age-friendly care was formalized in [Age-Friendly Health Systems](#), 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). The Age-Friendly Systems follow a set of practices designed to ensure high-quality, evidence-based care that considers the needs and preferences of older adults.

The World Health Organization (WHO) also promotes the age-friendly concept via its [Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities](#). This consists of 1,300-plus cities and communities “working to improve their physical and social environments to become better places to grow old.”

### 4Ms Drive Care

At the heart of age-friendly care is what is known as the 4Ms Framework, with the ‘Ms’ being: What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility:

- **What Matters** involves understanding the older adult’s goals, preferences, and values. This may be anything from walking their dog every day or dancing at a grandchild’s wedding to continuing to work or volunteer. Whatever goals the person has, the care team keeps them at the center of care planning.
- **Medication** means ensuring appropriate medication management that minimizes risks and maximizes benefits. The pharmacist plays a key role here, reviewing medication lists, assessing people for issues such as fall risk, and looking for issues – like sleep problems and loss of appetite – that could be medication-related. The pharmacist can make recommendations for changes that can improve wellbeing, as well as reduce costs and other barriers to taking medications as directed.





### Age-Friendly Care: It Matters to You, Continued

- **Mentation** addresses the individual's cognitive health and mental wellbeing. This means looking at ways to prevent or slow cognitive decline, like improving engagement in meaningful activities and looking at ways to maximize brain health.
- **Mobility** means supporting physical health and the ability to walk and/or move about. Personal goals often involve mobility – such as the ability to walk up and down stairs, play with grandchildren, and engage in social activities.

Each of the 4Ms involves a team approach that includes the pharmacist, prescriber (such as a physician or physician assistant), and other practitioners such as physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language therapists, and social workers.

#### Pharmacists and Age-Friendly Care

"Pharmacists are instrumental in age-friendly care. Medication, one of the pillars, can dramatically impact those looking to age in place; and medications have a strong relationship to what matters, mentation, and mobility," said Courtney Myers, PharmD, BCGP, FASCP, an independent consultant pharmacist.

Additionally, the concept of medication optimization – sometimes called 'deprescribing' – is key to addressing what patients want. Deprescribing means limiting medications to only the drugs and doses that are necessary to improve outcomes and meet goals. Myers observed, "What I have heard in interviewing some of my patients is they don't want to take more medications; they want to maintain the level of independence that they have, depending on the setting that they're in, or they want to continue doing the fun activities that they genuinely enjoy. They often say they're tired of taking so many medications," she said.

As patients or caregivers, it is important to be honest with prescribers and pharmacists to enable them to practice age-friendly care:

- ✓ Let them know what medications – including over-the-counter products and vitamins/supplements – you or your loved one is taking.
- ✓ If you or your loved one isn't taking a prescribed medication as directed, talk to your prescriber or pharmacist. Don't be embarrassed to admit if you can't afford the medication or if you don't understand the dosing instructions.
- ✓ Be honest about side effects or complications that are bothersome.
- ✓ Let them know if your goals or your loved one's goals change.



### Age-Friendly Care: It Matters to You, Continued

#### Age-Friendly Care in Action

Last year, the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP) introduced the Age-Friendly Badge to recognize pharmacists who have completed training on the 4Ms Framework. To earn the badge, pharmacists must complete education that covers the principles of age-friendly care as well as putting the 4Ms Framework into practice. PharMerica's consultant pharmacists earn this important certification.

#### Want to Know More?

Here are a few resources:

- Age-Friendly Health Systems: <https://www.johnahartford.org/grants-strategy/current-strategies/age-friendly/age-friendly-care>
- ASCP Introduces Age-Friendly Pharmacy Recognition: <https://www.ascp.com/news/news.asp?id=713177&hhSearchTerms=%22age-friendly%22>
- Age-Friendly Health Systems (IHI): <https://www.ihl.org/partner/initiatives/age-friendly-health-systems>