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TRANSFORMING DEMENTIA CARE

Pilot Study Snapshot

Implementation of the Care Ecosystem training model for individuals with dementia in a high risk, integrated care management program

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Health Care Systems
- Mass General Brigham
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"Shedding light on the adaptability and effectiveness of a nurse care manager to improve quality of life for care partners and patients, reduce behavioral symptoms of dementia, and avoid unnecessary emergency room visits and hospitalizations."

RATIONALE: There is growing need for to provide high quality care for persons living with dementia (PLWD) and provide support for care partners in the primary care setting. The Care Ecosystem model is a telephone-based dementia care program that provides standardized, proactive, personalized, and scalable support and education for care partners. The Care Ecosystem model has demonstrated an improvement in patient quality of life, reduced unnecessary healthcare expenditures, and a decrease in care partner burden and depression.

OBJECTIVE: To assess the feasibility of implementing and measuring outcomes of an adapted Care Ecosystem training model for primary care nurse managers serving a diverse panel of PLWD and their caregivers in a large healthcare system.

SETTING: Primary care practices participating in the Mass General Brigham healthcare system's Integrated Care Management Program in Boston, MA.

POPULATION: People with dementia and their care partners.

INTERVENTION: The intervention involves an adaptation of the Care Ecosystem model which trains primary care nurse case managers to deliver telephone-based collaborative dementia care. Nurse care managers will be randomly assigned to early versus delayed Care Ecosystem training (15 per group).

OUTCOMES: Leveraging the Mass General Brigham electronic medical record, the pilot study will establish the feasibility of collecting the primary clinical outcome defined as emergency department visits among the PLWD cared for by the primary care practices. Secondary outcomes will assess the feasibility of implementation, number of contacts between nurse care managers and care partners, and documented advance care planning.

IMPACT: This pilot study will inform and strengthen the design of a large-scale implementation of an embedded pragmatic trial using a multi-site infrastructure offered through multiple service organizations within a large healthcare system. A scalable Care Ecosystem model of telephone-based collaborative dementia care delivered by primary care nurse managers has the potential to reduce unnecessary health care use while improving quality of care for patients with dementia.