What Matters Most: The Defining Principle for Age-Friendly Health Systems, Patient Priorities Care & Whole Health

VA has joined the Age-Friendly Health Systems (AFHS) movement to provide every older Veteran safe, high-quality care aligned with what matters (i.e., 'values'). Becoming an Age-Friendly Health System means that VA care settings, hospitals and health care systems reliably use a set of evidence-based practices known as the "4Ms"– **What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility** – to improve care for older Veterans across all care settings. When applied together, the 4Ms represent a broad cultural shift consistent with the mission of Whole Health to focus health care on what matters most to the Veteran.

AFHS and Patient Priorities Care (PPC) are Whole Health Clinical Care approaches designed specifically for older adults and those with multiple chronic conditions. The PPC approach **empowers and equips** older Veterans and those with multiple chronic conditions to communicate what matters to their health care and is **a preferred framework to address what matters** in VA and a structured method for guiding health care delivery within the 4Ms.

Identifying what matters most for older Veterans can be accomplished by any member of the care team. When Veterans are empowered to share what matters to them, (i.e., their **mission, aspiration, and purpose (MAP)**), shared health care goals can be developed in a partnership between clinicians and Veterans. This may result in referrals to locally available **Well-Being Programs**, virtual Whole Health resources, rehabilitative or social support services or other Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS). Doing so **equips** Veterans with self-care capacity or additional support to avoid hospital admissions, promote independence and achieve their highest possible level of wellness. AFHS and the PPC approach are not just for geriatrics and extended care programs – these are Whole Health Clinical Care approaches appropriate in all VA settings including inpatient, outpatient, rehabilitative or long-term/post-acute care settings.

For more information, visit https://marketplace.va.gov/communities/age-friendly. Contact agefriendly@va.gov.

For Patient Priorities Care VA Tools visit the Patient Priorities Care VA Implementation Toolkit. Contact patientprioritiescare2@va.gov.

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