

# Louisiana Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Project (LA-GWEP)

Louisiana, Mississippi



## SUSTAINABILITY GWEP-CC CASE STUDY

### Ochsner Health: The Primary Care Hub for the Louisiana Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Project A Care Study in Dementia-Friendly Care and Sustainability

#### About the GWEP-CC

The Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program Coordinating Center's (GWEP-CC) Sustainability Case Study Series presents business cases from the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Programs (GWEPs) that focus on sustainability, communication, and messaging about their GWEP grants. Case study authors are from six of the forty-eight GWEPs who were funded by Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in 2019. These case studies provide valuable insight on sustaining a program when funding ends.

For more information, please contact the GWEP-CC at [GWEPCC@americangeriatrics.org](mailto:GWEPCC@americangeriatrics.org).

#### Who We Are and Who We Serve: About LA-GWEP

For over 4 years, Ochsner Health has served as the primary care hub for the Louisiana Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Project (LA-GWEP). During this time, Ochsner Health has developed and tested initiatives to integrate the 4Ms model (What Matters Most, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility) into its system of care. Ochsner Health delivers healthcare to the people of Louisiana, Mississippi, and the Gulf South, with a team of more than 26,000 employees and 4,500 providers. The larger LA-GWEP team consists of 15 core individuals who are part of a university, a hospital system, and a community agency. In addition to Ochsner Health, Louisiana State University (LSU), the grantee, partners with Chamberlain School of Nursing and Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area. The latter organization is a local non-profit agency serving the community (as well as caregivers and physicians) through education and training programs on Alzheimer disease and related dementias (ADRD), along with support services for the memory-impaired. Ochsner

Health has a MedVantage primary care clinic, specialists in palliative care and neuropsychology, Epic electronic health record (EHR) specialists, project management, enhanced Annual Wellness Visit (eAWV) leadership, and clinical pharmacy that partner with LA-GWEP to address the objectives of the grant. The LSU School of Social Work is the lead academic organization for LA-GWEP. Specifically, LA-GWEP's program direction and evaluation services are managed through the LSU Healthy Aging Research Center, a partner of the LSU School of Social Work; both are housed within the College of Human Sciences and Education.

There are 74,000 individuals  $\geq 60$  years old in the New Orleans area and approximately 1.6 million people in the state of Louisiana who are  $\geq 50$  years old. In 2022 alone, Ochsner Health served 220,838 unique patients who were  $\geq 65$  years old in the Gulf South. Ochsner Health became a Level 1 Age-Friendly Health System in 2018 and should reach Level 2 status by spring of 2024.

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## What We Are Doing

The mission of LA-GWEP is to positively impact healthcare delivery to older adults and patients living with ADRD by increasing the number of trained healthcare professionals and continually improving the quality of ADRD-friendly practices. To increase knowledge of ADRD care for professionals, we host discussion panels with leaders and stakeholders about opportunities to create ADRD-friendly practices. We support practicing physicians in learning these skills while creating fellowships and training opportunities for nurses, medical residents, postdoctoral medical students, and social workers. Training covers multidisciplinary telemental health care and the necessary skills needed to work with this population and includes ECHO telementoring series, Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC) modules focused on ADRD, quality improvement exposure to the age-friendly health system processes, telemental health competency, Positive Approach to Care workshops, and ADRD engagement kits for clinicians.

Ochsner Health supports caregivers by hosting a weekly caregiver training series and virtual support groups and by holding in-person Positive Approach to Care workshops. Patients with ADRD are supported with multidisciplinary

telehealth appointments and are provided with interactive ADRD engagement kits.

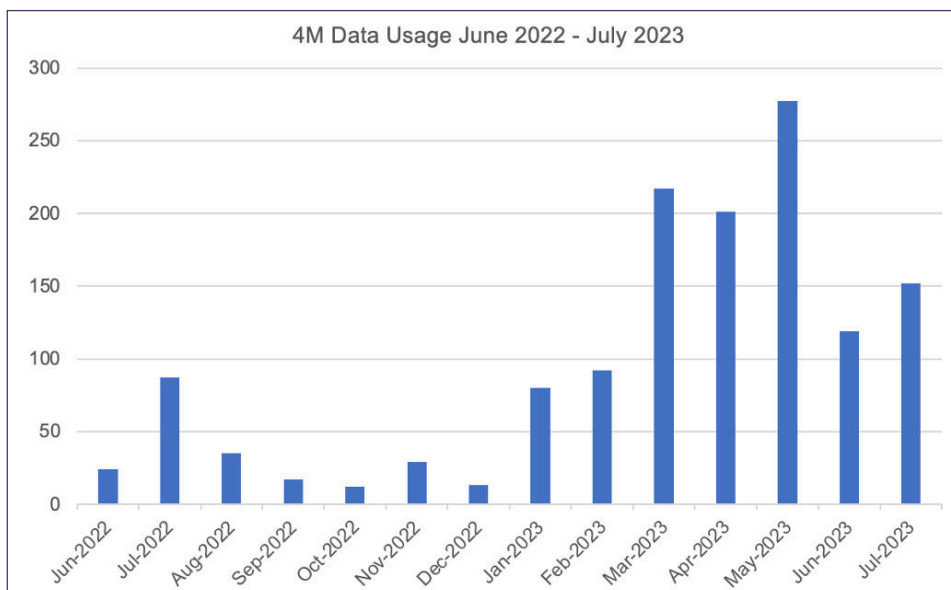
To achieve Level 2 Age-Friendly Health System status, Ochsner Health decided to efficiently integrate the 4Ms model into patient care on both an individual and population level within the Ochsner Health system. The goal was to extract the 4M information from the Epic EHR and consolidate it into one location for use by any Ochsner Health team member. We determined that a smartphrase would allow us to immediately capture the 4Ms information recorded in the chart that could be reviewed and addressed during each patient encounter.

Ochsner Health performed and tested an extensive quality improvement process for retrieving and displaying the 4M data in a smartphrase. Through internal collaboration among Ochsner Health members (primary care, specialists in palliative care and neuropsychology, the Epic EHR data team, project managers, eAWV leaders, clinical pharmacists, and quality improvement—dedicated fellows in medicine, nursing, and social work), we created the smartphrase “.4MDATA”. The smartphrase case study was presented at the University of Queensland (Australia) Medical Student Research Conference in September 2023.

## What We Found: Outcomes

### 4M Data

The 4M data are now in a discrete dot phrase that can be used by any provider at Ochsner Health. The 4MDATA smartphrase was created in June 2022 (Figure 1). Utilization of this 4M dot phrase and user feedback are the crux of our Level 2 Age-Friendly Health System application. With the assistance of the Epic reporting analyst team, we collaborated to accurately display utilization patterns. This data has been updated since our case study submitted in July 2023 based on improvements in Epic capture 4MDATA smartphrase usage with this 4MDATA Smartphrase Epic Report (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Use of the .4MDATA smartphrase for 1 year (Epic report)

## ECHO

Ochsner Health topic experts have facilitated 18 ECHO sessions since January 19, 2022, with the number of health professionals in attendance ranging from 25 to 77. The number of ECHO attendees is steadily increasing over time. The proportion of professionals from the medical discipline ranged from 13.0% to 40.0%, decreasing slightly over time. The proportion of nursing professionals ranged from 10.2% to 57.6%, steadily increasing over time. The proportion of social workers in attendance ranged from 4.0% to 12.0%. See Table 1, below.

**Table 1.** ECHO Sessions Sponsored by Ochsner Health and Attendance by Discipline

Date	Topic	Number in Attendance	% Medical	% Nursing	% Social Workers
01/19/22	Reducing High-Risk Medications	39	33.5	10.2	10.2
03/16/23	Memory Assessment in Primary Care	77	32.5	12.0	12.0
05/18/22	Creating an Age-Friendly Practice through the 4M Model	25	36.0	20.0	08.0
06/22/22	Creating an Age-Friendly Practice through the 4M Model	25	40.0	20.0	04.0
07/20/22	Medical Complexity in the Older Adult	28	32.2	19.2	07.1
08/17/22	Choosing Wisely to Improve Care for Geriatric Patients	45	26.1	23.8	13.0
09/21/22	Medical Complexity in the Older Adult	37	16.2	20.6	18.92
10/19/22	Screening and Fall Prevention with Older Adults	44	27.3	36.2	
11/16/22	Screening and Fall Prevention with Older Adults	52	21.1	47.9	09.5
12/21/22	Screening and Fall Prevention with Older Adults	48	20.8	50.0	04.2
01/18/23	Transitions of Care	64	23.5	44.5	07.9
02/15/23	Focus on Heart Failure	62	22.6	49.9	03.2
03/15/23	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder in Older Adults	63	23.9	44.5	07.9
04/19/23	Diabetes Management in Older Adults	67	25.4	52.2	06.0
05/17/23	Recognizing and Reporting Elder Abuse	59	23.7	54.3	08.5
06/21/23	Neurological Health	46	13.0	34.7	08.6
07/05/23	Myalgias	59	16.9	57.6	05.0
08/02/23	Scleroderma	48	14.5	56.2	10.4

Note: Proportions of disciplines represented do not total 100% because professionals from other disciplines were in attendance.

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## Other LA-GWEP Training

La-GWEP also provides skill training and informational “dementia panels” for primary care health professionals in our partner agencies; community health providers; and for medical, nursing, and social work faculty and students. Attendance at these in-person and virtual training events has included physicians, nurses, social workers, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, chaplains, pharmacists, and others in the healthcare field. Over the past 4 years, LA-GWEP has trained more than 300 individuals in dementia-friendly care.

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## How We Remain Sustainable

The 4M dot phrase is consistently used for the Med-Vantage clinic visits and the geriatric-palliative medicine evaluations within the palliative medicine clinic. Ochsner Health constantly reevaluates the content and the data display, and we plan to build flowsheets for consistent data collection, even for patients without eAWVs. Ochsner Health will also continue to educate other clinics and inpatient teams regarding the availability of the 4M dot phrase as a way to improve care for older adults.

The ECHO program will continue beyond the grant funding period because it has been embedded into the Ochsner Health routine monthly agenda. ECHO will continue to support primary care practices to increase trained professionals and the quality of age-friendly care and ADRD services in Louisiana.

Ochsner Health has also embedded the Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC) seven-module clinical dementia training into their medical school curriculum. All medical students must complete the CAPC requirement before graduating. This practice will continue. Medical students can also continue to take advantage of additional training in geriatrics through postdoctoral fellowships that were created by Ochsner Health to continue learning during their gap semester before beginning residency. Former Ochsner Health geriatric fellows report back that they practice differently in their residency because of their fellowship experience. The ADRD CAPC modules are also helping medical students during all rotations to understand the complexities of caring for those with frailty, which also prepares them for residency interviews.

LA-GWEP's Co-Investigator for Medicine recently earned recognition as an AHA Next Generation Leaders Fellow and received an Age-Friendly Health Systems scholarship for participation, which was funded by the John A. Hartford Foundation. Through this collaboration, the Ochsner Health surgery teams are linking with projects at other GWEP sites to expand other aspects of care delivery in an age-friendly manner. The Ochsner Health in-patient surgery teams are meeting with the GWEP group at University of Rochester to share lessons

in their journey on improving preoperative assessments to reduce harm to frail patients and on making the in-patient experience more ADRD-friendly. This fellowship will continue beyond the grant period as well.

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## Lessons Learned

Of the 220,838 patients at Ochsner Health who are >65 years old, the 4M dot phrase has the potential for all data fields to be completed for up to 86,792 people, which is 39% of this patient population with selected Medicare advantage insurance plans. Our hope is that as Ochsner Health advances to a Level 2 Age-Friendly Health System, we will build flowsheets for consistent data collection even for patients without an eAWV that can be used as an opportunity for data collection. We suggest that before starting the Age-Friendly journey, teams should work in an interdisciplinary manner with their EHR team to pull the 4M data into a centralized location.

A challenge that our team encountered was designing a 4M note that captured meaningful descriptive data answering ‘What Matters Most’ for the patient, while also tracking Advance Care Planning quality metrics for which physicians are evaluated. With the assistance of our team’s Epic analyst, a physician can now type “\*\*\*\*” and then type what matters most to the patient that day.

Ensuring that all partner agencies work together to plan training and evaluation for physicians, nurses, social workers, community health providers, faculty, and students is essential. Each group has similar, but unique needs. Working as a team, the challenges can be addressed and corrected to ensure that the greatest number of individuals are trained in dementia-friendly care.

The recent inception of LSU’s Healthy Aging Research Center will enable professionals across health, social services, and academic disciplines to further develop and strengthen interprofessional collaborative partnerships. LA-GWEP, with its primary emphasis on bolstering the geriatric workforce, falls squarely under the purview of healthy aging. Having these efforts consolidated into one aging-focused center will serve as a hub for current and future funding opportunities at all levels.

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