

Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders

# NICHE



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### SUPPORTING HOSPITALIZED FRAIL SENIORS FROM ED TO HOME

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**PROBLEM:** Frontline staff members were challenged to provide the best care for older adult patients.

**SOLUTION:** Specialized interventions driven by advanced practice nurses (APN) were implemented to improve the care of older adult patients as they transition from the community to the hospital and back to their homes.

**Problem Identified** Mount Sinai Hospital discovered that front-line staff members lacked the proper education and knowledge to identify and manage geriatric issues. The specialized needs of older adult patients were a special challenge to meet in the Emergency Department (ED) model of care, which focused on addressing a single, acute medical issue.



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**Solution Formulated** The hospital engaged two advanced practice nursing roles to optimize outcomes for their older adult population: the Geriatric Emergency Management (GEM) Nurse and the Inpatient Geriatrics APN.

The Geriatric Emergency Management (GEM) Nurses provide targeted geriatric assessment and intervention for older adult patients (ages 65+) in the ED. At-risk patients are identified through the Triage Risk Factor Screening Tool (TRST) and the Identification of Seniors at Risk (ISAR) tool.

**Goals of the GEM Nurse program are to:**

- Maximize patient well-being
- Reduce functional decline
- Ensure ongoing community supports
- Reduce repeat ED visits
- Avoid hospitalization

**Interventions include:**

- Support for staff to implement geriatric care strategies in the ED
- Linkage to community support services
- Referral for specialized geriatric services
- Liaison with family physician

Upon admission of the patient, the Inpatient Geriatrics APN reviews the patient's needs and coordinates the interdisciplinary approach to meeting these needs.

**Goals of the Inpatient Geriatric APN are to:**

- Reduce functional decline and iatrogenic illness
- Improve patient, family and staff experience
- Minimize hazards of hospitalization
- Promote patient, family, and staff knowledge and promote safe transitions

**Interventions include:**

- Follow-up on issues identified by GEM nurse
- Develop interdisciplinary treatment and management plans
- Education and support for staff to implement geriatric care strategies

Overarching goals included increasing staff knowledge and skill in care of the older adult to promote durable discharges and returning patients to their pre-admission condition.

**NICHE Role** The NICHE Geriatric Resource Nurse (GRN) core curriculum is designed for use by those at NICHE sites who train nurses in best practices for hospitalized older adults. GRNs are the foundation of system-wide improvement to achieve positive outcomes for hospitalized older adults. The NICHE program, available to hospitals throughout North America, offers evidence-based, interdisciplinary approaches to promote improved care for the hospitalized older adult.

## Evaluation/Results

From April 2008 to December 2011:

- A total of 2134 patients were assessed by the GEM Nurses, with 69.7% of these patients being discharged at the end of their ED visit
- The GEM nurses initiated linkages to specialized geriatric services for 34.7% of patients, and initiated community support services referrals for 34.2% of patients
- Through linkage of 334 high-risk admitted patients to the Inpatient Geriatrics APN, these patients' needs were identified early during their inpatient stay, resulting in the timely development of care plans and initiation of needed referrals

**For more information**

1. Canadian Nursing Association. (2008). Advanced practice Nursing: A national framework. Canadian Nursing Association: Author.
2. Sieben, H. (2005). The domain management model. *Academic Emergency Medicine*, 12: 162-8.

**NICHE-related resources**

1. The Geriatric Resource Nurse (GRN) Core Curriculum. (Available at NICHE Knowledge Center, accessed via [www.nicheprogram.org](http://www.nicheprogram.org).)
2. Webinar: Creating a Continuum of Care: Seniors Emergency Center. (Available at [http://nicheprogram.org/archived\\_webinars](http://nicheprogram.org/archived_webinars))

## About NICHE

NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders) is designed to help hospitals improve the care of older adults. A program of the Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing at New York University College of Nursing, the vision of NICHE is for all patients 65-and-over to be given sensitive and exemplary care. The mission of NICHE is to provide principles and tools to stimulate a change in the culture of health care facilities to achieve patient-centered care for older adults. For more information visit [www.nicheprogram.org](http://www.nicheprogram.org).

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