

Mobile Medical Teams for Homebound Older Adults across the Care Continuum

Homebound older adults compose a vulnerable, high-cost, and hidden population with barriers to accessing medical care. In 2016, 61% of UW Health primary care team members reported “infrequent visits due to mobility issues” as a challenge in caring for patients with serious illness. Medicare’s Independence at Home Demonstration Project has confirmed that interdisciplinary home-based primary care (HBPC) can improve quality and reduce costs for individual in the top 6.4% of Medicare spending. The goal of this project is to develop a team-based mobile medical service for homebound older adults at University of Wisconsin and UW Health. This service will increase access to both primary and palliative care, build social networks of home- and community-based services, improve patient and caregiver quality of life, and decrease total costs of care. We envision an interdisciplinary and multi-specialty practice without walls that is integrated with social services from the public health aging network and organized around geographic communities in a society that values the contribution of frail and disabled older adults to community life.

To build a sustainable and scalable mobile medical service at UW Health, we have assembled a cross-sector coalition of both leaders and front-line clinicians from UW Health, UW Home Health, UW School of Medicine and Public Health, the Dane County Area Agency on Aging, and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. This coalition will use lessons learned from an ongoing geriatric house call feasibility pilot to accomplish two objectives: 1) customize best practices from HBPC models to our local needs, and 2) create a business plan for financial sustainability that leverages the value-based payment opportunities in our local market. The coalition will focus on setting collaborative goals and customizing adaptable components of home-based medical care models such that the ultimate design aligns with existing programs and the UW Health Population Health Management strategic plan. The small-scale house call feasibility pilot will inform implementation requirements by serving as a real-time platform to test modifications and to create a high-value service that can be taken to scale.