



# Caregiver Promising Practice Spotlight

## Integrated Memory Care

**About This Series:** The National Caregiver Support Collaborative's (NCSC) Caregiver Promising Practice Spotlights highlight a series of innovative, evidence-informed, and evidence-based practices to effectively support older adult family, kin, and tribal caregivers. The Spotlights provide an overview of the promising practice and suggested actionable steps for organizations to implement the practice.



**Featured Promising Practice:** Integrate caregiver support services and primary and memory care for care recipients living with dementia into a singular care setting to enhance caregivers' dementia-specific knowledge and skills and reduce caregiver burden

### Promising Practice Overview

Established in 2015, Emory's Integrated Memory Care (IMC) is a nurse-led medical home that employs a "one-stop shop" model to integrate primary care and dementia-focused care for care recipients living with dementia and caregiver support services into a singular care setting. Based in Atlanta, Georgia, the IMC is a part of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) [Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience \(GUIDE\) Model](#), which explores a new payment and service delivery approach for coordinated dementia care. The IMC's multidisciplinary health team includes specialty nurse practitioners, physicians, dementia care assistants, registered nurses, a social worker, and a patient care coordinator. The IMC supports more than 700 patients living with dementia with memory, primary, and preventive care and management of co-existing conditions such as hypertension and diabetes.

The IMC Clinic's holistic approach also benefits caregivers, referred to by the IMC as "care partners," by equipping them with support services, including case management; advance care planning; an after-hours clinic line; support groups; and education, including [Savvy Caregiver](#), an evidence-based training that helps caregivers gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to care for individuals living with dementia. The IMC Clinic's integrated approach reduces avoidable hospitalization and emergency department visits for dementia patients, improving health outcomes and lowering costs.<sup>1</sup>

### Eligibility and Processes

Before establishing care at the IMC Clinic, patients must have a dementia diagnosis, which might require medical record verification. Prospective patients must agree to receive care from an IMC Clinic primary care provider. Physician referrals are not required; caregivers can refer their care recipients. The IMC Clinic primarily serves patients in specific zip codes within the Atlanta metropolitan counties of Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale.

*"We are a team at the Integrated Memory Care Clinic. I am truly a care partner, and that is very important to care partners because we know more about the person than anyone else."*

— Sharon, Wife of IMC Patient

<sup>1</sup> Emory University. (2018). [An Emory clinic is transforming memory care.](#)

## Why It Works

- Alleviates caregiver travel burden and challenges associated with care navigation, such as managing medical appointments at multiple facilities
- Encourages family caregivers to actively participate in their relative's care planning and delivery as designated care partners
- Offers caregivers opportunities to develop practical caregiving skills and strategies for managing care through an evidence-based training program and workshops
- Strengthens caregivers' knowledge of dementia, including types of dementia, diagnostic procedures, and interventions
- Informs caregivers about what to expect during future dementia stages, including common symptoms, enabling caregivers to distinguish between typical dementia-related changes and urgent medical concerns to reduce unnecessary hospitalizations while ensuring they seek appropriate support when needed

*"Our dream for this clinic is to have a process in place that demonstrates value for patients and their families...We want to create a best practice model for integrating dementia and primary care that is effective and sustainable."*

**— Carolyn Clevenger, Clinical Director**

## Implementation Tips

Organizations within aging, tribal, and kinship networks can use the following strategies, as applicable to their priorities and resources, to establish or strengthen caregiver support services.

- Promote program services at community events and via radio, social media, newspaper, magazine, and telephone advertisements (e.g., "on-hold" messages heard by patients or caregivers calling clinics)
- Foster dementia-friendly and caregiver-friendly clinic environments, processes, and workflows (e.g., place at least two chairs at appointment check-in desk, offer opportunities for caregivers to have one-on-one discussions with clinic staff to discuss sensitive topics)
- Encourage providers and professionals who serve persons living with dementia at nearby research centers or through professional organizations to refer eligible patient and caregiver dyads to the clinic
- Define program eligibility criteria for patients, including diagnostic requirements and geographic area served
- Assemble a multidisciplinary health team, including specialty nurse practitioners, physicians, registered nurses, social workers, and patient care coordinators

## Learn More

### **Recommended Resources:**

- [Emory Integrated Memory Care](#)

### **Contact:**

For more information on supporting older adult family, kin, and tribal caregivers, please contact the NCSC by e-mail ([caregivercollaborative@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:caregivercollaborative@acl.hhs.gov)).

Access other Promising Practice Spotlights in this series on the [NCSC website](#).