A MEDICAL STUDENT FORAY INTO THE DEPTHS OF PUBLIC HEALTH: AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION TOWARD A COMMUNITY DASHBOARD CHARACTERIZING THE EXPERIENCES OF FRAILTY IN ORDER TO GUIDE IMPROVEMENT

An Harmanli, BA1, Danielle Fahoome, BA1, Burton Masem, BA1, Ellen Massey, BA1, Beverly Lunsford, PhD, RN, FAAN2, Joanne Lynn, MD, MA, MS3, Elizabeth Cobbs, MD1

1George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences, 2Center for Aging, Health and Humanities, 3Altarum Institute

Background

- As older adults live longer in the U.S., some experience frailty towards the end of life. This demographic shift challenges the well-being of the nation’s economy, family structures, and current arrangements for services and financing.
- While some proposals aim to enhance the efficiency of care for frail elders, only a few quality measures are relevant to the last years of life.
- While work is underway to improve metrics for individual experience in advanced age, no measure development efforts aim to monitor the experience of elderly people in a geographic area.

Purpose

- To make an easily accessible, reliable and relevant community dashboard that will paint a picture of the quality of elder care and frailty burden regionally, aiming to guide improvement initiatives.
- The dashboard will be populated with data gathered from sources including follow-back interviews with surviving caregivers, Medicare claims, and nursing and home health data.

Conclusions

- By using existing data from utilization and other required data sets, a geographic community could construct a useful dashboard to prioritize and monitor improvements in elder care.
- The biases, which would be fairly stable across time for any one community, could be estimated. The costs could be mitigated with inexpensive access and off-the-shelf analytic packages.
- By marrying the breadth of information from large data sources with the depth of caregiver interviews, a platform could be created that motivates communities to undergo a very necessary elder care reform.