HELP Enrollment process

- To enroll a patient, our HELP team must first assess the patient, administer a cognitive screening test (MiniCog), and determine whether the patient meets enrollment criteria. HELP is available on the following hospital units: AIMA, AIMB, CVMU, OTSS, SSTU, NAC, and MICU. HELP provides unenrolled “friendly visits” to patients on IMR evenings or on weekends as time permits.

- Screening for enrollment is performed daily M-F by HELP staff. Every morning we review hospital census for

  - Patients ≥ 70 years
  - Admitted < 48 hours, but have an expected length of stay > 2 days
  - Has 1 or more risk factors for developing delirium
  - Appropriate to receive HELP volunteer visits and participate in targeted interventions

Exclusion criteria

- Already delirious or delirious at time of admission
- On contact, airborne, or droplet precautions
- Combative or other behaviors that may place volunteers at risk
- Cannot meaningfully communicate with volunteers
- Expected length of stay is less than 2 days
- Patient "opts out" of HELP visits

After a patient has been evaluated and enrolled in HELP:

- The Elder Life Specialist (ELS) builds plan of volunteer interventions, and
- The Elder Life Nurse Specialist (ELNS) writes a Progress Note in Epic, enters a Nurse-to-Nurse communication order, and posts a “Sticky Note” and/or sends a text page to the hospitalist treatment team within 24 hours of enrollment
- HELP volunteers carry out interventions during three shifts a day

Limitations of HELP

Although HELP has proven to be an effective program and has reduced the incidence of delirium in our hospital, we have some limitations. We do our best to enroll as many non-delirious patients age 70+ as possible given our limited resources. However:

- We are not able to enroll patients on the weekends, or other times when the ELS or ELNS are out of the office.

- We cannot enroll patients who are on Contact/Droplet/Airborne Precautions as we do not have sufficient HELP volunteers with PPE training. HELP is working with Infection Control to change this.