NDCC
NATIONAL DEMENTIA CARE COLLABORATIVE

Maximizing Independence (MIND) at Home Impact Story

Maximizing Independence (MIND) at Home, developed through years of research at Johns Hopkins University, is an home-based model designed to support people living with dementia and their caregivers through comprehensive, person-centered care. Like other evidence-based models in the National Dementia Care Collaborative (NDCC), MIND at Home recognizes that effective comprehensive dementia care requires more than diagnosis or treatment. This approach has a strong emphasis on home as the nexus of care and employs multidimensional strategies to address medical, social, and environmental drivers of health to optimize outcomes.
As MIND at Home looked toward broader dissemination, the John Hopkins team acknowledged that scaling the model would require the right business partner aligned with the mission of the program. Craniometrix proudly stepped in as that partner.

"We looked for a partner who shared similar mission-oriented beliefs in terms of wanting to serve people and their families with a family-centered evidence-based approach to dementia care," said Quincy Samus, PhD, of Johns Hopkins.

Through their partnership over the last two years, MIND at Home and Craniometrix have worked together to integrate the MIND at Home's assessments, care planning tools, trainings, and clinical knowledge into it's digital platform that can be delivered across care settings. Craniometrix maintains the operational infrastructure of the care navigation teams and technology for the program, while MIND at Home provides initial and ongoing regular Care Navigator training and clinical guidance based on the MIND at Home evidence-based care planning protocols.

Introducing Evidence-Based Dementia Care into Daily Workflows

A shared goal of the partnership between Craniometrix and MIND at Home has been to refine the academic program's approach into a model that can be integrated into real-world care delivery. Craniometrix has embedded MIND at Home's 50 + item comprehensive assessments and care planning tools into workflows to support care navigators as they work with caregivers of people living with dementia along with a comprehensive library of hundreds of vetted educational resource materials.

The care planning framework involves identifying the needs of the care dyad, selecting appropriate and personalized interventions based on the preferences and unique circumstances, and recognizing barriers that may affect their progress. MIND at Home provides initial GUIDE-compliant training for Craniometrix' GUIDE care navigators and continues to support the team through biweekly interdisciplinary virtual meetings attended by clinical experts, such as geriatricians, geriatric psychiatrists, and nurse practitioners, assuring that the intervention fidelity is maintained, including how to optimize the in-home assessment in developing the individualized care plan. More recently, through a pilot grant funded by the Johns Hopkins Artificial Intelligence Technology Center (NIA P30AG073104), the teams have been working together on exploring how artificial intelligence can assist care navigators in efficiently creating highly personalized care plans by utilizing information from the comprehensive MIND at Home assessments and intervention protocols.

For this partnership, technology is not meant to replace the human connection that is fundamental to providing comprehensive dementia care. Tools such as artificial intelligence will be used to reduce administrative burden, allowing care navigators to spend more meaningful time supporting and engaging with caregivers.

"The contact, the conversation has to be human," said Jon Amos of Craniometrix. "We can't replace connection with a self-service app."

Instead of building a virtual neurology practice, Craniometrix focuses on partnering with existing neurology practices and geriatric specialists, to offer an enhancement to the care delivered while enabling local clinicians to continue providing comprehensive dementia in the form of assessments, medication reviews, and more. In between visits, Craniometrix supports families by creating a care plan, providing emotional support and answering caregivers' questions, addressing social needs and other challenges that arise throughout the dementia journey.

"It doesn't make sense for us to compete with the great neurologists, primary care providers, geriatric specialists who are out there and already looking after these patients," said Jon Amos of Craniometrix.

Creating a Caring Space for Caregivers

The outcome of this partnership offers not only a care plan, but a relationship. It gives caregivers a place to ask questions, express tough emotions, discuss solutions to problems, and feel less alone. For families and caregivers of people living with dementia, their introduction to MIND at Home begins with a comprehensive needs assessment designed to help families understand both their potential challenges and the support available to them through the partnership. Caregivers begin to recognize their own stressors and how their wellbeing impacts their loved one's care plan. For caregivers who are consumed by appointments, daily responsibilities, and concern for their loved one, simply being asked "how are you doing?" can open the door to resources caregivers may not have realized they were allowed to need.

"It can take us a few months to get to the point where the caregiver realizes that they can talk about themselves too," Jon said.

In one recent example, a caregiver who was anxious and reaching "the end of their tether" received support from a care navigator who asked whether they had considered support for themselves. The care navigator helped the caregiver find low-cost, accessible mental health therapy. By the next month, Jon said, it was "like talking to a completely different caregiver."

The MIND at Home program has shown that comprehensive dementia care can impact outcomes for both caregivers and people living with dementia. Prior research showed a 37% decreased risk of leaving the home or death at 18 months, maintaining quality of life, and reductions in caregiving burden in monthly caregiving hours compared to a similar group. This is likely attributed to the

benefits of care teams identifying the needs of families and connecting them to appropriate services before problems arise, like adult day programs or other forms of respite.

The program has also demonstrated greater cost effectiveness compared to usual care through reductions in acute care and nursing home care and a shift in the pattern of health care utilization away from acute care use towards greater home and community-based care. Some outcomes are harder to identify in formal metrics, but matter just the same. Caregivers have reported feeling less alone and more prepared through learning strategies that help them manage daily challenges.

"The small things are the things that really matter to people," Quincy said. "You start accumulating enough of those wins, people build confidence and resilience, people learn how to cope."

Together, MIND at Home and Craniometrix academic have a strategic academic-corporate partnership that demonstrates a successful scaling approach for evidence-based dementia care where workforce investments and technology strengthen, rather than replaces, the human relationships at the center of care.

Learn More
Since Craniometrix partners directly with practices, it does not accept direct patient referrals. Interested in learning more about MIND at Home? Visit their website.

Looking for dementia care services? Use the CMS GUIDE provider search tool or explore the Maryland Dementia Care Coordination checklist, which is available as a self-service resource regardless of state of residence.