

**Resolution  
On  
Mental Health & Substance Abuse  
Services & Interventions**

**National Coalition on Mental Health & Aging  
2005**

# **Three Key Events Since 1995 White House Conference on Aging**

- Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health (1999)
- Olmstead Decision (U.S. Supreme Court, 1999)
- President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (2003)

# Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health (1999)

## SUMMARY

*“ Disability due to mental illness in individuals over 65 years old will become a major public health problem in the near future because of demographic changes. In particular, dementia, depression, and schizophrenia, among other conditions, will all present special problems in this age group.”*

# **Olmstead Decision**

## **U.S. Supreme Court**

### **SUMMARY**

The institutionalization of persons with disabilities, including those with mental illnesses, who, given appropriate supports, could live in the community is a form of discrimination that violates the American's with Disabilities Act.

# President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health

## BARRIERS TO CARE

- A fragmented service delivery system;
- Out of date Medicare policies;
- Stigma due to mental illness and advanced age;
- A mismatch between services that are covered and those preferred by older persons; and
- A lack of adequate preventative interventions and programs that aid early identification of geriatric mental illness.

## OTHER FACTORS

- Baby Boomers are aging!
- Majority remain unserved or underserved
- Inadequate workforce
- Substance abuse
- Co-morbidity of MI & SA
- High suicide rate
- Family and caregiver issues
- Possible negative impact of Medicare Part D

# NCMHA RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assure access to an affordable and comprehensive range of quality mental health and substance abuse services that are age appropriate, culturally competent, and consumer driven.
- Amend statutes that address public and private health and long-term care insurance to guarantee parity, eliminate exclusions based on pre-existing conditions, ensure full access to a comprehensive range of quality services, and assure access to medications.
- Coordinate benefits for those dually eligible for Medicare & Medicaid.
- Promote Medicaid Home and Community Based Waivers as alternatives to institutionalization.

# **NCMHA RECOMMENDATIONS**

**(continued)**

- Promote research and the implementation of emerging and evidence-based practices.
- Support integration of older adult MH & SA services into primary health care, long-term care, and community-based services.
- Promote screening for co-occurring disorders and development of integrated treatment strategies.
- Increase collaboration to promote more effective use of resources and reduce fragmentation of services.

## POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Treatment Works!
- Successful treatment of MI & SA results in overall health benefits
- Prevention, early intervention, and treatment can significantly reduce overall healthcare costs