Get the Facts!

On Older Adults and Mental Illness

#1 of 5 – The Elders are Coming!! The Elders are Coming!!

1. **Nationally**, older adults (persons 65 years and older) number almost 35 million or about 12.7% of the population.
2. **In Florida**, older adults (persons 65 years and older) number over 2.7 million or about 18.1% of the population.
3. By 2030, with the **"baby-boom" generation** fully retired, it is estimated that persons over 65 will represent about 20% of the US population and a substantially higher proportion of Florida's population.

We have a growing CRISIS in Florida...

We need to act now to avoid a DISASTER.

Sources for Demographic Information/Estimates:

- U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census estimates.
- Hobbs, FB & Damon, BL (1996) 65+ in the United States. U.S. Census Bureau, Economics and Statistics Administration. Publication #P23-190.
- Jeste, D et al (1999) Consensus statement on the upcoming crisis in geriatric mental health: Research agenda for the next two decades. Archives of General Psychiatry, 56, 848-853.
- Koenig, H et al (1994) Mental healthcare for older adults in the year 2020: A dangerous and avoided topic. The Gerontologist, 34, 674-679.

The **Florida Coalition for Optimal Mental Health and Aging**, a statewide grassroots alliance of individuals and organizations, was established to improve the availability and quality of mental health and substance abuse services for older Floridians and their families through training, education, research and increased public awareness.

Florida Coalition for Optimal Mental Health and Aging

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On Older Adults and Mental Illness

#2 of 5 – Mental Disorders/Substance Abuse on the Rise!

1. Nationally, older adults (persons 65 years and older) number almost 35 million or about 12.7% of the population.
2. In Florida, older adults (persons 65 years and older) number over 2.7 million or about 18.1% of the population.
3. By 2030, with the "baby-boom" generation fully retired, it is estimated that persons over 65 will represent about 20% of the US population and a substantially higher proportion of Florida's population.
4. Overall about **1 in 5 older adults** (20%) experience a mental disorder, with highest rates in institutions like nursing homes.
5. Estimates of alcohol & other drug abuse among elders are **2 - 10% of the population**.
6. Elders with mental health and substance abuse problems are more likely to be **misdiagnosed and untreated**; thus actual prevalence rates are likely to be even higher.

Source for Prevalence Information: Florida Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse (2001) Older Adult Workgroup Report. Tampa, FL: Louis De la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. Available at: http://cmhsa.fmhi.usf.edu.

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FACT: A Florida legislative budget request last session asked for $1.5 million to fund an assertive community treatment program to serve hundreds of severely disabled older adults – it was not funded.

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#3 of 5 – Costs Skyrocket!

1. Nationally, older adults (persons 65 years and older) number almost 35 million or about 12.7% of the population.
2. In Florida, older adults (persons 65 years and older) number over 2.7 million or about 18.1% of the population.
3. By 2030, with the "baby-boom" generation fully retired, it is estimated that persons over 65 will represent about 20% of the US population and a substantially higher proportion of Florida's population.
4. Overall about 1 in 5 older adults (20%) experience a mental disorder, with highest rates in institutions like nursing homes.
5. Estimates of alcohol & other drug abuse among elders are 2 - 10% of the population.
6. Elders with mental health and substance abuse problems are more likely to be misdiagnosed and untreated; thus actual prevalence rates are likely to be even higher.
7. **Mental stress and illness take a significant toll on the health, costs of care, and productive functioning of older Floridians and their families.**
8. **In 1995, the NIAAA/NIDA reported that alcohol abuse cost $166.5 billion annually in related treatment costs and indirectly related hospital/medical costs.**
9. **Florida employers lose billions of dollars annually in productivity caused by the burden of mental and substance abuse problems on older adult caregivers.**

Source for Information: Florida Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse (2001) Older Adult Workgroup Report. Tampa, FL: Louis De la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. Available at: http://cmhsa.fmhi.usf.edu.

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FACT: In the 2000 Florida legislative session, a surcharge for on-premises consumption of beer, liquor and wine was repealed. As a result of the repeal, over $35 million per year that could have been used to treat alcohol and drug abuse was lost.

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#4 of 5 – Treatment Works!

1. Nationally, older adults (persons 65 years and older) number almost 35 million or about 12.7% of the population.
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7. Mental stress and illness take a significant toll on the health, costs of care, and productive functioning of older Floridians and their families.
8. In 1995, the NIAAA/NIDA reported that alcohol abuse cost $166.5 billion annually in related treatment costs, and indirectly related hospital/medical costs.
9. Florida employers lose billions of dollars annually in productivity caused by the burden of mental and substance abuse problems on older adult caregivers.
10. There are many clinical treatments for mental and substance abuse disorders that are effective and cost efficient.
11. Funding for the innovative Special Geriatric Residential Treatment System Programs, created in Florida in the 1980s, has been shifted to other programs. It was the only geriatric program with such dedicated funding.

Source for Information: Florida Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse (2001) Older Adult Workgroup Report. Tampa, FL: Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. Available at: http://cmhsa.fmhi.usf.edu.

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FACT: A study of federal employees insured by Blue Cross and Blue Shield found that health care costs for patients with heart disease, respiratory problems and diabetes who received mental health counseling were reduced by 57% by the end of the second year and 66% by the end of the third year.

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#5 of 5 – Stop the Coming Disaster!

1. Nationally, older adults (persons 65 years and older) number almost 35 million or about 12.7% of the population.
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8. In 1995, the NIAAA/NIDA reported that alcohol abuse cost $166.5 billion annually in related treatment costs, and indirectly related hospital/medical costs.
9. Florida employers lose billions of dollars annually in productivity caused by the burden of mental and substance abuse problems on older adult caregivers.
10. There are many clinical treatments for mental and substance abuse disorders that are effective and cost efficient.
11. Funding for the innovative Special Geriatric Residential Treatment System Programs, created in Florida in the 1980s, has been shifted to other programs. It was the only geriatric program with such dedicated funding.
12. **Florida state government must address this crisis to avoid a disaster for its older citizens. Steps to take now include: a) stop additional cuts to geriatric programs; b) create categorical funding by eliminating several exemptions; c) mandate a collaborative agreement between DCF and DOEA; d) establish a comprehensive older adult policy on mental health and substance abuse (as other age groups currently have in Florida).**

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FACT: In the next decade, over a quarter of Florida's population will be older adults – and older adults vote at a much higher rate proportionally than the general population.

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