

# Older Adults and Behavioral Health 2005



## Facts That Affect All of Us!

The U. S. faces an increasing aging population, with baby boomers projected to **exceed 56 million by 2020**. In Florida today, almost **1 out of 4 is 60 or older**, and the state ranks **first** in the country in the percent of elders.

Across all age groups in the U. S., the **annual cost** of untreated mental illnesses exceeds **\$300 billion** in lost productivity and in healthcare and societal costs. Mental disorders in older people are among the most expensive public health problems.

Depression and anxiety are the most common mental illnesses in older people. **The consequences of depression: 3 times** as much health care use, **twice** the medical costs, and **3 times** as many deaths after heart attack. The suicide rate for older persons is **50%** high than all other age groups.

In Florida, it is estimated that **785,000 (22%) age 65 and over** have an emotional or mental health condition that requires attention. Alcohol is the most common form of substance misuse among elders 55 and older, along with medication misuse, and illicit drug use.

**The cost of nursing home and other institutional care** continues to be a serious problem in the state. Without treatment for mental illness or substance misuse, many of these individuals may be institutionalized. Unfortunately, few older adults receive treatment for these conditions.

**Treatment does work**, and the need for specialized mental health and substance abuse services for elders has been established in the Surgeon General's Report on Older Adults and by the U.S. Administration on Aging.

**The Florida Legislature** must establish a comprehensive **state policy** on mental health and substance abuse for older Floridians, **dedicate public funds** for the mental health and substance abuse needs of older adults, and mandate that **agencies collaborate** to provide mental health and substance abuse services to elders.

 **Florida Coalition for Optimal Mental Health and Aging**

Contact: Julie Kuhn (813) 974-5929

[jkuhn@fmhi.usf.edu](mailto:jkuhn@fmhi.usf.edu)

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