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

- Olmstead Decision (U.S. Supreme Court, 1999)
- President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (2003)
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- Out of date Medicare policies;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