Older adults are the least likely of any age group to receive specialty mental health services.

Older people with an untreated mental illness use more health services like emergency rooms.

Medical treatment outcomes for other conditions are worse when complicated by untreated mental health problems.

Untreated mental illness results in: unnecessary disability and quality of life loss, suicide, poverty and homelessness.

Medicare pays for 80% of most services but only covers 50% of outpatient mental health services.

Poor reimbursement rates for mental health services makes providers less interested in providing care to older persons.

50% of older adults with mental illness are treated by Primary Care Physicians and only 50% by Mental Health Specialists. The remainder do not receive treatment at all.
In 2005, the Iowa Coalition on Mental Health and Aging (ICMHA) initiated a process to expand and improve the delivery of specialty mental health services to older Iowans. The members of the coalition represent primary care, hospital, long-term care and specialty mental health providers; aging, health and mental health program administrators; policy leaders from the Legislature, the Governor’s office and state departments such as Elder Affairs and Human Services; and researchers and analysts. The coalition membership also includes older consumers, their caregivers, and representatives from advocacy organizations.

Anyone who is interested in expanding and improving the care provided to older Iowans with mental illnesses is welcome to join.

**KEY POINTS**

- Many older Iowans do not receive appropriate treatment for mental illness
- Untreated & mistreated mental illness has huge negative economic consequences
- Loss of quality of life for people not receiving treatment is preventable
- Want to learn more? Contact us!

www.ICMHA.org