

CA Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions

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ISSUE BRIEF: Older Adults

Increasing mental/behavioral health access and engagement.

A dramatic increase in CA's older adult population has begun, with a projected 80.8% increase from 2010—2030.* The state and local communities must scale and roll-out evidence-based mental/behavioral health offerings to address the needs of older adults. *See next page for more statistics.

Local Solutions

Evidence-Based Practices:

Examples: [PEARLS](#) & [IDEAS](#) programs

Outreach: Increase outreach and engagement.

Planning should include input from older adults, such as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA):

<https://4csl.org/aging-network-directory/>

Workforce/Training

- Fund MHSA WET programs.
- Geriatric Training— 6-month programs for Mental Health providers. Example: [SDSU](#)
- [Mental Health First Aid Training](#) for professionals and volunteers who work with Older Adults (such as Meals on Wheels, Community Centers, Residential and Hospice Care.)
- Peer Specialists offer experience-based support. Examples: [Pool of Consumer Champions](#); [Alliance on Aging Peer Counseling](#)
- Training in older adult suicide screening and differential diagnosis of SMI and dementia.

Statewide Solutions

Mental Health Data should include age-specific:

- Performance Outcome Data
- Service Penetration Rates for seniors

Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE): Address the “Board & Care” Shortage—[Issue Paper](#)

Workforce issues to address:

- [Workforce Shortage](#)—Fund [MHSA WET 5-Year Plan](#)
- [Training](#) statewide to include MH/BH, Geriatric & Peer Specialist Certification
- [Medi-Care Access](#): 43% of psychiatrists do not take Medi-Care.

More at: calbhbc.com/workforce

See next page for **statistics**.

The Statistics*

- **Mental illness** impacts one in four older adults.
- **Suicide rate** for males 85+ is more than 4 X higher than national rate.
- **Depression:**
Nationally 15-20 percent of older adults have experienced depression.
- **Anxiety Disorders:** Approximately 11 percent of older adults have anxiety disorders.
- **Alcohol & Drugs:** 16% of older adults are estimated to be alcoholic or at risk. 25% of senior emergency room visits in 2012 involved narcotic and nonnarcotic pain relievers.
- **50%** of depression care is provided in the primary care setting.
- **50%** of patients with mental illness only have contact with their primary care physician.
- **66%** of people who commit suicide had contact with a primary care physician in month prior to death.

*Sources: [CA DOF](#), [SAMHSA](#) & [UCLA Center for Health Policy Research](#)

More at: www.calbhbc.com/seniors