

## Recommendations:

### **Recommendation #1 - Develop education and training opportunities to assist health care and social service organizations develop strategies to serve older adults with depression and anxiety.**

- Train consumers, families, friends, aging service providers, health care provider, and behavioral health providers to identify warning signs and provide treatment or referral to treatment to older adults who are at risk for depression, anxiety, or suicide.
- Introduce routine depression, anxiety, and suicide screening developed for older adults in the course of non-clinical activity such as senior day care, senior centers, senior transportation, and visits with family.
- Primary health care providers implement routine, standard screening and follow-up assessments for depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.
- Increase the effectiveness of behavioral health services by implementing evidence-based practices, tracking outcomes systematically, and taking steps to improve treatment compliance. Data shows older adults significantly improve when they are given between session reminder telephone calls, repetition, weekly review of concepts, at-home assignments, and breaking tasks into smaller components.
- Focus needs to be on integrated services across all life areas and providers with efforts on reducing disability and enhancing independent functioning.

### **Recommendation #2 – Provide specialized and practiced training regarding important risk factors for suicide in older adults for primary health care providers, behavioral health providers and social service providers.**

- Train professionals to detect, intervene and manage suicide risk for older adults. Use evidenced based screening tools designed to be used with older adults. The professionals must bring the subject of suicide up when the individual has risk factors.
- Implement evidence-based practices for depression, tracking outcomes systematically, and taking steps to improve treatment compliance.
- Train service providers to identify warning signs and to refer to services if they feel the person is at risk. This training must include practice regarding what to say to the individual and how to response to the individual.
- Develop systematic outreach to assess and support high-risk older adults in improving life conditions.
- Collaborate with organizations with expertise in suicide prevention to develop training to increase awareness of suicide risk in older adults.

### **Recommendation #3 – Develop a continuum of care that includes options appropriate to the level of need for individuals experiencing cognitive changes and challenging behaviors resulting from Neurodegenerative illness.**

- Establish and fund a statewide information and referral system to enable families and caregivers to connect with local case management and support services.
- Create a mobile team of professionals including case manager, behavioral health provider, nurse and social worker to work with the primary health care provider and the family to assist the individual to remain in the community. The team will work as a care team with the caregivers to assist the individual throughout all phases of the illness.

- Make tele-health available to individuals with neurodegenerative illnesses across the state. This option will be useful with training as well as being able to access specialist for individuals unable to leave the home or who live a distance from the health care provider.
- Sustain and expand implementation of evidence-based protocols designed to address challenging behaviors.

**Recommendation #4 – Develop and implement a medication management protocol specifically for use with older adults.**

- Increase the awareness of medication management concerns with key member of the older adult's support team, including consumer, caregivers, health care providers, pharmacists and aging service providers. This includes educating professional to the impact memory issues play in the consumer's ability to follow directions. The professionals may need to spend more time in identifying the cause of the symptoms displayed by the consumer.
- Implement evidence-based protocols to increase coordination among the health care providers, pharmacists and aging service providers to reduce medication management issues.
- Develop specialized training for health care providers working in emergency rooms, which focuses on the unique situations related to older adults.
- Identify and support the use of assisted technology to assist older adults to manage their medications.

**Recommendation #5 - Enhance services for caregivers.** Care provided by family members and friends is the backbone of long-term care services in the United States.

- Develop a team of care navigators to assist caregivers in identifying needed services, accessing services and assisting the caregiver in arranging services. Care navigators are especially important for caregivers caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia.
- Develop funding to provide evidenced based caregiver interventions. This type of intervention improves the quality of life for both the consumer and the caregiver, reduces abuse and neglect and improves the quality of interactions between the consumer and the caregiver.
- Increase the awareness and availability of respite services.
- Offer support for AARP's Care Act.