

- 10 Expand professional and continuing education programs for: a) all providers of services to older people, including primary care physicians, nurses, social workers, and so forth; b) all specialists in the provision of mental health services and treatment for older people; and c) faculty in schools which prepare a variety of professionals for geriatric practice, such as schools of medicine, nursing, allied health professions, social work;
- 11 Expand educational and training programs in mental health and aging for older persons, their families, and friends, and others in the community, such as letter carriers, police and fire personnel, bank tellers, and shop keepers, who are likely to come in contact with older persons at risk;
- 12 Support an expedited mental health and aging research agenda that includes funding for basic, clinical, services research, and ensures that findings are widely disseminated;
- 13 Distribute culturally sensitive information about accessing community-based mental health services;
- 14 Ensure that Federal, State, and local public policies shall recognize older adults as a primary resource for maintenance and achievement of mental health, and that consumers shall be significantly involved in the planning and development of mental health research, systems, services, and programs.



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Meeting mental health needs

- 1 WHEREAS quality of life and optimal functioning depend upon physical and mental health;
- 2 WHEREAS mental disorders of late life (e.g., Alzheimer's Disease, depression) represent major burdens to older Americans and their families;
- 3 WHEREAS substantial numbers of older persons residing in the community have mental health needs and approximately half of all nursing home residents have serious, often undiagnosed, untreated mental disorders;
- 4 WHEREAS research indicates the efficacy of mental health interventions, illness prevention, and health promotion in producing positive health outcomes;
- 5 WHEREAS there is an insufficient supply of practitioners, including primary care providers, who are adequately prepared for the promotion of optimal mental health and the recognition and treatment of mental disorders among diverse populations; and
- 6 WHEREAS older adults are experienced, knowledgeable, and effective in meeting their own and other's mental health needs;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the 1995 White House Conference on Aging to support policies that:

- 7 Amend Medicaid to include provisions that ensure the availability of home and community-based mental health services;
- 8 Assure access to an affordable, comprehensive range of quality mental and physical health care, including outreach, in-home, preventive, acute, and long-term care services;
- 9 Amend all statutes that regulate public and private health and long-term care insurance plans to achieve parity in coverage and reimbursement for mental and physical health disorders, eliminate exclusions based on pre-existing conditions, set standards for health plans, and ensure consumer rights;