



March 23, 2012

The California Mental Health Planning Council (CMHPC) is mandated by federal and state statute to advocate for children with serious emotional disturbances and adults and older adults with serious mental illness, to provide oversight and accountability for the public mental health system, to advise the Administration and the Legislature on priority issues, and to participate in statewide planning. With passage of the Mental Health Services Act, the Planning Council also has responsibilities related to workforce development.

One of the Systems of Care Committees that support the Planning Council is the Older Adult Committee (OAC). At our quarterly meeting that took place in San Diego, CA January 18-20, 2012, the OAC discussed the problems counties are experiencing in regard to providing older adults who have mental health diagnosis integrated care when they begin to display cognitive problems associated with the onset of dementia/Alzheimer's disease. We are concerned that as their cognitive abilities decline, their level of care will suffer. Full integration of care is what we feel they deserve. Older adults with mental illness dealing with yet another serious health issue deserve our support.

The OAC strongly believes that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) must address the mental health needs of people with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. As the final plan is completed, we urge you to address the mental health needs of people with dementia/Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive issues as well as their caregivers who also deserve our attention. By recognizing and treating all these conditions we will improve the functioning of our patients as well as improving the quality of life for them and their caregivers.

Sincerely yours,

John Ryan  
Chair of the Older Adult Committee  
California Mental Health Planning Council  
1600 9<sup>th</sup> Street, #420  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916-651-3819

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact –  
Michael Gardner  
[Michael.gardner@dmh.ca.gov](mailto:Michael.gardner@dmh.ca.gov)  
916-651-3819