

MOTION

HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION

The mission of the Los Angeles City Department of Aging is to improve the quality of life, independence, health and dignity of the City's older population by managing community based senior programs that are comprehensive, coordinated and accessible, and to advocate for the needs of older citizens and their family caregivers.

The normal physical and emotional stresses that go along with aging can be risk factors for mental illnesses like anxiety and depression. According to the CDC 20 percent of adults aged 55 or older have experienced some type of mental health concern, but nearly one in three of those seniors do not receive treatment.

The most common mental health issue among the elderly is severe cognitive impairment or dementia, particularly caused by Alzheimer's disease (National Alliance on Mental Illness).

Depression and mood disorders are also fairly widespread among older adults, and disturbingly, they often go undiagnosed and untreated. Often going along with depression in many individuals, anxiety is also one of the more prevalent mental health problems among the elderly.

Older Adults with mental health issues can also suffer physical disabilities, long-term and physical illnesses that can affect thought, memory, and emotion (e.g. thyroid or adrenal disease) adverse medication interactions alcohol or substance abuse and malnutrition

Adults 50-64 frequently fall between the cracks of governmental safety nets. They are not old enough to qualify for Medicare, however, when their physical health is assaulted by poor nutrition and severe living conditions they may eventually resemble someone much older.

Unhoused older adults face serious challenges to their mental health. Older homeless people are likely to suffer from impairments resulting from depression or dementia, which can contribute to the worsening of their physical health. They also have higher rates of geriatric syndromes, including problems performing daily activities, walking, vision and hearing, as well as falls and frailty when compared to the general population.

For those who have housing, elder abuse is a rapidly growing criminal problem. As our population ages incidents of physical, emotional and financial abuse against elders, especially those facing mental health problems, are expected to grow unless steps are taken. Detection of abuse, neglect and fraud is critical.

Therefore, I move that the Director of the Los Angeles City Department of Aging appear before the Health, Mental Health and Education Committee to provide a report on current Department initiatives and programs in use and plans in motion to better integrate City services with the non-profit service sector, the County of Los Angeles and the State of California to better address current and future challenges.

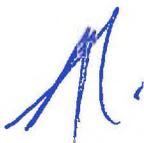
PRESENTED BY:


David E. Ryu
Council Member, 4th District

SECONDED BY:



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