

*“Aging is NOT for sissies”*

## **AOD PROBLEMS AMONG OLDER ADULTS**

“Substance abuse, particularly of alcohol and prescription drugs, among adults 60 and older is one of the fastest growing health problems facing the country. Alcohol and prescription drug misuse affects up to 17% of older adults. (SAMHSA TIP #26, 1998)

### **PRESCRIPTION & OVER THE COUNTER DRUGS**

- Adults age 65 and older represent 12% of the U.S. population yet consume
  - ✓ 34% of Rx drugs
  - ✓ 25% of OTC drugs
  - ✓ 42% of all retail Rx expenditures.<sup>1</sup>
- Because older adults often take numerous medications prescribed by multiple health care providers, their risk of having an adverse reaction and resulting emergency room visit or hospitalization is greater than that of younger adults.<sup>2</sup>
- Medication-related problems account for 5 to 20% of hospitalizations.
- Estimated costs associated with providing care for patients with adverse drug events:
  - ✓ \$77 billion for ambulatory care patients
  - ✓ \$ 8 billion for institutionalized patients (nursing home and hospital).<sup>3</sup>

### **ALCOHOL**

- Alcohol-related hospitalization rates among the elderly are similar to those for myocardial infarction.<sup>4</sup>
- One in six (15%) men and 1 in 8 (12%) women 60+ regularly drink in excess of NIAAA alcohol limits.<sup>5</sup>
- One third (1/3) of chemically dependent people are elderly. (*National Council on Alcoholism*)

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<sup>1</sup> Blow, Frederic C. “Substance Abuse Among Older Adults.” Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series 26. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). U.S. Government Printing Office. 1998.

<sup>2</sup> “The State of Health and Aging in America 2004,” Merck Institute of Aging and Health and Centers for Disease Control, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Alliance for Aging Research: When Medicine Hurts Instead of Helps, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Adams, W.L., et.al. “Alcohol-related hospitalizations of elderly people”, *JAMA*, 1993; 270:1222- 1225

<sup>5</sup> National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 1995

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## **AOD PROBLEMS AMONG OLDER ADULTS**

### **ILLICIT SUBSTANCES**

- As the baby boom cohort ages, a growing number will require treatment for illicit substances.
- The number of adults 50+ who are substance dependent or abusing is expected to increase by 150% from 2000/2001 to the year 2020.<sup>6</sup>
- In 2002-2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 1.8 million Americans 50+ reported using illicit substances (marijuana, non-medical use of Rx, cocaine, hallucinogens).<sup>7</sup>
- Treatment admissions for adults 50+ with drug problems has increased 270% from 1992 to 2002.<sup>8</sup>

### **THE PROBLEM IN CALIFORNIA**

- 65+ age group in CA is expected to grow by 85% in the next 20 years.
- 800,000 older Californians expected to be affected by AOD problems.
- Anticipated \$8-10 billion annually in associated health care and economic costs.
- Only 16 programs in California are age-appropriate or adapted for the older adult.

## **ARE WE READY FOR THE BOOMERS?**

- Statewide need for prevention and treatment programs targeting older adults.
- Treatment facilities need to be “age-appropriate”.
- Better screening for AOD problems of 50+ adults at clinics, ER’s, aging services, etc.

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<sup>6</sup> Gfroerer, J. “Substance Use Among Older Adults (50+): Current Prevalence and Future Expectations.” U.S. DHHS, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Gfroerer, J. “Substance Use Among Older Adults (50+): Current Prevalence and Future Expectations.” U.S. DHHS, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Gfroerer, J. “Substance Use Among Older Adults (50+): Current Prevalence and Future Expectations.” U.S. DHHS, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2003.

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## **AOD PROBLEMS AMONG OLDER ADULTS**

- More training for counselors on older adult needs and age-related issues.