



**ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH,  
MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

**ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGING**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**ORAL TESTIMONY BY INVITATION ONLY**

**POSTPONED NEW DATE TBD**

**SUBJECT:** Assessing the Comprehensive Geriatric Mental Health Act

**PURPOSE:** To ascertain the status of work done by groups that were funded under the program, and by relevant state agencies.

Assembly Hearing Room  
19th Floor  
250 Broadway  
New York, NY

Friday  
May 9, 2008  
10:00 AM

Currently, there are an estimated 6 million American seniors with depression and only 10% of them are getting treatment. Untreated mental conditions can lead to disability, exacerbate symptoms of other illnesses, lead to premature death, and result in suicide. The suicide rate among elderly men is the highest among all age groups. The elderly are twice as likely to commit suicide as teenagers.

As the 78 million baby boomers retire, increased health care costs including mental health care costs, will shift to the states. Currently, states provide mental health services through their state Medicaid match and through state general revenue funded mental health programs for a variety of populations including the elderly. In 2000, \$14 billion in state funding was spent on mental health services. The need for services is increasing daily.

In 2005, New York State passed landmark legislation to address the critical issue of geriatric mental health care. In addition to the enacted legislation, to date there has been \$2 million appropriated for demonstration projects designed to meet the needs of elderly New Yorkers suffering from mental illness. The Assembly Standing Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and the Assembly Standing Committee on Aging are holding this public hearing to determine the status of the mandates included in the legislation, in regard to the requirements placed on state agencies to begin to better address geriatric mental health issues; to learn how the funds appropriated have been spent by grantees; and what outcomes there have been.

Please see the reverse side for a list of subjects to which witnesses may direct their testimony, and for a description of the bills which will be discussed at the hearing.

Persons wishing to present pertinent testimony to the Committees at the above hearing should complete

and return the enclosed reply form as soon as possible. It is important that the reply form be fully completed and returned so that persons may be notified in the event of emergency postponement or cancellation.

Oral testimony will be limited to 5 minutes in duration. In preparing the order of witnesses, the Committee will attempt to accommodate individual requests to speak at particular times in view of special circumstances. These requests should be made on the attached reply form or communicated to Committee staff as early as possible. In the absence of a request, witnesses will be scheduled in the order in which reply forms are postmarked.

Ten copies of any prepared testimony should be submitted at the hearing registration desk. The Committees would appreciate advance receipt of prepared statements.

In order to further publicize these hearings, please inform interested parties and organizations of the Committees' interest in hearing testimony from all sources.

In order to meet the needs of those who may have a disability, the Assembly, in accordance with its policy of non-discrimination on the basis of disability, as well as the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), has made its facilities and services available to all individuals with disabilities. For individuals with disabilities, accommodations will be provided, upon reasonable request, to afford such individuals access and admission to Assembly facilities and activities.

**Peter Rivera**  
**Member of Assembly**  
**Chairman**  
**Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities**

**Jeffrey Dinowitz**  
**Member of Assembly**  
**Chairman**  
**Committee on Aging**

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**SELECTED ISSUES TO WHICH WITNESSES MAY DIRECT THEIR TESTIMONY:**

1. A number of agencies have received grants from the state to implement sections of the Comprehensive Geriatric Mental Health Act. What types of services have these grants paid for?
2. How many seniors have been served thus far by these demonstration projects, and what types of mental health issues have they presented?
3. The Act mandates that local mental health plans identify and address the mental health needs of older adults. Has this been extensively accomplished and what needs have been identified and addressed?
4. The Act also requires the Office of Mental Health to support planning and improve quality of care for older adults with mental disorders. What has OMH done to meet this requirement?
5. This Act also creates an Interagency Council on Geriatric Mental Health to be responsible for developing, on an ongoing basis, an interagency plan for addressing the needs of older adults with mental disorders. How has the Council begun to address the needs of seniors with mental health issues?
6. The Comprehensive Geriatric Mental Health Act further requires that the Commission on Quality of Care conduct a study within two years to determine the adequacy of services for older adults with

mental illnesses at facilities regulated by the Office of Mental Health or the Department of Health. Has this study been completed, and if so what were the findings?

7. The Act also stipulates that all state bodies that address long-term care or aging issues include stakeholders knowledgeable about geriatric mental health. What steps have the relevant state bodies taken to address such issues?
8. The Act also requires that the Office of Mental Health, Department of Health, Office for the Aging, and the Department of Education jointly develop programs to assure that there will be a well-trained geriatric mental health workforce as the population of older adults increases. Have such workforce development plans been met?

**PUBLIC HEARING REPLY FORM**

Persons wishing to present testimony at the public hearing on The Comprehensive Geriatric Mental Health Act are requested to complete this reply form as soon as possible and mail it to:

Bill Egger  
 Legislative Associate  
 Assembly Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
 Room 522 - Capitol  
 Albany, New York 12248  
 E-mail: [eggerw@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:eggerw@assembly.state.ny.us)  
 Phone: (518) 455-4371  
 Fax: (518) 455-4693

I plan to attend the following public hearing on The Comprehensive Geriatric Mental Health Act to be conducted by the Assembly Committee on Mental Health and Aging.

I plan to make a public statement at the hearing. My statement will be limited to 5 minutes, and I will answer any questions which may arise. I will provide 10 copies of my prepared statement.

I will address my remarks to the following subjects:

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I do not plan to attend the above hearing.

I would like to be added to the Committee mailing list for notices and reports.

I would like to be removed from the Committee mailing list.

I will require assistance and/or handicapped accessibility information. **Please specify the type of assistance required:**

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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

[\\*\\*\\* Click here for printable form \\*\\*\\*](#)

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New York State Assembly  
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