



Older Ohioans Behavioral Health Network

The older adult population in Ohio is growing by leaps and bounds, mirroring the nation. Ohio is gaining 12,000 new senior citizens each month. The mission of the Ohio Department of Aging addresses this population by “improving the quality of life for older Ohioans, helping senior citizens live active, healthy and independent lives.” Quality of life is much more than physical health, mental health, emotional or spiritual well-being; it is a combination. By acting in partnership, Ohio’s human service systems can improve the quality of life for older Ohioans through prevention and treatment of mental illness, medication misuse and substance abuse.

The Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities, with funding from the Ohio Departments of Mental Health and Aging has hosted and coordinated regular meetings of the Older Ohioans Network Steering Committee. The Steering Committee has had presenters on Adult Protective Services, Governor’s Office of Faith-Based Services, and Ohio Association of Community Health Centers, ODJFS on Medicaid Buy-in, Project Assist from Cuyahoga County which is a SAMSHA TCE grant to collaborate behavioral health services with adult protective services, and Youngstown State University Gerontology program.

OACBHA has maintained it’s website with a special link featuring Older Ohioans and published a monthly Older Ohioans Behavioral Health Network newsletter.

OACBHA was able to award \$50,000 in Round 4 Mini-grants to three Area on Aging Agencies and three ADAMH Boards for evidence-based/promising practices to look at innovative programs to assist older Ohioans across the state. Evidence-Based and Promising Practices Tool-kits were developed and five regional trainings were conducted to various areas of the state to assist communities in planning activities for future grants and services for older Ohioans.

OACBHA established a linkage on the Ohio Network of Care website, which directs older Ohioans and their family members to the Long-term Care Consumer Guide website (www.ltcoho.org). As a result of the collaboration with Department of Aging, Network of Care usage experienced a significant increase and this seems attributable to this connection.