



The Looming Mental Health Crisis for Florida's Seniors

From the Humana Foundation's Issue Brief,
The State of Senior Emotional Health in Florida



Purpose

To raise awareness of the growing emotional health challenges facing Florida's older adults and inspire cross-sector action to improve mental health, social connection and access to care.



What We Examined

- **Analysis of state and national data on senior mental health**, including depression, suicide, and access to care
- **Focus on Florida-specific trends**, including geographic and demographic disparities
- **Review of research on key drivers like social isolation**, financial insecurity and caregiving



Why It Matters

Florida is rapidly aging – by 2050, one-third of residents will be over 60. At the same time, emotional health challenges are rising, threatening seniors' ability to live healthy, independent lives and placing added strain on healthcare systems and communities.



What Research Shows

- 1 Nearly 1 in 8 Florida seniors are diagnosed with depression.
- 2 Hospitalizations due to mental disorders rose 16% from 2022 to 2024 for seniors.
- 3 Older women are diagnosed with depression at twice the rate of men (17.6% vs. 8.1%); White older men have the highest suicide rates in Florida.
- 4 While 1 in 12 seniors experiences frequent mental distress, the number rises to 1 in 10 among those living in the state's rural areas.
- 5 Older adults with mobility limitations have nearly three times the rate of depression as those without disabilities.



Key Drivers of Poor Emotional Health

- 1 Financial insecurity (housing, food, healthcare costs)
- 2 Social isolation & loneliness
- 3 Caregiving burden, especially among older caregivers
- 4 Workforce shortages and access barriers
- 5 Stigma and ageism, leading to underdiagnosis and delayed care



Call to Action to Improve Support for Florida Seniors' Mental Health

- 1 **Advance an Age-Ready Florida** by making older adults a priority in mental health planning, including engaging seniors and caregivers in community needs assessments and embedding screening for loneliness, depression, and anxiety in programs that serve older adults.
- 2 **Strengthen access to age-appropriate mental health care** by expanding the geriatric-trained mental health workforce, adopting evidence-based approaches for Florida's diverse older populations, and increasing services in rural and underserved communities.
- 3 **Invest in community supports that reduce stressors and strengthen stability** by prioritizing caregiver support, emergency financial assistance, and mobility solutions that help older adults manage daily challenges and remain independent.
- 4 **Scale technology and data solutions** that expand access to care, build digital skills, and foster meaningful social connection, and improve the assessment and monitoring of older Floridians' mental health.

Read the full issue brief [HERE](#).

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