

## APA Official Actions

# Position Statement on Ensuring Access to Psychiatric Services for the Elderly

Approved by the Board of Trustees, December 2020

Approved by the Assembly, November 2020

Retained by the Board of Trustees, December 2015

Retained by the Assembly, November 2015

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July 2008

Approved by the Assembly, May 2008

“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

### Issue:

The American Psychiatric Association stands as an advocate for access to quality psychiatric care for aging populations. Psychiatric treatments have been shown to be effective in the management of neuropsychiatric and mental disorders of late-life. While older Americans benefit from access to psychiatric treatment, they still do not have adequate access to these services.

### APA Position:

**The American Psychiatric Association endorses the following fundamental principles regarding the treatment of older Americans with psychiatric illnesses:**

- 1. All older Americans should have access to timely psychiatric consultation and treatment.**
- 2. Treatment of older adults with psychiatric illness must be provided with respect and compassion.**
- 3. Psychiatrists caring for older adults must adhere to the ethical standards of the American Psychiatric Association and provide treatments that are appropriate and effective.**
- 4. Psychiatrists have unique skills in the provision of psychotherapy, psychopharmacology, and other somatic treatments, and social and family interventions. Elderly patients benefit when a psychiatrist participates in a multidisciplinary treatment team for evaluation and for delivery of treatment services.**
- 5. Additional research (basic and clinical) is necessary to develop new treatments for the elderly that are safe and effective.**

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