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MEMORANDUM

TO: AAA Executive Directors
CARES Supervisors

FROM: Terry White
Secretary

DATE: April 16, 2004

SUBJECT: Notice of Policy: Mental Health and Substance Abuse Referrals

NOTICE #: 041904-1-P-SWCBS

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that information concerning elder mental health or substance abuse problems is captured and that these elders are referred for services. Creation of a policy concerning identifying elders who have mental health or substance abuse was mandated during the 2002-2003 legislative session. Specifically, the Department of Elder Affairs is required to implement, in cooperation with the Department of Children and Family Services, a coordinated policy for the screening, identification and referral to treatment elderly persons with mental health or substance abuse problems.

Discussions are currently underway between the Department of Elder Affairs and the Department of Children and Family Services, Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health headquarters staff to examine sharing aggregate data. The sharing of this data will enable each state agency to analyze the numbers of elders referred for treatment versus the numbers who receive treatment or services.

Referrals for treatment

In administering the 701-B assessment clients will be identified who are suicidal and in need of immediate mental health intervention or in need of a less urgent referral for mental health services or substance abuse services. In these situations both case managers and CARES staff should advise clients or their caregivers of services provided either on a private pay basis or funded through the Department of Children and Family Services, Alcohol, Drug Abuse or Mental Health program (DCF/ADAMH).

Elders having either mental health or substance abuse problems should be advised of local treatment agencies. Attached is a directory of community agencies that the DCF/ADAMH programs contract with to provide services. Should a client, caregiver or family member request services a written referral should be sent. As an alternative to a written referral for services, the client or caregiver may consult their physician concerning the problem(s). Either circumstance should be documented in the client's case file.

This policy is effective April 30, 2004. Questions concerning this notice should be directed to Mr. Sam Fante at SC 994-2164 or (850) 414-2164.

SF/at