Mental Health Sector

- In any given year, approximately 57.7 million Americans experience mental disorders. However, less than one-third of adults with diagnosable mental disorders receive mental health services.
- Myths and stigma exist against people with mental disorders.
- Low-income people have higher rates of anxiety and depression.

Addressing Seven Core Problems

1. Consumer’s Rights
The Patient Self-Determination Act (PSDA) of 1991 protects consumer’s right to engage in treatment decisions.
Each state’s board of behavior science (BBS) enforces standards of competent and ethical behavior for professionals under its jurisdiction.

2. Quality Care
The Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) established ten social work competencies to ensure MSW graduates use research to inform practice and vice versa.

3. Culturally Competent Care
California, New Jersey, and Washington passed laws to mandate cultural/linguistic competence into licensure requirements for mental healthcare professionals.

4. Prevention of Mental Distress
Collaboration with primary care providers ensures proper screening and early intervention.
The Prevention and Public Health Fund promotes early detection and management of existing mental health conditions at the lowest severity level possible.

5. Affordable and Accessible Mental Health Services
California enacted Proposition 63 to increase access to mental health services to uninsured individuals. Most other states do not have similar legislation.

6. Mental Health Services for Underserved Populations
Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) provide free or low-cost mental health services in many places of employment.

7. Care Linked to Communities
Continuity of care between healthcare institutions and community agencies is essential.

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