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Caring for an Aging America Act Critical to Address Workforce Shortage to Care for Older Adults

Eldercare Workforce Alliance Praises Leadership of Senators Boxer (D-CA), Collins (R-ME), Kohl (D-WI) and Sanders (I-VT)

Washington, D.C. — The Eldercare Workforce Alliance praises Sens. Boxer (D-CA), Collins (R-ME) and Kohl (D-WI), and Sanders (I-VT) for introducing the *Caring for an Aging America Act*. If enacted, the bill, which is endorsed by the Alliance, recognizes the importance of ensuring that the healthcare workforce is prepared to meet the needs of the nation's growing population of older adults.

This year the first baby boomers turned 65 years old and by 2029 this group will total an estimated 70 million people, far outpacing our current health care system's capacity to care for them. The *Caring for an Aging America Act* will attract health professionals to the field of geriatrics and gerontology by providing them with loan repayment opportunities in exchange for agreeing to work in underserved areas.

"This bill codifies loan forgiveness for health professionals who pursue geriatrics and gerontology training into law. This is critical to recruiting the next generation of health professionals with specialized training in care of older adults. It will help us to ensure that America's frailest elders receive high quality, well-coordinated, interdisciplinary team care," said Nancy Lundebjerg, C.O.O. of the American Geriatrics Society and co-convenor of the Alliance. "We commend Senators Boxer, Collins, and Kohl for their leadership on this bill and foresight to invest in a well-trained health care workforce with the skills to care for older adults."

This bipartisan bill expands the Health Resources and Services Administration's National Health Service Corps Program to include primary health care professionals with training in geriatrics and gerontology.

"Supporting health professionals who go into geriatrics and gerontology is also supporting family caregivers, who increasingly rely upon the specialized expertise and training of these eldercare professionals," Kathy Kelly, Executive Director of the Family Caregiver Alliance, headquartered in San Francisco.

“By introducing this bill, Sen. Boxer, Kohl, Sanders, and Collins are alerting their fellow members of Congress that there is a critical need to address the elder care workforce shortage by emphasizing the importance of having training in geriatrics and gerontology. I am hopeful that this bill will lead to future congressional action and creation of additional incentives to encourage people to enter into the geriatrics field in order to improve older adults’ access to trained providers,” said geriatrician Dr. Jabbar Fazeli from Falmouth, Maine.

The Eldercare Workforce Alliance is comprised of 28 national organizations united in their commitment to address the eldercare workforce shortage in order to ensure that our grandparents and parents receive quality care in the settings of their choice.

The positions of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance reflect a consensus of 75 percent or more of its members. These endorsements reflect the consensus of the Alliance and do not necessarily represent the position of individual Alliance member organizations.