

Eldercare Workforce Alliance FY2014 Outside Witness Testimony
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives

Written Testimony** Regarding Funding Requests for Eldercare Workforce Programs
of the Department of Health and Human Services

Submitted on March 15, 2013, on behalf of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance by

Nancy Lundebjerg, MPA
Alliance Co-Convener
(212) 308-1414

Michèle Saunders, DMD, MS,
MPH
Alliance Co-Convener
(210) 567-7439

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Members of the Subcommittee:

We are writing on behalf of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA), which is comprised of 28 national organizations united to address the immediate and future workforce crisis in caring for an aging America. As the Subcommittee begins consideration of funding for programs in FY 2014, the Alliance** urges you to provide adequate funding for programs designed to increase the number of health care professionals prepared to care for America's growing senior population and to support family caregivers in the essential role they play in this regard. We hope you will support a total of \$42.1 million in funding for geriatrics programs in Title VII and Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act and \$173 million in funding for programs administered by the Administration on Aging that support the vital role of family caregivers in providing care for older adults. Specifically, we recommend the following levels:

- **\$37.1 million for Title VII Geriatrics Health Professions Programs;**
- **\$5 million for Title VIII Comprehensive Geriatric Education Programs; and**

***The positions of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance reflect a consensus of 75 percent or more of its members. This testimony reflects the consensus of the Alliance and does not necessarily represent the position of individual Alliance member organizations.*

- **\$173 million for Family Caregiver Support Programs.**

Today's health care workforce is inadequate to meet the special needs of older Americans, many of whom have multiple chronic physical and mental health conditions and cognitive impairments. It is estimated that an additional 3.5 million trained health care workers will be needed just to maintain the current level of access and quality. Without a national commitment to expand training and educational opportunities, the workforce will be even more constrained in its ability to care for the growth in the elderly population as the baby boom generation ages. Reflecting this urgency, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has identified "enhancing geriatric/elder care training and expertise" as one of its top five priorities.

Of equal importance is supporting the legions of family caregivers who provide billions of hours of uncompensated care that allows older adults to remain in their homes and communities. The estimated economic value of family caregivers' unpaid care was approximately \$450 billion in 2009.

The number of Americans over age 65 is expected to reach 70 million by 2030, representing a 71% increase from today's 41 million older adults. That is why Title VII and Title VIII geriatrics programs and Administration on Aging (AoA) programs that support family caregivers are so critical to ensure that there is a skilled eldercare workforce and knowledgeable, well-supported family caregivers available to meet the complex and unique needs of older adults.

Geriatrics health profession training programs are integral to ensuring that America's healthcare workforce is prepared to care for the nation's rapidly expanding population of older adults.

In light of current fiscal constraints, EWA specifically requests \$42.1 million in funding for the following programs administered through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) under Title VII and VIII of the Public Health Service Act.

Title VII: Geriatrics Health Professions, Appropriations Request: \$37.1 Million

Title VII Geriatrics Health Professions programs **are the only** federal programs that seek to increase the number of faculty with geriatrics expertise in a variety of disciplines. These programs offer critically important training for the healthcare workforce overall to improve the quality of care for America's elders.

- **Geriatric Academic Career Awards (GACA)**: The goal of this program is to promote the development of academic clinician educators in geriatrics. *Program Accomplishments:* In Academic Year 2010-2011, the GACA Program funded 68 full-time junior faculty awardees. These awardees provided interdisciplinary training in geriatrics to 38,392 health professionals in clinical geriatrics; provided interdisciplinary team training to 6,617 clinical staff in various geriatric clinical settings; and provided geriatric services to 57,364 geriatric patients who are underserved and uninsured patients in acute care, geriatric ambulatory care, long-term care, and geriatric consultation services settings. HRSA, through the Affordable Care Act (ACA), expanded the awards to be available to more disciplines. EWA strongly supports and requests adequate funding for future expansion. Currently, new awardees are selected only every five years and to meet the need for clinician educators in all disciplines, EWA believes that we need to invest more in the future in order to develop adequate numbers of faculty to provide this training. Specifically, these academic career development awards should be available to clinician educators annually. **EWA's FY 2014**

request of \$5.5 million will support current GAC Awardees in their development as clinician educators.

- Geriatric Education Centers (GEC): The goal of the Geriatric Education Centers is to provide quality interdisciplinary geriatric education and training to the health professions workforce, including geriatrics specialists and non-specialists. *Program Accomplishments*: In Academic Year 2010-2011, the 45 GEC grantees developed and provided 2,103 education and training offerings to health professions students, faculty, and practitioners related to care of older adults. Interdisciplinary education and training was provided to 10,703 interdisciplinary teams. The grantees provided education and training to 64,414 health professions students, faculty, and practitioners. The GECs provide much needed education and training. As part of the ACA, Congress authorized a supplemental grant award program that will train additional faculty through a mini-fellowship program. The program provides training to family caregivers and direct care workers. **Our funding request of \$22.7 million includes support for the core work of 45 GECs and \$2.7 million awarded to 24 GECs that would be funded to undertake development of mini-fellowships under the supplemental grants program included in ACA.**
- Geriatric Training Program for Physicians, Dentists, (GTPD) and Behavioral and Mental Health Professions: The goal of the GTPD is to increase the number and quality of clinical faculty with geriatrics and cultural competence, including retraining mid-career faculty in geriatrics. *Program Accomplishments*: In Academic Year 2010-2011, 13 non-competing continuation grants were supported. A total of 54 physicians, dentists and psychiatry fellows provided geriatric care to 24,139 older adults across the care continuum. Geriatric physician fellows

provided health care to 13,788 older adults; geriatric dental fellows provided health care to 4,834 older adults; and geriatric psychiatric fellows provided health care to 5,516 older adults. This program supports training additional faculty in medicine, dentistry, and behavioral and mental health so that they have the expertise, skills and knowledge to teach geriatrics and gerontology to the next generation of health professionals in their disciplines.

EWA's funding request of \$8.9 million will support 13 institutions to continue this important faculty development program.

Title VIII Geriatrics Nursing Workforce Development Programs, Appropriations Request: \$5 million

These programs, administered by the HRSA, are the primary source of federal funding for advanced education nursing, workforce diversity, nursing faculty loan programs, nurse education, practice and retention, comprehensive geriatric education, loan repayment, and scholarship.

- Comprehensive Geriatric Education Program: The goal of this program is to provide quality geriatric education to individuals caring for the elderly. *Program Accomplishments*: In Academic Year 2010-2011, 27 non-competing Comprehensive Geriatric Education (CGEP) grantees provided education and training to 3,645 registered nurses, 1,238 registered nursing students, 870 direct service workers, 569 licensed practical/vocational nurses, 264 faculty and 5,344 allied health professionals – totaling 11,930 professionals trained. This program supports additional training for nurses who care for the elderly; development and dissemination of curricula relating to geriatric care; and training of faculty in geriatrics. It also provides continuing education for nurses practicing in geriatrics.

- Traineeships for Advanced Practice Nurses: Through the ACA, the Comprehensive Geriatric Education Program is being expanded to include advanced practice nurses who are pursuing long-term care, geropsychiatric nursing or other nursing areas that specialize in care of elderly.

Administration on Aging: Family Caregiver Support, Appropriations Request: \$172.9 million

- Family Caregiver Support Services: Provides a range of support services to approximately 700,000 family and informal caregivers annually in States, including counseling, respite care, training, and assistance with locating services that assist family and informal caregivers in caring for their loved ones at home for as long as possible. Request: \$154.5 million
- Native American Caregiver Support: Provides a range of services to Native American caregivers, including information and outreach, access assistance, individual counseling, support groups and training, respite care and other supplemental services. Request: \$6.4 million
- Alzheimer's Disease Support Services: One critical focus of this program is to support the family caregivers who provide countless hours of unpaid care, thereby enabling their family members with dementia to continue living in the community. Request: \$9.5 million
- Lifespan Respite Care: Funds grants to improve the quality and access to respite care for family caregivers of children or adults of any age with special needs. Request: \$2.5 million

On behalf of the members of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance, we commend you on your past support for geriatric workforce programs and ask that you join us in expanding the geriatrics

workforce at this critical time – for all older Americans deserve quality of care, now and in the future. Thank you for your consideration.