



January 23, 2013

Ms. Hester Grippando
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Ms. Grippando,

As the Administration works to determine the President's budget requests for FY 2014, the [Eldercare Workforce Alliance](http://www.eldercareworkforce.org) (EWA), a coalition of 29 national consumer, health care professional, direct-care worker and family caregiver organizations, asks that you include adequate funding for the essential geriatrics health professions training programs that are authorized under Titles VII and VIII of the Public Health Service Act, family caregiver support programs administered by the Administration on Aging, and programs aimed at strengthening the direct-care workforce administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration.

We appreciate President Obama's commitment to targeting resources to the programs which are most critical to meeting our nation's challenges in a time of fiscal constraint. The programs highlighted above are vital targets for resources in order to ensure that America's healthcare workforce is prepared to care for the nation's rapidly expanding population of older adults. The President's request for FY2013 was a welcome, though still inadequate, signal that the Administration recognizes the importance of this goal. The Health Resources and Services Administration's identification of "enhancing geriatric/elder care training and expertise" as one of five top priorities also recognizes the immediacy of the eldercare workforce crisis.

Geriatrics Health Professions Training Programs

At a minimum, EWA asks that the Administration request an equal amount of funding for Geriatrics Health Professions programs as it requested for FY2013. We also encourage you to consider the importance of the additional investments needed in order to realize the health care workforce goals set forth in the National Action Plan on Alzheimer's released in 2012 and the Administration's commitment to enhancing the primary care workforce, of which geriatrics is a part. 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 and offer critically important training for the healthcare workforce overall to improve the quality of care for America's elders. Because of the critical role these programs play in preparing the health care workforce to care for older adults and the scheduled beginning of a new grant cycle, the Alliance will advocate for expanded funding in FY2015.

According to a 2008 MedPAC report, among physicians who specifically train in and provide primary care, geriatricians spend the most time providing non-procedural primary care with 65% of their payments derived from primary care services such as office and home visits and visits to patients in non-acute settings.¹ Geriatrics and gerontological health professionals typically care for the 20% of Medicare beneficiaries who account for 80% of Medicare costs. The Geriatrics Health Professions programs support

The Eldercare Workforce Alliance is a project of The Advocacy Fund.

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

geriatrics faculty and programs that are needed to train other members of the care team to provide the type of multidisciplinary care that is the hallmark of geriatrics.

Family Caregiver Support

We also appreciate the President's support of family caregiver programs. Family caregivers are the backbone of long-term care in this country. Family caregivers can face physical, emotional, mental, and financial challenges in their caregiving role. The Family Caregiver Support program, authorized through Title III of the Older Americans Act, as well as the Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States and Lifespan Respite Care programs, administered through the Administration for Community Living, offer crucial supports to older adults and their family caregivers. The estimated economic value of family caregivers' unpaid care was approximately \$450 billion in 2009. These federal programs provide critical support to family caregivers.

Direct-Care Workforce Programs

The direct-care workforce is a powerful engine for job creation in the U.S. Totalling 3.2 million in 2008, the number of direct-care workers exceeds the number of registered nurses, school teachers (K-12), cashiers, and fast food workers. Employment projections predict the need for an additional 1.1 million direct-care jobs by 2018. While direct-care workers are responsible for providing 70 to 80 percent of the paid hands-on long-term care for older adults, their preparation and training is underfunded and inconsistent. To meet the needs of older adults, we must ensure adequate funding for programs that build a stable, well-trained direct-care workforce.

On behalf of the members of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance, we commend you on your support for eldercare workforce programs and ask that you continue your support for this workforce at this crucial time, as 10,000 Americans turn 65 daily -- for all older adults deserve quality of care, now and in the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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ⁱ Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, Report to the Congress: Reforming the Delivery System (Washington: MedPAC, June 2008), chap. 2, p.34.