

**Eldercare Workforce Alliance
Outside Witness Testimony
Fiscal Year 2014 Appropriations**

Subcommittee Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

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

Submitted on behalf of the
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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Moran, 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.

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 by 2030 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

***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.*

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 annually 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.

We hope you will support a total of \$47.4 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:

- **\$42.4 million for Title VII Geriatrics Health Professions Programs;**
- **\$5 million for Title VIII Comprehensive Geriatric Education Programs; and**
- **\$173 million for Family Caregiver Support Programs.**

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 \$47.4 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: \$42.4 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 the Academic Year 2011-2012, the GACA program funded 66 full-time junior faculty. These awardees delivered over 1,000 interprofessional continuing education courses specific to geriatric-related topics to over 44,000 students and providers. Collectively, awardees of the program provided a total of 32,000 hours of instruction through continuing education courses. Additionally, they provided 4,700 clinical trainings to providers of many professions and disciplines throughout the academic year. HRSA, through the Affordable Care Act (ACA), expanded the awards to be available to more disciplines. EWA strongly supports this expansion and requests adequate funding to make it possible. Currently, new awardees are selected only every five years. To meet the need for clinician educators in all disciplines, EWA believes that awards should be made available to clinical educators annually in order to develop adequate numbers of faculty to provide geriatric instruction and training. **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 Geriatric Education Centers is to provide high quality interprofessional geriatric education and training to current members of the health professions workforce, including geriatrics specialists and non-specialists. *Program Accomplishments*: In Academic Year 2011-2012, the 45 GEC grantees developed and provided over 4,100 continuing education and clinical training offerings to nearly 80,000 health professionals, students, faculty, and practitioners, significantly exceeding the program's performance target. Three quarters of the continuing education offerings were interprofessional in focus. Of the sites that offered clinical training sessions, almost 75% of these sites were in a medically underserved community and/or Health Professional Shortage Area. 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 for awards to 24 GECs that would be funded to undertake the development of mini-fellowships under the supplemental grants program included in ACA.**
- Alzheimer's Disease Prevention, Education, and Outreach Program (GECs): These funds, included in the President's FY2014 budget request, will allow HRSA to expand efforts to provide training to healthcare providers on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, utilizing the already existing Geriatric Education Centers (GECs). **EWA Requests \$5.3 million.**
- Geriatric Training Program for Physicians, Dentists, (GTPD) and Behavioral and Mental Health Professions: The goal of the GTPD program 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 2011-2012, a total of 63 physicians - including psychiatrists-, dentists, and psychologists, were supported through this fellowship program. During that year alone, fellows provided geriatric care to older adults on 23,358 occasions. 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 12 institutions to continue this important faculty development program.**

Title VIII Geriatrics Nursing Workforce Development Programs

Appropriations Request: \$5 million

Title VIII 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 and training to individuals caring for the elderly. *Program Accomplishments*: In Academic Year 2011-2012, a total of 18 Comprehensive Geriatric Education Program (CGEP) grantees provided a variety of services, including over 1,700 hours of instruction to over 8,200 trainees. Topics included geriatric training for direct care providers, palliative and end-of-life care, and health care and older adults. This program supports additional training for nurses who care for the elderly; development and dissemination of curricula relating to geriatric care; training of faculty in geriatrics; and 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 older adults. **EWA's funding request of \$5 million will support the education and training of individuals who provide geriatric care.**

Administration on Aging: Family Caregiver Support

Appropriations Request: \$172.9 million

These programs support caregivers, elders, and people with disabilities by providing critical respite care and other support services for family caregivers, training and recruitment of care workers and volunteers, information and outreach, counseling, and other supplemental services.

- Family Caregiver Support Services: This program 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. **EWA requests \$154.5 million.**
- Native American Caregiver Support: This program 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. **EWA requests \$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. Funds will go towards evidence-based interventions and expand the dementia-capable home and community-based services, enabling additional older adults to live in their residence of choice. **EWA requests \$9.5 million.**
- Lifespan Respite Care: This program funds grants to improve the quality of and access to respite care for family caregivers of children or adults of any age with special needs. **EWA requests \$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 supporting the geriatrics workforce at this critical time – for all older Americans deserve quality care, now and in the future. Thank you for your consideration.