

## FY2017 ELDERCARE WORKFORCE APPROPRIATIONS

As the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education funding is considered, the Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA) urges 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.

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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 the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Title VII geriatrics program and the Administration for Community Living (ACL) 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:

- \$45 million in funding for geriatrics programs in Title VII of the Public Health Service Act;
- \$197 million in funding for programs administered by the ACL that support the vital role of family caregivers in providing care for older adults;
- \$1.7 billion to support the research efforts of the National Institute on Aging; and
- \$9.7 million for additional workforce programs.

While our below requests take into account the current fiscal constraints, EWA believes a modest increase in funding for these programs is essential to meet the needs of our growing older adult population, today and in the future.

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### GERIATRICS WORKFORCE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (GWEP) (\$45 million)

The Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) is the only federal program that increases the number of faculty with geriatrics expertise in a variety of disciplines who provide training in clinical geriatrics, including the training of interdisciplinary teams of health professionals. In May 2015, HRSA announced 41 three-year grant funded programs. **For FY2017, we request increased funding for this program to close current geographic and demographic gaps in geriatric workforce training.**

#### **EWA FY2017 Requests:**

**Title VII Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program\*:** The GWEP seeks to improve high quality, inter-professional geriatric education and training to the health professions workforce, including geriatric specialists, as well as increase geriatrics competencies of primary care providers and other health professionals to improve care for this often underserved population. It supports the development of a health care workforce that improves health outcomes for older adults by integrating geriatrics with primary care, maximizing patient and family engagement, and transforming the healthcare system. **\$45 million request.**

\*In December 2014, HRSA combined the existing Title VIII Comprehensive Geriatric Education Program and the Title VII Geriatric Academic Career Award, Geriatric Education Centers, and Geriatric Training for Physicians, Dentists and Behavioral and Mental Health Providers programs into the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program. The FY 2016 Omnibus also consolidated these programs, citing HRSA's combined competition for the program.

## FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT (\$197 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 1,590,000 family and informal caregivers annually, 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. **\$158.5 million request**

**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. In FY2014 more 934,000 caregivers were served through this program. **\$8 million request**

**Alzheimer's Disease Support Services:** A 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. The program provided direct services to 46,860 individuals with Alzheimer's disease and their family caregivers in FY2014. **\$10.5 million request**

**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. **\$5 million request**

**Family Support Initiative:** The new initiative will encourage use of community assets and opportunities to help families reduce stress, improve emotional well-being, develop support skills and knowledge, and plan for the future. Special attention will be given to efforts that assist families with balancing workforce participation and caregiving responsibilities, and those facing the dual demands of caring for older parents while raising children and/or supporting a family member with a disability. **\$15 million request**

## NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING (\$1.7 billion)

The National Institute on Aging, one of 27 Institutes and Centers of the National Institutes of Health, leads a broad scientific effort to understand the nature of aging in order to promote the health and well-being of older adults. Funding will aid in researching training initiatives for the workforce that cares for older adults and research on physician-family communication during end-of-life and critical care. **\$1.7 billion request**

## NATIONAL HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE COMMISSION (\$3 million)

The National Health Care Workforce Commission, established by the ACA, plays a central role in formulating a national strategy for bolstering the health care workforce in order to meet the needs of the burgeoning numbers of older Americans. **\$3 million request**

## ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS (\$6.7 million)

**Geriatric Career Incentive Awards Program:** Congress authorized this new program through the ACA. These funds foster greater interest among a variety of health professionals in entering the field of geriatrics, long-term care, and chronic care management. **\$3.3 million request**

**Training Opportunities for Direct Care Workers:** In the ACA, Congress approved a program administered by HHS that will offer advanced training opportunities for direct care workers. EWA believes Congress must fund it to create new employment opportunities by offering new skills through training. **\$3.4 million request**

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