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March 20, 2014

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Kingston and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The National Association for Geriatric Education (NAGE) congratulates your work on the FY 2014 Omnibus Appropriations Bill and commends the effort of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 to restore Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 sequestration cuts. NAGE appreciates your past support for Geriatric programs (Title VII health professions) and Comprehensive Geriatric Education Programs (Title VIII nursing workforce). As you begin the process of determining spending levels for FY 2015, NAGE strongly urges you to consider the growing need for geriatric education programs that help the nation's health professions better serve the rapidly increasing older and disabled populations.

Please return to the President's FY 2010 budget request which was approved by the House that year, but not included in the final bill. For FY 2010, President Obama requested and the House provided \$41.997 million for Geriatric Education Centers under the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Title VII, Section 753 of the Public Health Service Act. Unfortunately, only \$34 million was funded in the final bill, and that has been cut to under \$34 in subsequent years. We write today to respectfully request that you support Geriatric Education Centers at this previous requested level of \$41.997 million in FY 2015.

Three geriatric health professions programs are financed under Title VII, Section 753 of the Public Health Service Act and are included in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Geriatric Education Centers and their related programs, the Geriatric Academic Career Awards and the Geriatric Faculty Fellowships, provide much needed interdisciplinary geriatric and gerontology training to a broad range of health professionals who serve our rapidly growing aging population. These programs improve the education, supply, distribution, diversity, and quality of health care professional who care for our nation's growing elderly population, including the underserved and minorities.

The Geriatric Education Center (GEC) program currently funds 50 GECs in 36 states, including statewide and multi-state programs; the Geriatric Academic Career Awards currently support 88 newly trained geriatric physicians; the third program, the Geriatric Faculty Fellowships provides funding for 11 programs designed to train physicians, dentists, and behavioral and mental health professionals who will become academicians in geriatric medicine, dentistry, and psychiatry.

NAGE is a non-profit membership organization representing Geriatric Education Centers (GECs) and other programs that provide education and training to health professionals in the areas of geriatrics and gerontology. Our mission is to help America's health workforce be better prepared to render age-appropriate care to today's older Americans and those of tomorrow. Every day in America 10,000 more persons reach the age of 65 years. There simply aren't enough physician geriatricians, geriatric nurse practitioners and the myriad other health professions needed to provide interprofessional care to this burgeoning older population.

Thus, we need your continued support for geriatric programs to adequately prepare the next generation of health professionals for the rapidly changing and emerging needs of the growing and aging population.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Caprio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "T" and a long, sweeping underline.

Thomas Caprio, MD, MPH, CMD, FACP
President, National Association for Geriatric Education (NAGE)