



National Association for Geriatric Education

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Dear Members of the Obama Transition Team:

The recent Institute of Medicine report, “*Retooling for An Aging America: Building the Healthcare Workforce*,” addresses the direct care workforce crisis and suggests possible solutions for providing health services for the growing number of older Americans. In response to this challenge, it is time to reauthorize HRSA Title VII geriatric programs to include training of professionals, paraprofessionals, community health workers, and family caregivers as part of the new health care safety net.

The DHHS-HRSA geriatric education programs, funded under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act, are dedicated to training a health care workforce to address the special needs of older persons and improving the health and quality of care for America's growing older population. The geriatric programs, which include Geriatric Education Centers, Geriatric Training for Physicians, and Behavior/Mental Health Professionals, and Geriatric Academic Career Awards emphasize:

- Interdisciplinary care - where teams of health care professionals work with older adults and their families to deliver care that addresses the goals of the individual patient
- Coordinated, integrated care - that fosters care coordination across settings to enhance health and better manage chronic conditions
- Culturally effective care - communicating health information and providing care in a manner that is understandable, appropriate, and acceptable to individuals in light of their cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors
- Disease prevention and chronic disease management - improving health outcomes through early detection and intervention, ongoing management of chronic diseases, and enhancing the individual's participation in management of his/her health
- Reducing disparities - through identifying at-risk populations, promoting evidence-based disease prevention programs, and diversifying the interdisciplinary health care workforce to ensure culturally effective care
- Emergency preparedness – by providing training programs on ways to protect older adults in emergency situations

As we embark on health care reform, our country faces the immediate challenge of a rapidly increasing older population. With 48 Geriatric Education Centers located throughout the country, the HRSA Title VII geriatric programs are strategically positioned to make significant contributions to affordable and accessible health care for older Americans. These programs educate and train healthcare workers to deliver efficient, coordinated and quality care to older adults.

Our approach to a new model of health care must be broad-based and reach every community in America. The Title VII geriatric education programs are one component of a comprehensive strategy to meet the challenge of health care reform and contribute to the solution.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

*Judith L. Howe, PhD*

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