

January 25, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chair  
Special Committee on Aging  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bob Casey  
Ranking Member  
Special Committee on Aging  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Susan Collins and Senator Bob Casey;

The American Geriatrics Society (AGS), an organization devoted to improving the health, independence and quality of life of older adults, supports the Geriatrics Workforce Improvement Act. The AGS is thankful for your support of the geriatrics workforce training programs and for your efforts to improve care of older Americans.

The Geriatrics Workforce Improvement Act would authorize the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) and the Geriatrics Academic Career Awards (GACAs) program under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act. The AGS believes that both programs must be authorized and funded if all Americans are to have access to high-quality, person-centered care as we grow older.

The GWEP is currently the only federal program designed to increase the number of providers, in a variety of disciplines, with the skills and training to care for older adults. The GWEPs educate and engage the broader frontline workforce including family caregivers and focus on opportunities to improve the quality of care delivered to older adults, particularly in underserved and rural areas. The GACA program is an essential complement to the GWEP program. GACAs ensure we can equip early career clinician educators to become leaders in geriatrics education and research.

The introduction of this important legislation follows announcements of related funding opportunities from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in November 2018. Authorization of the GWEPs and GACAs as outlined in the Geriatrics Workforce Improvement Act will help ensure that HRSA receives the funding necessary to carry these critically important workforce training programs forward.

At a time when our nation is facing a severe shortage of both geriatrics healthcare providers and faculty with the expertise to train these providers, the AGS believes the number of educational and training opportunities in geriatrics and gerontology should be expanded, not reduced. Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



**Laurie Jacobs, MD, AGSF**  
President



**Nancy E. Lundebjerg, MPA**  
Chief Executive Officer