



January 25, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Special Committee on Aging
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

Dear Senator Susan Collins and Senator Bob Casey;

On behalf of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA), we are writing to express our support of the Geriatrics Workforce Improvement Act.

EWA is a coalition of 32 national consumer, health care professional, direct-care worker and family caregiver organizations. 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. Today's health care workforce is inadequate to meet the needs of older Americans, many of whom have multiple chronic physical and mental health conditions and cognitive impairments. Without a national commitment to expand training and educational opportunities, the workforce will be even more constrained in its ability to care for the elderly population as the baby boom generation ages.

This bipartisan bill supports two critical objectives. First, it would formally establish funding for the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP). Second, it would reestablish the Geriatric Academic Career Awards (GACAs), a previously funded program for developing clinician-educators. By supporting the GWEP and the GACAs, the Geriatrics Workforce Improvement Act would:

- Foster education and engagement with family caregivers by training providers who can assess and address their care needs and preferences.
- Promote interdisciplinary team-based care by transforming clinical training environments to integrate geriatrics and primary care delivery systems.
- Improve the quality of care delivered to older adults by providing education to families and caregivers on critical care challenges like Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.
- Reach underserved and rural communities by ensuring clinician-educators are prepared to train the geriatrics workforce of today and tomorrow.

This investment protects our most vulnerable elders and invests in our country's future. We ask that you continue your support for the programs at this crucial time, and thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Nancy Lundebjerg, MPA
EWA Co-Convener

Michèle J. Saunders, DMD, MS, MPH
EWA Co-Convener

The Eldercare Workforce Alliance is a project of The Advocacy Fund.

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