

## FY18 Eldercare Workforce Appropriations Requests

As the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 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 population** of older adults and to **support family caregivers** in the essential role they play in caring for older loved ones.

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The number of Americans over age 65 is expected to double between 2000 and 2030, totaling more than 70 million people and accounting for almost 20% of the American population by the end of the next decade. 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 the following requests:

- \$51 million in funding for geriatrics programs in Title VII and Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act;
- \$187.5 million in funding for programs administered by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) that support the vital role of family caregivers in providing care for older adults; and
- \$1.7 billion to support the research efforts of the National Institute on Aging

While our 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) (\$51 million)

The Title VII and VIII Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program\* (GWEP) is the only federal program that aims to develop a health care workforce that maximizes patient and family engagement while improving health outcomes for older adults. It equips the primary care workforce with the knowledge and skills to care for older adults and builds community networks to address gaps in health care for older adults through individual, system, community, and population level change. In July 2015, HRSA announced 44 three-year grant funded programs located in 29 states.

The program:

- Integrates geriatrics and primary care to transform clinical training environments to provide more coordinated and comprehensive care
- Develops providers who can assess and address the needs of older adults and their families/caregivers
- Creates and delivers community-based programs that provide patients, families, and caregivers with the knowledge and skills to improve health outcomes and the quality of care for older adults
- Provides Alzheimer's disease and related dementia education to families, caregivers, direct care workers, and health professions students, faculty, and providers

For FY2018, the first year of the new grant cycle, we request increased funding to close current geographic and demographic gaps in geriatrics workforce training. Specifically, the increased funding could launch 8 new GWEP centers, targeted to underserved and rural communities, and provide \$100,000 to each GWEP site to reestablish the Geriatrics Academic Career Award program. **\$51 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 FY16 Omnibus also consolidated these programs, citing HRSA's combined competition of the program.

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## **FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT (\$187.5 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 family and other unpaid 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. In FY14, the program provided more 125,000 caregivers with counseling and training services, provided 67,000 family caregivers with 6.2 million hours of respite care, and provided nearly 1.4 million contacts to caregivers assisting them in locating services from a variety of public and private agencies. However, in FY14, more than 1 in 3 family caregivers still experienced trouble accessing services so additional funding would go a long way in ensuring families can access the support they need. **\$158.5 million request**

**Native American Caregiver Support:** This program provides grants to eligible tribal organizations to provide support for family and informal caregivers of Native American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian elders. It offers 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 and Specialized Supportive Services:** A critical focus of these programs 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 to 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 programs provided direct services to 46,860 individuals with Alzheimer's disease and their family caregivers in FY2014. **\$5 million for the Alzheimer's Disease Support Services Program. \$11 million for the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative - Specialized Supportive Services.**

**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. In FY14, 33 states participated in the program. **\$5 million request**

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

**The National Institute on Aging,** one of the 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. In addition, the NIA coordinates the Older Americans Independence Centers Program, which aims to increase scientific knowledge leading to better ways to maintain or restore independence in older persons. The NIA also supports on-going projects that improve patient-level health outcomes for individuals with three or more chronic health conditions. **\$1.7 billion request**

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Website: [www.eldercareworkforce.org](http://www.eldercareworkforce.org)  
Facebook: [/eldercarealliance](https://www.facebook.com/eldercarealliance)  
Twitter: [@eldercareteam](https://twitter.com/eldercareteam)  
Blog: [eldercareworkforce.wordpress.com](http://eldercareworkforce.wordpress.com)

*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.*

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

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