NAGE ACTION ALERT

April 13, 2017

Dear NAGE Members:

NAGE, its leadership, public policy team, and our public policy advisor in Washington DC have been working hard to protect and expand funding for the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program. The President’s budget proposal recommends a cut of $403 million to health professions programs at HRSA and could end the GWEP. As we fight these proposed cuts we are requesting increased funding for both GWEPS and GACAs to address the growing demand for geriatrics-trained health care professionals across the country.

We need your help to inform your Members of Congress of the value of your programs for older adults and your communities.

Communicate with your Members of Congress Now!

With Members of Congress home for two-weeks, now is the time to see them. We know it is difficult to get to DC, so this is a fantastic opportunity to meet with your Representative in the House and your two Senators. You can schedule a meeting at one of their offices in the state or invite them to visit your program site. Such a site visit can include a tour, sitting in on a class, a meeting with you, your colleagues, and partners, or a special event. You can also start by meeting them and their staff at their offices and suggesting a site visit at a future date.

Attached is a list of GWEPs and Members of Congress from your states. Please note whether they serve on the appropriations committee and particularly if they serve on the Labor, Health and Humans Services Subcommittee. If so, they have a lot more clout in the GWEP funding process!

These are challenging times, but with Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Programs, Centers on Aging, and Geriatric Education Centers all working together to oppose cuts to GWEPS and support funding to train the health care professionals and caregivers who provide care for millions of older adults across the nation, we have a strong chance to stop these unwarranted cuts to the GWEP.

Below you will find a few guidelines to help you establish contact and schedule an appointment with your Members of Congress and their staff. Also, there is a list of resources that we are providing as attachments to this e-mail. These should support your advocacy, but please also make sure that your institutional home is comfortable with your involvement in this important educational process.
Meeting with Your Members of Congress

- To schedule an appointment to meet with your Senator or Representative, contact the office by phone.
  
  - We encourage you to meet with your Senator or Representative him or herself, but please understand that you will most likely meet with a member of the Senator’s or Representative’s staff who handles health and aging issues. All Senators and Representatives rely heavily on staff for information and advice. If your appointment is with a staff member, invest as much energy into presenting your issues(s) to him or her as you would if you were meeting with the Senator and Representative in person.

  - See the GWEPs and their Members of Congress list or use the links below:
    
    - Visit the Member’s website through either http://www.senate.gov
      http://www.house.gov

    - Or call the Capitol switchboard (202-224-3121) to place the call or to obtain the phone number. Ask for your legislator's office by name.

- When you call to make the appointment, identify yourself as a constituent, state your full name and title, and ask to speak with the legislative assistant who handles health care or aging issues. If s/he is not available (often the case), then ask if you may leave a voicemail or e-mail message for her/him.

- Between your busy schedule and theirs, it may take several attempts before you actually talk with (by phone or by email) the appropriate staffer or the scheduler. Don't give up! You are a constituent; you have the right to visit your legislator.

  - The staff representative may ask you what you would like to discuss in the meeting.

- Ask for a 30-minute meeting with your Member of Congress, but accept 15 minutes. A site visit will demand more time, of course. Be sure to get the full name of the staffer with whom you speak or will be meeting and the office room number.

- Important: Please let us know if you schedule a site visit and any other results of your efforts! Feel free to contact our Public Public Advisor, Brian Lindberg at brian@consumers.org.

Resources for Your Meetings

Please use the following materials to help make the case for the value of the work GWEPs do in our communities.

- Congressional Visit Outline
- NAGE Background Piece on GWEPs (to share with Members and their staff)
- NAGE House of Representatives Appropriations Committee Testimony (to share)
• GWEPs and their Members of Congress List
• Guide to meeting with Elected Officials

For additional information, please feel free to consult the Eldercare Workforce Alliance GWEP advocacy toolkit. NAGE is a member of the EWA and works with their staff on advocacy in Washington, DC.

Please remember that with this meeting, you are establishing a relationship with your Member of Congress and becoming a valuable resource. Your meeting will be most effective if you share stories and supplement your discussion of federal issues with specific examples of what is happening with your program. The more you can personalize the federal issues for your Member of Congress and his/her staff, the more effective your meeting will be.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I am looking forward to hearing about your meetings!

Sincerely,

Kathryn Hyer, PhD, President NAGE
Maura Brennan, MD, President-Elect, NAGE