



July 15, 2019

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Schakowsky and Congressman Burgess;

On behalf of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA), we are writing to express our support for the *Educating Medical Professionals and Optimizing Workforce Efficiency and Readiness (EMPOWER) for Health Act of 2019* (H.R. 2781).

EWA is a coalition of 35 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.

Among the other programs this bill would reauthorize, it supports two critical objectives for our coalition. First, it would formally authorize 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 EMPOWER for Health Act of 2019 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. 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.*