



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
October 29, 2019

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Bipartisan Workforce Legislation Passes House; Expands Federal Geriatrics Training Programs

Washington, DC—The House yesterday passed legislation that would reauthorize federal geriatrics workforce programs. The Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA) commends Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-III) and co-sponsor Representative Michael C. Burgess (R-TX) for introducing the bipartisan EMPOWER for Health Act of 2019 (H.R. 2781) in the U.S. House of Representatives. This bill reauthorizes many workforce programs under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act, including geriatrics. This bill would ensure communities across the U.S. have access to health professionals and other critical supports to improve care for us all as we age. With bipartisan support, swift passage of the bill would take a significant step toward training and supporting a healthcare workforce empowered to improve the quality of care for older adults.

“Our nation faces a severe and growing shortage of eldercare professionals with the skills and training to meet the unique healthcare needs of older adults,” said Amy York, Executive Director of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance. **“EWA supports the EMPOWER for Health Act of 2019 because it expands the only federal geriatrics training program. That’s an investment in an eldercare workforce that can support well-coordinated, high-quality care for all older Americans.”**

This bipartisan bill supports two critical objectives for geriatrics workforce programs. 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.

About EWA: The Eldercare Workforce Alliance is a group of 35 national organizations – representing consumers, family caregivers, and health care professionals, including direct care workers – joined together to address the immediate and future workforce crisis in caring for an aging America.

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