

America's Go-To Resource on Quality Care for Older Adults

The Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA) is comprised of 28 national organizations united in our commitment to address the eldercare workforce shortage in order to ensure that our parents and grandparents receive the dignity of living comfortably and receiving quality care in settings of their choice.

EWA represents a wide range of health care providers - physicians, nurses, direct-care workers, psychologists, social workers, pharmacists, physical therapists, as well as eldercare employers, consumers, and family caregivers - all of whom serve the needs of America's burgeoning population of older adults.

EWA, with a command of information on the critical workforce shortages — and in particular, our expertise in recommending innovative team care solutions — can serve as a go-to resource for policymakers, health organizations, the media and others. We welcome the opportunity to help meet this historic challenge.

Eldercare Workforce Alliance

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ADVOCATING
TEAM CARE
FOR OLDER
ADULTS



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

Alliance Members

AARP
Alzheimer's Association
Alzheimer's Foundation of America
American Academy of Nursing
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Geriatrics Society*
American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living
American Medical Directors Association
American Nurses Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists
American Society on Aging
Coalition of Geriatric Nursing Organizations
Council on Social Work Education
Direct Care Alliance
Family Caregiver Alliance
Gerontological Society of America
LeadingAge
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Association for Geriatric Education
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-term Care
National Council on Aging
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Partnership for Women & Families
NCB Capital Impact/THE GREEN HOUSE® Project
New York Academy of Medicine/ Social Work Leadership Institute
PHI - Quality Care through Quality Jobs*

*EWA Co-Conveners

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**Addressing the
Workforce Shortage
in Caring for
an Aging America**



It Takes a Team to Deliver Quality Care



AMERICA FACES AN UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGE. As of January 1, 2011, Baby Boomers are turning 65 at a rate of 10,000 per day—and this trend will continue for 20 years. By 2030 in the United States, about one in five persons will be over 65. To live with independence and dignity, aging Americans will need access to a wide range of professional health and social services, as well as home care and residential supports. Providing our parents and grandparents with quality services, and supporting the family caregivers who provide the bulk of assistance, demands an interdisciplinary team of professionals, direct-care workers, and caregivers who are well-trained in the care of older adults.

Despite the certainty of increased demand for eldercare services, the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) landmark report, *Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce*, notes the significant shortage of the eldercare workforce – those trained to care for the needs of our nation's older adults. The shortage will grow exponentially in the coming decades as the Baby Boomers age.

Eldercare is projected to be the fastest-growing employment sector within the health care industry. Strengthening the eldercare workforce is not only vital to our social infrastructure and improving the quality of care, but also has the potential to drive long-term economic growth.

Our Aging Nation

- Within 20 years, one in five Americans will be over 65 and an estimated 90 percent of those Americans will have one or more chronic conditions.
- 7.7 million people will have Alzheimer's disease in 2030, up from 4.9 million in 2007.
- The number of older adults with diabetes will rise from 5 million in 2005 to 10.6 million in 2025 and to 16.8 million in 2050.

High-quality care for older adults, many of whom have multiple complex chronic conditions, requires a diverse range of skills for addressing physical, mental, cognitive and behavioral health, as well as social and emotional well-being. It takes a coordinated, interdisciplinary team to provide this care, but the current eldercare workforce is often siloed and already overwhelmed by the demand for services.

The Geriatrics Workforce Shortage

The need for action is rendered more urgent by the current shortfall among professionals and direct-care workers, and the need to support caregivers, all of whom serve the unique needs of our nation's elders.

- More than one million more direct-care workers will be needed by 2018, according to the latest employment projections.
- Only 7,029 certified geriatricians currently practice in the US – roughly half the number needed, and the numbers are falling.
- By 2020, 60,000 to 70,000 geriatric social workers will be needed, yet today only less than 5 percent of social workers are specifically trained in gerontological social work.
- By 2020, the nursing workforce is expected to drop 20 percent below projected requirements.
- Only 3 percent of psychologists specialize in geropsychology, a fraction of the projected 7,500 needed.
- In 2001, there were about 2,600 geriatric psychiatrists. In 2005, that number was reduced to 2,100, less than half of the 5,000 that are needed to provide adequate care for the current population of older adults.
- About 43.5 million unpaid family caregivers provide care to a person 50 or older annually. The estimated economic value of family caregivers' unpaid care was approximately \$375 billion in 2007 – a \$25 billion increase over 2006.

Averting the Impending Crisis

The Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA) was created to help policymakers, providers, consumers, and family caregivers to address these shortfalls and avert this looming crisis.

Urgent action by policymakers is required to address the issues of recruitment, retention and improved compensation and training for the professional and direct-care workforce, as well as support for family caregivers.

EWA believes effective solutions are available to address this crisis and provide the quality care America's older adults deserve. These solutions include:

- Ensuring a Competent Workforce
- Strengthening the Direct-Care Workforce
- Addressing Clinician and Faculty Shortages
- Re-designing Health Care Delivery
- Supporting Family and Other Informal Caregivers

EWA has the interdisciplinary expertise that can inform workforce policies for developing a team approach to caring for older adults.