



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**September 15, 2009 is Eldercare Workforce Alliance National Advocacy Day;  
Alliance will Alert Congress that a Strong Eldercare Workforce  
is Essential to *Real* Health Reform**

**Washington, DC** – Today, eldercare workforce advocates and constituents are visiting members of Congress to deliver a critical message to Congress: A strong eldercare workforce is essential to *real* health reform. Organized by the Eldercare Workforce Alliance, a 29-member broad-based coalition, the hill visit day is bringing some 50 advocates to Washington to visit key members of the House and Senate. To reinforce its message, the Alliance has taken out a full-page advertisement in *Roll Call*.

The Alliance is a broad-based coalition of 29 national organizations representing all aspects of the healthcare delivery system including consumers, family caregivers, the direct-care workforce, and healthcare professionals. EWA supports practical solutions to improve the quality of healthcare for older adults by strengthening the eldercare workforce.

The Alliance was formed in 2008 to respond to the Institute of Medicine's report, *Retooling for An Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce*. The report concluded that America's healthcare workforce is ill-prepared to care for the rapidly growing number of older adults in the U.S. There are already serious shortfalls of healthcare professionals and direct-care workers trained to care for older people in this country, and the number of Americans 65 and older is expected to nearly double, to 77 million, over the next two decades.

A workforce that is skilled in the care of older adults will improve the health and quality of life of our nation's seniors. Many older adults who are frail or living with chronic diseases do not receive the care they need because of systemic challenges including clinician and faculty shortages, inadequate education and training opportunities, insufficient support for family caregivers, and poor working conditions for the direct-care workforce. Our nation's seniors deserve quality health care from a workforce that is skilled in geriatrics and gerontology.

As Congress prepares to reach consensus on health reform, it is critical to retain and include provisions focused on developing and maintaining the eldercare workforce. Specifically, EWA urges Congress to retain provisions in the Senate HELP Committee *Affordable Choices Act* and the House Tri-Committee *America's Affordable Choices Act of 2009* and enact health reform legislation that:

- **Supports health professionals** specializing in geriatrics and gerontology by including provisions to reauthorize and expand the Geriatrics Health Professions Education and Training Programs under Title VII and VIII of the Public Health Service Act;
- **Supports the Direct Care Workforce** by including the Senate HELP Committee provisions that would provide training opportunities and workforce development support;
- **Supports older adults remaining in their homes** by including the Senate HELP Committee Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act provisions;
- **Supports personal care attendants** by including House Tri-Committee provisions that would establish a Workforce Advisory Panel.

EWA further urges Congress to add provisions that would:

- Provide loan forgiveness for professional training in geriatrics and gerontological specialties, consistent with the *Caring for an Aging America Act of 2009* (S. 750) and the *Geriatrics Loan Forgiveness Act of 2009* (H.R. 1457);
- Increase the federal match for all home and community-based services funded under Medicaid.

### **Members of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance**

- AARP
- Alzheimer's Association
- Alzheimer's Foundation of America
- American Academy of Nursing
- American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
- American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
- 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
- National Alliance for Caregiving
- National Association for Geriatric Education
- National Council on Aging
- National Hispanic Council on Aging
- National Partnership for Women & Families
- NCB Capital Impact/THE GREEN HOUSE® Project
- NCCNHR – The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
- New York Academy of Medicine/Social Work Leadership Institute
- PHI – Quality Care through Quality Jobs
- Visiting Nurse Associations of America

**A Project of the Tides Advocacy Fund.**