The Eldercare Workforce Alliance Urges Inclusion of 
H.R. 468, the Retooling the Health Care Workforce for an Aging America Act of 2009, 
in Health Reform Legislation

June 5, 2009

We, the Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA)—a coalition of 28 national organizations representing older adults and the healthcare professionals, direct-care workers, and family caregivers who care for them—strongly support H.R. 468, the Retooling the Health Care Workforce for an Aging America Act of 2009, sponsored by Representative Jan Schakowsky, and co-sponsored by Representative Gene Green, Representative Carolyn C. Kilpatrick, Representative Joe Sestak, and Representative Peter Welch. We urge members of the House to co-sponsor H.R. 468 and to ensure that all provisions of the bill are included in health reform legislation.

Our nation faces an impending healthcare crisis as the number of older people with complex health needs increasingly outpaces the number of healthcare providers with the knowledge and skills to adequately care for them. If current workforce trends do not change, we will continue to fail to ensure that every older American is able to receive high-quality care. The Institute of Medicine’s (IOM) April 2008 report, Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce, calls for immediate investments in enhancing the geriatric competencies of the entire workforce, increasing the recruitment and retention of geriatric specialists and caregivers, and improving the way that care for older adults is delivered.

H.R. 468 would address many key recommendations in the IOM report by expanding geriatrics training for medical school and other health professions faculty and for physicians, nurses, social workers, clinical psychologists, and other allied health professionals. It would also expand training for nurses' aides, home health aides and other direct-care workers, as well as family caregivers who provide the majority of daily, hands-on care for millions of older Americans.

Congress does not have the luxury to wait to fix this problem. The fastest growing segment of our population are people over the age of 85, who have the highest per capita utilization of healthcare services and who often have multiple, complex, chronic health conditions. Inadequate training in geriatrics, chronic care management, and long-term care leads to misdiagnoses, medication errors, and poor care coordination—resulting in substandard care and higher costs.

The Eldercare Workforce Alliance urges the House of Representatives to include all of the provisions of H.R. 468 in health reform legislation and to lend its full support to the passage of this bill.

Thank you for considering our views. Please do not hesitate to contact Steven L. Dawson, President of PHI at 718-402-7766 or SDawson@PHInational.org or Nancy Lundebjerg, Deputy EVP and Chief Operating Officer of the American Geriatrics Society at 212-308-1414 or nlundebjerg@americangeriatrics.org if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Steven L. Dawson, Co-Convener

Nancy E. Lundebjerg, Co-Convener

A Project of the Tides Center and Tides Advocacy Fund
On behalf of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance members who support H.R. 468:

- 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

** Co-conveners

- 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
- 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

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