



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

**APA Public Interest Government Relations Office (PI-GRO)
Aging Policy Update
Fall Consolidated Meetings 2010**

Health Reform. PI-GRO worked tirelessly over the last year to successfully secure provisions related to APA's health reform priorities in the health reform bill that was signed into law on March 23, 2010 (P.L. 111-148). PI-GRO is now working to ensure appropriate implementation of this law. Among the included provisions related to aging that were spearheaded by PI-GRO were:

- ***Integrated Health Care.*** PI-GRO successfully advocated for the inclusion of several provisions in the new law that promote integrated interdisciplinary teams, which include mental and behavioral health care providers in primary care and a variety of health care settings.
- ***Prevention and Wellness.*** PI-GRO successfully secured several prevention and wellness provisions of importance, including provisions related to community preventive health activities, elder abuse, an annual wellness visit provided under Medicare, interventions and screenings for individuals between 55-64 years of age, and grants to establish national centers of excellence for depression.
- ***Geriatric Health Workforce.*** PI-GRO and Education GRO worked individually and as members of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance to successfully secure critical language related to geriatric health professions education and training in the new health reform law. Specifically, these provisions: 1) expand Geriatric Academic Career Awards to include faculty in psychology; 2) authorize a new Geriatric Career Incentive Awards program, to include students of psychology; and 3) expand Geriatric Education Centers to include schools with programs in psychology. PI-GRO and Education GRO are now working with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to ensure prompt and appropriate implementation of these new provisions.
- ***Long Term Services and Supports.*** Over the last year, PI-GRO worked individually and with partners from the aging and disability advocacy communities to successfully secure the inclusion of the *Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act* (S. 696/H.R. 1721) in the new health reform law. This initiative establishes a new national insurance program in order to: 1) help adults with functional limitations to maintain personal and financial independence and live in the community; 2) establish an infrastructure that will help address the nation's community living assistance services and supports needs; 3) alleviate burden on family caregivers; and 4) address institutional bias by providing a financing mechanism that supports personal choice and independence. In addition to the *CLASS Act* provisions, PI-GRO successfully advocated for the inclusion of several other initiatives which will assist States in providing home and community-based services and supports. PI-GRO is now working with coalition partners to ensure appropriate implementation of these long term care initiatives.

Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA). EWA is a coalition of 29 national organizations committed to addressing the geriatric health care workforce crisis. PI-GRO worked closely with EWA partners throughout the health reform legislative process and continues to work collaboratively on health reform implementation and related policy priorities. In June 2010, APA worked with EWA to include a geropsychologist among a select list of experts that EWA nominated for the National Health Care Workforce Commission established by the new health reform law. In addition, a member of the PI-GRO staff serves as chair of the EWA Public Policy Committee and has spearheaded several EWA policy activities, including three National Advocacy Days which focused on securing the geriatric workforce provisions in health reform and encouraging funding for these initiatives.

Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation. PI-GRO worked individually and as a member of the Elder Justice Coalition to successfully secure the inclusion of the *Elder Justice Act* (S. 795/H.R. 2006) in the new health reform

law. These provisions authorize the establishment of programs for comprehensive prevention, detection, and treatment of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. In addition, on February 19, 2010, PI-GRO responded to an official request for information from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) related to an elder abuse study that they were tasked to undertake at the direction of the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging. PI-GRO submitted a response to the GAO which outlined the nature and extent of elder abuse; described the integral role psychologists play in detecting, preventing, and intervening in elder abuse; and provided federal policy recommendations to address this important problem. PI-GRO gathered input from the APA Committee on Aging, the APA Division of Trauma Psychology (Division 56), and the Elder Justice Coalition.

Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization. PI-GRO is working individually and with coalition partners to develop recommendations for the upcoming reauthorization of the OAA. In particular, PI-GRO recommendations will focus on (1) the implementation of the mental health and aging provisions that APA successfully secured in the 2006 OAA reauthorization; (2) expansion and enhancement of the National Family Caregiver Support Program; and (3) enhancement and coordination of efforts to address elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation (including through the implementation of the newly authorized *Elder Justice Act*).

SAMHSA Reauthorization. PI-GRO continues to work closely with other APA directorates to advance APA's comprehensive recommendations for the reauthorization of SAMHSA. Early in 2010, PI-GRO sent APA's priorities to all congressional health staff, which included recommendations related to improving access and quality in services for older adults through the integration of mental and behavioral health into primary care and community settings. In 2007-2008, PI-GRO successfully secured the inclusion of provisions from the *Positive Aging Act* (H.R. 3191) in the Senate draft of the bill to reauthorize SAMHSA. On May 28, 2010, Representative Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) introduced the *SAMHSA Modernization Act* (H.R. 5466), which would reauthorize SAMHSA and includes language from the *Positive Aging Act*. Most recently, in August 2010, Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) reintroduced the *Positive Aging Act* in the Senate. This bill has been a longstanding priority for APA and would authorize grants to integrate mental health services into primary care settings for older adults and grants for community-based interdisciplinary geriatric mental health outreach teams. PI-GRO is now working to ensure the retention of the *Positive Aging Act* language in the House and Senate bills to reauthorize SAMHSA.

Institute of Medicine (IOM) Study. Following over a year of advocacy, PI-GRO (in conjunction with other professional associations) successfully worked with Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Patrick Kennedy (D-RI), to designate \$900,000 in the report language that accompanied the *Fiscal Year 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act* to fund an IOM study focused on the geriatric mental health workforce. PI-GRO has since nominated several geropsychologists for consideration to serve as members of this important group, and is now awaiting official announcement of committee member assignments from the IOM.

Lifespan Respite Care Act. PI-GRO continues to work as a member of the National Respite Coalition in support of funding for the *Lifespan Respite Care Act* (P.L. 109-442), which was signed into law in 2006. In Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010, the program received \$2.5 million annually. The President's Fiscal Year 2011 budget proposed \$5 million for this program and the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations bill included \$7 million. PI-GRO continues to urge Congress to fund the program at its fully authorized level of \$94.8 million. This initiative provides for the development of lifespan respite programs at the state and local levels; planned and emergency respite for family caregivers of children and adults; training and recruitment of respite workers and volunteers; assistance for caregivers in gaining access to services; and the establishment of a National Resource Center on Lifespan Respite Care.

Emergency/Disaster Preparedness and Response. PI-GRO continues to share psychological research and clinical knowledge with federal policymakers regarding the mental health consequences of disasters, with particular attention to public interest subgroups, including older adults. These efforts include reviewing legislative proposals and drafting legislative language; meeting with congressional offices, federal agencies, and stakeholder organizations; and recommending APA experts for hearings, briefings, and federal advisory groups and committees.