

THE AMERICAN GERIATRICS SOCIETY

RATIO OF PHYSICIAN FACULTY FTEs IN GERIATRICS TO STUDENTS INDICATES NEED FOR TITLE VII PROGRAMS

July 2011

FEW SCHOOLS HAVE ENOUGH PHYSICIAN FACULTY IN GERIATRICS

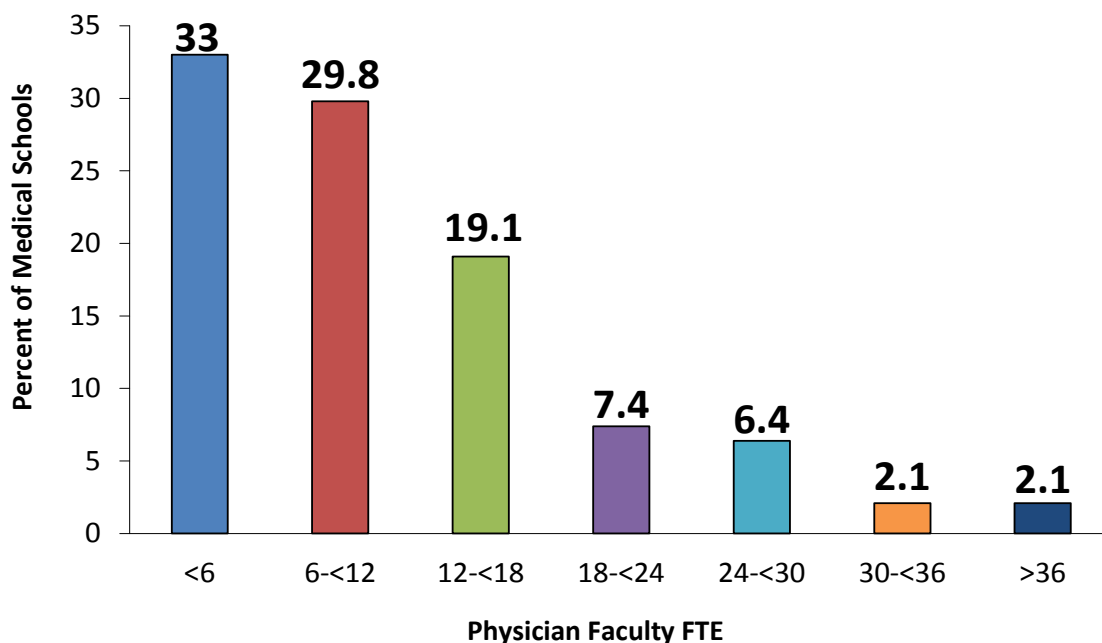
According to the AAMC 2007ⁱ graduating medical student survey, the last year these questions were asked, only 23% of students strongly agreed that they had been exposed to expert geriatrics care by attending faculty and only 19% strongly agreed that they are prepared to care for older adults in acute care settings. This is not surprising given that there are only 1,099 geriatrician faculty members nationally according to 2010 data from the AGS Geriatrics Workforce Policy Studies Center.ⁱⁱ

The scarcity of geriatrician faculty is compounded by faculty only spending 10% of their time teaching the nation's medical students. An additional problem is the wide-spread variation in the number of physician faculty (some of which are not geriatricians) to students at the nation's medical schools. While there is an average of 11.2 FTE (full time equivalent), the number of faculty trained in geriatrics varies from 0 at some schools to 58 at other schools.

OTHER DEMANDS ON GERIATRICIAN FACULTY

In addition to teaching medical students, geriatrician faculty are also called upon to teach residents in internal and family medicine as well as having clinical and research responsibilities. With the Institute of Medicine calling for all healthcare professionals to be competent in care of older adultsⁱⁱⁱ in 2008, the demands on geriatrician faculty are likely to increase as they are called upon to partner with other faculty in a variety of medical specialties.

Distribution of Physician Faculty FTEs Among U.S. Medical School Geriatrics Programs in 2010²



TITLE VII GERIATRICS HEALTH PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

Funding for Title VII Geriatrics Health Professions Programs is a small but highly effective investment in ensuring that older adults receive high quality healthcare now and in the future. The geriatric health professions program is financed under the interdisciplinary, community-based linkages section of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and currently supports three initiatives: the Geriatric Academic Career Awards (GACAs), the Geriatric Education Center (GEC) program, and geriatric faculty fellowships. These are the only federal programs designed to address access to quality healthcare, improve diversity of the healthcare workforce and recruit and retain healthcare professionals in medically underserved areas.

- **The Geriatric Academic Career Award Program (GACA)** supports the development of geriatrics health professionals in geriatric medicine and geriatric psychiatry. It is a key component for recruiting young clinician educators into academic career paths. To hold a GACA, faculty must have completed relevant training, hold a full-time faculty appointment, and commit to spending 75% of their time teaching/developing interdisciplinary education in geriatrics. The 'Affordable Care Act' expands the GACA Program to include other disciplines -- nursing, social work, psychology, dentistry, pharmacy, or other allied health professions school as determined by the Secretary. Given the importance of an interprofessional team to geriatrics care, the Society has long-advocated for this expansion of eligibility.
- **Geriatric Training for Physicians, Dentists and Behavioral and Mental Health Professionals Program (GTPD)** trains professionals who decide to teach geriatric medicine, dentistry, and psychiatry. These grants, which support a two-year fellowship and/or one year retraining efforts to assist physicians, dentists, and behavioral and mental health professionals who teach geriatric medicine, geriatric dentistry, or geriatric behavioral and mental health, are an important component of addressing the faculty pipeline issue.
- **The Geriatric Education Center (GEC)** program provide grants to support collaborative arrangements involving several health professions schools and healthcare facilities to provide multidisciplinary training in geriatrics. GECs strengthen multidisciplinary training of health professionals in assessment, chronic disease syndromes, care planning, emergency preparedness, and cultural competence unique to older Americans. GECs provide continuing education, curriculum development and dissemination and training and retraining of faculty.

ⁱ AAMC Medical School Graduation Questionnaire, All Schools Report

ⁱⁱ The 2010 AGS Geriatrics Workforce Policy Studies Center Survey of US Allopathic and Osteopathic Medical Schools. (Note: this survey had a 60% response rate, 95/159).

ⁱⁱⁱ IOM (Institute of Medicine). 2008. *Retooling for an aging America: Building the health care workforce*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.