

# THE AMERICAN GERIATRICS SOCIETY

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LINDA HIDDEMEN BARONDESS  
Executive Vice President

February 29, 2008

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Caring for an Aging America Act of 2008**

Dear Senator Boxer:

The American Geriatrics Society (AGS), an organization of approximately 7,000 geriatric health care professionals, and basic and clinical researchers specializing in aging, strongly supports your legislation, the Caring for an Aging American Act of 2008.

As you know, our nation's aging population is growing rapidly. By 2030, when the last of the baby boomers reaches the age of 65, the U.S. population aged 65 and older will exceed 70 million – approximately twice the number in 2000. As America's 77 million baby boomers age, the need for healthcare professionals trained in geriatrics will be high in demand. Unfortunately, providers specially trained in the care of older adults are in dangerously short supply.

This critical legislation will attract and retain trained health care professionals and direct care workers dedicated to providing quality care to the growing population of older Americans by providing loan forgiveness and career advancement opportunities. The bill will also establish a health and long-term care workforce advisory panel for an aging America.

There is an urgent need to prepare the health care workforce, including physicians, nurses, social workers and psychologists, to better serve the increasing numbers of older adults. AGS strongly supports the bill's provision calling for more incentives to attract and retain top practitioners into the fields of geriatric care and gerontology, which remain among the least well-compensated specialties.

Senator Boxer, AGS appreciates your leadership on this important legislation and your long-standing efforts to improve quality of care for older Americans. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to enact the Caring for an Aging American Act of 2008. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Alanna Goldstein at 212-308-1414.

Sincerely,



Todd P. Semla, MS, PharmD, BCPS, FCCP, AGSF  
President  
American Geriatrics Society