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AGS Statement on America First: A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again

The American Geriatrics Society (AGS) expressed its deep disappointment with proposed cuts to geriatrics training, healthcare research, and a range of services for older adults—all outlined by President Trump in his budget plan for 2018.

Among several concerns, the AGS noted that the budget would eliminate \$403 million from training programs that educate the doctors, nurses, physician assistants, pharmacists, social workers, and many other health professionals essential to our care as we age. The Trump proposal is premised on a flawed assumption that health professions and nursing training programs “lack evidence that they significantly improve the Nation’s health workforce.”

We are especially concerned about the potential impact of these cuts on the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) under Titles VII and VIII. This is the only federal program aimed at improving the quality, safety, and affordability of our care by increasing the number of professionals with the skills needed to care for us as we age.

In addition to other cuts targeting necessary home- and community-based services for older Americans, the budget also would reduce essential funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by nearly \$6 billion. Both such cuts remain critical concerns, as more and more Americans are poised to benefit from promising science and care that enables them to age in their homes while saving federal resources.

Outside these serious concerns, AGS experts were pleased to see the Trump Administration’s recognition of the importance of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). The proposed 2018 budget requests \$78.9 billion in discretionary funding for the VHA—a \$4.4 billion increase from 2017 that would sustain the Veterans Choice Program and provide discretionary funding to improve care access and efficiency for more than nine million American veterans.

We remain committed to working with Congress and the Trump Administration on these and other meaningful reforms that would improve care, reduce costs, and enhance well-being for us all as we age.

About the American Geriatrics Society

Founded in 1942, the American Geriatrics Society (AGS) is a nationwide, not-for-profit society of geriatrics healthcare professionals that has—for 75 years—worked to improve the health, independence, and quality of life of older people. Its nearly 6,000 members include geriatricians, geriatric nurses, social workers, family practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, and internists. The Society provides leadership to healthcare professionals, policymakers, and the public by implementing and advocating for programs in patient care, research, professional and public education, and public policy. For more information, visit AmericanGeriatrics.org.

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