Abstract

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) reports the geriatric population will almost double to seventy million by the year 2030. The fastest growing portion of this population includes those over 85 years of age. The societal implications and challenges of this trend are great, none more so than in the medical arena.

Currently, less than 1% of all physicians are certified geriatricians and current trends reveal fewer training opportunities are available. In 2006-07 there were only 468 total post-graduate geriatric training positions, and only a little over half of them were filled. Less than 0.5% of all US medical school graduates go into geriatrics. In order to meet the challenges of the future, the US needs to invest in training a health care workforce. Without an intervention, the geriatric population will have limited access to geriatricians and more costly and poorer quality health care.

The primary focus of the Retooling the Health Care Workforce for an Aging America Act of 2009 is access to affordable quality care for seniors. This bill intends to provide additional resources to increase the availability of training in caring for the aging population. I recommend supporting the Retooling the Health Care Workforce for an Aging America Act of 2009. This bill would improve access to geriatric specialists and lower the cost of health care for the elderly.