



September 17, 2014

Bernard Sanders, Chairman
Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging
648 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sanders:

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers (NAPGCM). With over 2,000 members, the NAPGCM is dedicated to the advancement of professional geriatric care management through education, collaboration, and leadership. A Geriatric Care Manager is a health and human services specialist who helps families who are caring for older relatives. We write today about the Older Americans Act (OAA), which expired in 2011.

Signed into law in 1965, the OAA develops, coordinates, and delivers home and community-based services that help older adults maintain their independence. The NAPGCM hopes that the OAA can be reauthorized this fall in a bipartisan fashion that both upholds the Act's mission to improve the lives of older adults and family caregivers, and protects its services.

Nearly one year ago, the Senate HELP Committee passed a bipartisan bill (S. 1562) to reauthorize the Act. Yet, the bill—and the reauthorization process—is stalled. Completing this bill's progress should be a priority in the remaining weeks of the 113th Congress. While we know that there is little time left, we believe that leaving the OAA unauthorized for yet another year fails to recognize or prioritize the needs of America's seniors.

By keeping seniors healthy and in their communities, OAA programs can delay or prevent the need for more expensive institutional care, such as that paid for through Medicare or Medicaid, effectively saving taxpayer, state, and federal dollars. We are concerned that as reauthorization continues to stall, the cumulative impact of our nation's economic and demographic pressures could threaten the very sustainability of OAA programs, as well as the health, dignity, and independence of older Americans.

Accordingly, we urge you to reaffirm your commitment to current and future seniors, as well as to the mission of the Act itself, by reauthorizing the OAA in 2014.

Sincerely,

Emily Saltz, NAPGCM President