HCAOA Urges Congress to Prioritize Long-Term Care for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities

Position
The Home Care Association of America (HCAOA) urges the Congress to make action on long-term care policies a priority. The aging of our population requires Congress to review its policies and identify cost-effective ways to assist seniors and individuals with disabilities to age gracefully in a manner that affords them maximum independence for as long as possible. Such a focus will also limit the burden on public programs such as Medicare and Medicaid.

As part of this effort, HCAOA believes Congress should incentivize individuals through the tax code to remain in their residence for all long as possible.

Background
As life expectancy increases, the number of seniors is growing much faster than other segments of the population. Today, there are about seven people (family, friends, or others) aged 45-64 to care for each person over the age of 80. By 2050, this caregiver ratio will be less than 3:1.
Seven in 10 Americans over age 65 will need long-term care services during their lifetime, but 90 percent of them want to stay at home as they age. Access to home care services is part of the answer to meet these rapidly growing needs.

The Commission on Long-Term Care, established under Section 643 of American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-240), issued its final report to the public in 2013. However, the Congress has yet to make addressing the challenges of long-term care a special focus.

HCAOA supports bipartisan legislation such as the “Credit for Caring Act,” (S.1443/H.R2730). This Act is sponsored by Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA), Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO), Senator Shelley Capito (R-WV), Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), and Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) in the Senate, and Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA) and Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY) in the House of Representatives. This legislation begins to address concerns with access to home care and other long-term care services in the U.S. by authorizing a non-refundable tax credit for family caregivers.

HCAOA also supports efforts to promote home modifications to enable aging seniors to stay in their home as long as possible. This could be achieved through the tax code or through initiatives like the Senior and Disability Home Modification Assistance Initiative Act (S.702/H.R.1583), introduced by Senator Angus King (I-ME) and Rep. Joe Morelle (D-NY), which proposes to amend the Older Americans Act to direct the Administration on Aging to carry out an initiative to coordinate federal resources to provide home modifications for older individuals to support enabling them to live independently and safely in a home environment.

If you would like more information on this matter or have questions, please contact Patrick Cooney at Patrick@federalgrp.com or by calling (202) 413-2629.

The Home Care Association of America (HCAOA) is the nation’s first association for providers of private-pay home care. HCAOA was founded on the principle that quality private pay home care service has one model of care and that model is to employ, train, monitor and supervise caregivers, create a plan of care for the client and work toward a safe and secure environment for the person at home.