

ABSTRACT

Gregg Warshaw, MD and Elizabeth Bragg, PhD, RN. The Training of Geriatricians in the United States: Three Decades of Progress. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 2003;51:S338-S345.

During the past 3 decades, significant progress has been made in preparing U.S. physicians to care for the growing elderly population. This paper reviews progress in training and certifying internists and family physicians in geriatric medicine. The establishment of the National Institute on Aging, a series of Institute of Medicine reports, Veterans Health Administration initiatives, and leadership and investment by the public sector and private foundations have supported the development of geriatric medicine training programs. In 1988, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education initially accredited 62 internal medicine (IM) and 16 family practice (FP) geriatric medicine fellowship programs. By academic year 2001-2002, 120 geriatric medicine fellowships were training 338 fellows. A recent survey of U.S. medical schools found a total of 869 full-time equivalent (FTE) geriatrics faculty members. Their geriatrics programs had a median of 5.0 FTE physician faculty members, with a range of 0 to 42. Recent surveys of IM and FP residency programs found 803 geriatrician faculty members teaching in IM residency programs (53% response rate) and 453 teaching in FP residency programs (75% response rate). From 1988 through 2002, 10,207 Certificates of Added Qualifications in Geriatrics were awarded. The distribution of these practicing geriatricians varied considerably by state, with the national average being 5.5 per 10,000 persons aged 75 and older. Individual state rates ranged from 2.2 to 15.9. Although geriatric medicine training has grown remarkably over the past 3 decades, this growth is still not producing the number of geriatricians needed to care for the growing elderly population. Thus, expanded investment in the training of geriatricians as faculty and practitioners is needed.

PMID: 12823665