

John A. Hartford Geriatric Nursing Initiative (HGNI)

Older adults are the core business of health care today, and nurses—central to the health care of all older adults—are responding to the challenge.

Launched in 1995, the Hartford Geriatric Nursing Initiative (HGNI) is confronting the challenges associated with an aging patient population through an array of programs. With a \$60 million investment from the John A. Hartford Foundation, the HGNI is preparing professional nurses to play leadership roles in improving the health of older adults.

In partnership with the nation's nursing schools and a variety of health care organizations and systems, this dynamic, national initiative works in five areas:

- Shaping nursing practice to best meet the health care needs of older adults;
- Enhancing professional education to ensure all nurses are prepared to treat older people;
- Promoting research needed to guide the care and enhance the health of older adults;
- Developing leadership in academic and professional settings; and
- Demonstrating nursing's commitment to enacting public policy that improves older Americans' health care.

The goal of the JAHF Geriatric Nursing Initiative is to shape the quality of health care of older Americans by creating innovative models of education, practice, and research so that nurses are always prepared to meet the ever-changing needs of our aging population.

As Peter Peterson states in his book, *Gray Dawn: How the Coming Age Wave Will Transform America – And the World*, “global life expectancies have grown more over the last fifty years than over the previous five thousand.” There are 25 million Americans over the age of 65 today; America's older adults comprise the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population.

Nurses play an essential role in providing a full range of health care services, health education and health promotion to these older Americans. Geriatric advanced practice nurses are expert nurses prepared at the master's degree and higher who provide – direct - and influence - the care of older adults and their families in a variety of settings. These nurses are uniquely prepared to improve outcomes of care, promote quality of life, and provide comprehensive care for older adults.

The country is challenged to prepare geriatric nurses at a time when the number of individuals entering the health care disciplines is diminishing on an annual basis and is most pronounced in nursing. Inherent in this shortage is a lack of nurses fully prepared to care for the burgeoning geriatric population.

The John A. Hartford Foundation of New York foresaw the need to increase the nation's capacity to provide effective and affordable care for its rapidly increasing older population. Beginning in 1996, they sought to specifically build capacity within nursing.

Established within The New York University's School of Nursing, The John A. Hartford Foundation Institute for the Advancement of Geriatric Nursing was the keystone to a significant investment in nursing. With the unparalleled success of the Institute, the Foundation expanded its commitment and funded additional geriatric nursing programs. Collectively these programs are fueling a nation-wide initiative to shape the design and character of geriatric health care in the United States.

The JAHF Geriatric Nursing Initiative seeks to realize the Geriatric Nursing Initiative's goal through the achievement of the following five objectives:

- Enhancing Professional Nursing Education
- Designing Innovative Clinical Practice Models
- Building Research Capacity That Supports Practice, Education and Leadership
- Developing Nursing Leaders Who Shape Geriatric Health Care
- Informing Policy and Consumers of the Issues that Impact Older Americans' Health Care