



November 9, 2011

Dear Colleagues:

We at the John A. Hartford Foundation would like to give you an update on the status of our Geriatric Social Work Initiative (GSWI) and to ask for your assistance.

The John A. Hartford Foundation is committed to improving the health and well-being of older people and we continue to believe that geriatric social work is essential to advancing that mission. Over the past 12 years we have invested more than \$75 million dollars in geriatric social work faculty leadership and curricula development. We are incredibly proud of the accomplishments of all the grant programs and project leaders and certain that the work and careers they have set in motion will only grow in impact. Thank you.

As you know, the Foundation is engaged in strategic planning to take a fresh look at how we can invest limited resources to improve the care of older adults. Our board of trustees has already re-committed to the area of aging and health and over the next year staff and trustees will be refining our strategies, defining our objectives, and developing new grants to take us through the next phase of the GSWI.

There are three important things for you to know:

- 1. The GSWI created a dynamic new cadre of leaders and a momentum to develop more leadership potential for the field:** through the Faculty Scholars and Doctoral Fellows programs there are now over 200 faculty leaders, the Hartford Partnership Program in Aging Education (HPPAE) and Gero-Ed Baccalaureate Experiential Learning (BEL) grants and the Curriculum Development Institute (CDI) projects trained hundreds of students, the Gero-Ed Center programs developed invaluable curriculum and materials, and the Leadership Academy for Deans and Directors facilitated the development of dozens of new gerontology programs in schools of social work. There are now thousands of leaders through-out the country who can continue the momentum.
- 2. New Grantmaking:** Losses in the Foundation's endowment mean that the absolute amount of Hartford's annual grantmaking will be smaller (and will likely remain smaller for the foreseeable future) than it was before 2007. Right now, all available funds are being used to pay our current grant commitments, including all the Hartford Geriatric Social Work Initiative (GSWI) programs, through the end of their grant agreements. This means that we are paying over \$4.5 million to the GSWI projects over the next two years. However, this also means that we are unable to

make any new grants until we have satisfied these commitments and once again have new, "uncommitted" money. Our current schedule calls for new grants therefore, following from the new strategic plan to be made in 2012 with payouts to begin in 2013.

- 3. Tapping into the brain trust:** The Hartford Foundation will be working with our esteemed GSWI project leaders as well as other leaders in geriatric social work to identify new program areas that will build upon and utilize the tremendous human capital and the incredible materials in which the Hartford Foundation has invested since 1999.

We need your assistance in two ways:

- 1. Keep up the momentum** - While we are coming to the end of our current projects, we need you and all of our colleagues to end strong and keep the momentum in geriatric social work. We need you to continue the work that you started by recruiting more students, nurturing more faculty leaders, keeping the curriculum current and available, and to continue the networking and career building.
- 2. Partner with us** - Work with us in identifying problems and issues in social work that can be addressed by strategic grantmaking and identifying ways we can partner and pool resources with other stakeholders. We need to try new things as we help social work prepare to care for the growing wave of older Americans. We need to find solutions that make sense for 2013 and beyond. As our endowment grows again, we can then begin to infuse money into these new programs and partnerships.

Please contact Nora OBrien-Suric at: [nora.obrien@hartfound.org](mailto:nora.obrien@hartfound.org) for additional information and for any suggestions for partnerships for the Geriatric Social Work Initiative.

We thank you all so very much for your continuing passion, your commitment, and your expertise in geriatric social work. And we look forward to continue working with you towards improving the health of older adults.

Sincerely,



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*Executive Director*



Christopher A. Langston  
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*Senior Program Officer*