

## **BIG WIN FOR PSYCHOLOGY!**

### ***Congress approves a threefold increase for Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) Program***

February 21, 2003

Despite tight budget allocations and other pressing considerations, Congress approved \$6 million for psychology education and training in the Bureau of Health Professions: \$3 million to continue the GPE Program overall, and an additional \$3 million to support graduate training in geropsychology within the GPE. This initiative has been the top legislative priority for the APA Education Directorate and Education Advocacy staff and the culmination of tremendous grassroots efforts.

It is especially noteworthy that the GPE program advances the recognition of psychology as an essential health profession of national significance within the BHPr, which is charged with "coordinating, evaluating, and supporting the development and utilization of the Nation's health personnel."

Much of the credit for this big win goes to APA members across the nation, who provided the critically needed grassroots support. On the House side APA member Herbert Goldstein, PhD (of St. Petersburg, FL), successfully launched an effort to gain first-ever FY 2002 funding for the GPE program, by gaining the support of Bill Young (R-FL), Chair of the full House Appropriations Committee. In addition, APA member Robert Devies, PhD (of Alliance, Ohio) was instrumental in garnering support of Representative Ralph Regula (R-OH), Chair of the House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

In addition, Peter Nathan, PhD, of the University of Iowa, with the help of the Education Directorate and the Iowa Psychological Association, hosted a reception for Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chair of the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee. Senator Harkin's support for GPE was evident in the final Senate bill, which included specific instruction in their report to continue GPE with a separate geropsychology component in FY 2003.

Finally, members of APA 's Committee on Aging (CONA), as well as APA grassroots networks, including the newly established Federal Education Advocacy Coordinators (FEDAC) network, played a vital role in participating in hill visits, sending letters and making calls to their Members in support of the GPE program.

#### GPE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) program provides funds to train health service psychologists to work with other health professionals in the provision of services to underserved populations (e.g., children, rural persons, chronically ill, and victims of abuse and trauma). In addition, funding to train geropsychologists who provide health care services to older persons will be established in 2003. Funding is provided through a competitive grant process to APA accredited doctoral, internship (or postdoctoral residencies if allowed by the agency) for basic or advanced training. Allowable use of funds is likely to include trainee stipends, clinical teaching psychologists, faculty and curriculum development, model demonstration programs and technical assistance.

Last year approximately 65 applications were received for 18 grants. The request for proposals (RFP) was announced on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2002 in the Federal Register and application materials were made available at the Bureau of Health Professions website with links from the APA website. Technical assistance was provided through a series of conference calls arranged following the Federal Register announcement. In addition, a Peer Review Panel made up of psychologists from around the country met in the summer to review the grant applications. Funds for FY 2002 were disbursed on September 30, 2002 (the last day of the fiscal year). A similar schedule is expected for the FY2003 funding cycle.

Further information about the GPE grant program can be found at the BHPr website <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov>. In addition, Education Advocacy staff will send out announcements on various psychology training listservs, and provide updates and information about GPE funding on its own website <http://www.apa.org/ppo/edppo.html>.