

AAGP | American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry

AAGP Statement on Immigration Executive Order February 6, 2017

The American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry (AAGP) has an organizational membership of 1,500 professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, nurse practitioners, social workers and others, who provide mental health services for older adults in the USA. The AAGP's mission is to promote the mental health and well-being of older people through professional education, public advocacy, and support of career development for clinicians, educators, and researchers in geriatric psychiatry and mental health. Given the aging of the population that is occurring in the United States, as well as around the globe, coupled with the prevalence of mental illness, the mission of our organization is more critical now than ever. A recently published study found that in the USA in 2010, there was one geriatric psychiatrist for every 11,128 older Americans and by 2030, it is projected that there will be one geriatric psychiatrist for every 20,195 Americans (American Geriatrics Society, 2011).

We join our colleagues from several other national medical associations in expressing serious concern about the recent executive order signed by President Donald Trump on January 27, 2017, which temporarily suspends entry into the United States by immigrants from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Targeting individuals on the basis of race, religion, gender (including gender identity, sexual orientation, or pregnancy), disability, age, or national origin and restricting their right to travel freely to and from their places of origin without just cause has deleterious effects on the patients and families we serve and is antithetical to the mission of our organization.

Our organization has long celebrated the diversity of its members, who represent many different countries of origin. In the United States, approximately 50% percent of practicing geriatric psychiatrists and 50% of geriatric psychiatry fellows are international medical graduates. These physicians are vital to our medical community in the provision of patient care, the education of trainees, and the advancement of scientific research. International medical graduates provide much needed services in underserved rural and inner-city areas across the United States. These physicians are also vitally important in geriatric mental health given the serious workforce shortage this field faces. Thus the Executive Order puts further strain on the physician workforce in areas of dire need.

We are deeply committed to providing ongoing support and advocacy for the members of our organization, the patients and families we serve, and all of those who may face discrimination as a result of this Executive Order.



Daniel D. Sewell, MD
President