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CalSWEC II Aging Initiative: California Labor Force Development in Geriatric Social Work

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the 2005 Aging Summit, supported by the Archstone Foundation and a statewide coalition of universities and agencies, was to develop a strategic plan for social work labor force development to serve the growing older population in California. The proposal that follows was an outcome of the CalSWEC Aging Summit supported by the Archstone Foundation, the California Geriatric Education Center, and the California Welfare Directors Association. Earlier in 2002, the California legislature (SB 2202) recognized that a geriatrically prepared cadre of health professionals is needed to serve its 3.5 million older citizens. Social work is a key profession in building community care and addressing the health and social service needs of a diverse older population. Social work can play a particularly salient role for persons with disabilities impacted by the Olmstead Decision and the 739,251 California elders served through MediCal programs. The National Institute of Aging estimates that 60-70,000 professionally trained social workers will be needed by 2020 to work with the older population. For California, whose population is composed of the largest absolute number of older citizens in the nation, the need is even greater. The California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) recognizes the need to move toward addressing this geriatric imperative. Previously, CalSWEC focused successfully on public social services for targeting programs serving children over the past 14 years. In 2004, a new phase began with CalSWEC II expanding the statewide consortium of Schools of Social Work to address the needs for labor force development related to the burgeoning population of older adults and their families.

The **vision** of this proposal, CalSWEC II Aging Initiative: California Labor Force Development in Geriatric Social Work, is to improve the care of California's older citizens by creating a well prepared labor force of geriatric social workers to provide social services, create linkages between programs, and to coordinate the care of elders. The **goals** are to: 1) transform social work education in the state in order to increase geriatric skills of practicing social workers through evidence-based and competency driven geriatric social work education and training; 2) increase the number of social workers in geriatric practice through the development of sustainable incentives to enter geriatric social work; and obtain further training in geriatric social work through sustainable MediCal and other agency and universities collaboration; and 3) to professionalize the labor force for the delivery of services to older persons. These goals would be accomplished through **measurable objectives** in this interrelated three-pronged approach: 1) to adopt evidence-based practice and competency-driven geriatric social work curriculum in all Schools of Social Work in California; 2) to develop models of sustainable incentives for geriatric social work education through county agency and university collaboratives within three linkage zones in California; and 3) to improve services for older adults by developing professional jobs and career trajectories for geriatric social workers through consultation and canvassing aging agencies. The **structure** of this CalSWEC II proposal utilizes the statewide collaboration of universities and agencies to accomplish multiple projects by teams of key leaders. Each of the three objectives will take place within each of three defined labor force linkage zones. **Projects with deliverables** will include: a California Competency Model endorsed statewide, a survey and report of the status of geriatric

curriculum in the seventeen schools of social work, faculty development in GeroEd Curriculum Development Institutes (CDI), CalSWEC Aging Dissemination Center, CalSWEC empirically based curriculum development, county agency university collaborative models, geriatric stipend generation throughout the state, geriatric in-service training models for agency staff, California labor force study, and a geriatric social work job development report. All of these statewide project products would be brought to fruition over a three-year period. This project advances the goals of the CalSWEC Aging Initiative and is supported by additional funds from California Welfare Directors Association and California State University, Long Beach, Department of Social Work. Therefore, the total project costs would be \$804,527, with \$655,147 requested from the Archstone Foundation.