



COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

NC Coalition on Aging

2016 Legislative Priorities

North Carolina is experiencing a significant increase in our older population. Today, 1 in 5 – over 2 million people in our state– are age 60 and over. There are 170,000 people age 85 and over. By 2018, the state as a whole, and 90 of the 100 counties, will have more population 60 and over than age 0-17. The need for action by the General Assembly to address the challenges faced by our older citizens and the families who provide care to those who need assistance is more imperative than ever as the population of seniors swells.

The member organizations of the NC Coalition on Aging (a statewide alliance of agencies, organizations, groups, and supporting individuals concerned with issues impacting older North Carolinians) asks the NC General Assembly for support of these priorities in the 2016 legislative short session:

Increase the state appropriation for the Home and Community Care Block Grant by \$2 million.

- The Block Grant, which is the primary funding source for non-Medicaid funded services to help older adults remain independent and living in the community, combines federal and state dollars and local matching funds.
- The state is losing ground in its efforts to help frail older adults in the community through the Block Grant with waiting lists growing and fewer individuals being served each year. Almost 9,500 seniors are waiting for services such as home-delivered meals and in-home aide services. In SFY 2015, 5,642 fewer persons were served by the Block Grant than in SFY 2012.
- Without legislative action, \$969,549 will be cut from the Block Grant at the end of this fiscal year.
- An appropriation of \$2 million would make a huge impact: 2,266 home-bound seniors could receive home delivered meals for a year or the waiting list for in-home aide services could be reduced by 1,200 frail older adults.

Pass House Bill 816 (Study the Needs of Working Caregivers).

- There are over 1.7 million family caregivers in the state providing care to an adult with limitations in daily activities at least some time during the year,
- Families provide at least 80% of all care services needed to help older relatives live in their homes. They are the backbone of our long-term care system.
- Over 60% of family caregivers work and more than 75% report that they have to make adjustments to their work schedules and 15% say they have to give up work entirely in order to care for their relative.

(over)

Appropriate \$2 million in state funding for **adult protective services.**

- Adult protective services is a mandated core service provided by county departments of social services. County departments evaluate reports of adults 18 and older alleged to be abused, neglected and/or exploited.
- There has been a 44% increase in adult protective services reports in the last five years. In SFY 2009, 17,042 reports were received, of which 9,252 were evaluated. In SFY 2015, 24,545 reports were received, of which 12,121 were evaluated. Seventy percent of those receiving adult protective services are 60 or over.
- No state funding is appropriated to counties to provide adult protective services and existing resources are stretched to the limit with county workers taking on increasing caseloads of complex cases. These challenges put some of our state's most vulnerable citizens at increased risk.

Pass **House Bill 817 (An Act Enacting the Uniform Adult Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Jurisdiction Act of 2015).** This legislation, which has been passed by 43 states including our neighboring states, would:

- Allow state courts to recognize adult guardianship orders from other states.
- Create a clear process for determining which state has jurisdiction to appoint an adult guardian if a conflict exists.
- Outline procedures for transferring a guardianship to another state and for accepting a transfer, helping to eliminate both the expense and the wait on families and caregivers.
- Reduce abuse by barring someone who wrongfully seeks control and assets of an older or disabled adult from taking a person across state lines and immediately being named guardian. It also allows state courts to penalize perpetrators and decline jurisdiction because of "unjustified conduct."

Establish a **North Carolina Study Commission on Aging.**

- With the increase in our state's older population, a vehicle like a Study Commission is needed to research and examine the needs of our state's older citizens and their caregivers and to make recommendations for action.

To see a list of the Coalition on Aging's Organization/Group Members in support of these priorities go to <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/pdfFiles/Coalition2016PrioritiesHandout.pdf>.