



NC Coalition on Aging

Agencies, organizations, and individuals that represent and support our state's aging population coming together to give voice to issues that affect older North Carolinians.

The older adult population in North Carolina is growing by leaps and bounds and as such, their needs are increasing.

- Today, 1 in 5 – over 2 million people in the state – are age 60 and over. By 2033, about 1 in 4 will be over 60, and people over 85 will be the fastest growing population group.
- Effective this year, there are more people in the state over the age of 60 than under the age of 18.

2018 Legislative Priorities

Increase the recurring state funding for the **Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) by \$7 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. In January of 2018, there were 10,935 seniors on waiting lists for services.
- An appropriation of \$7 million would make a huge impact: The waiting list could be reduced by approximately one-third. Most impacted would be high demand services such as home delivered meals and in-home aide services.

Increase state funding and support for **adult protective services (APS) and **public guardianship services** and conduct a comprehensive evaluation of these services.**

- APS and guardianship services are mandated core services provided by county departments of social services to some of our state's most vulnerable citizens.
- In recent years, there has been a major increase in the need for APS and guardianship services. In 2009, there were 17,073 reported cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults. This

(over)

number increased to 27,483 reported cases in SFY 16-17. The need for publically funded guardians has more than doubled over the past decade, with 6,885 adults having publically funded guardians during SFY 16-17.

- In SFY 16-17, approximately \$23.5 million was expended on APS. Funding was 3% state, 79% county, and 18% federal. In SFY 16-17, approximately \$21.8 million was spent on public guardianship - 3% state funds, 61% county, and 36% federal.
- There are growing challenges as the number of APS and guardianship cases increase and many counties are struggling to find the money to provide needed services.
- The APS and guardianship statutes have not had significant review and change in decades to reflect the changing needs of the population intended to be served.

In order to better support direct care workers and help reduce worker turnover, invest in **the Medicaid Community Alternatives Program for Disabled Adults(CAP-DA) programs by increasing the reimbursement rate from \$13.88 per hour to the national average of \$18.82.**

- The Medicaid reimbursement rate for CAP-DA is the same today as it was in 2001.
- The General Assembly increased the Medicaid Personal Care Services rate to \$15.52 per hour in the last legislative session but did not increase the CAP-DA rate.
- Most of the reimbursement rate goes to pay for personal care aides who provide direct care such as bathing, dressing, and preparing meals to those receiving CAP-DA. Wages for aides are low and getting lower with the average wage for an aide in the state being \$9.18 per hour.
- A stagnant reimbursement rate presents significant challenges in aide recruitment and retention which compromises the stability of our long-term care system.

Pass legislation that will support **working family caregivers and help to keep them in the workforce.**

- There are over 1.28 million family caregivers in the state providing care to an adult with limitations in daily activities.
- 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.
- More than 60% of family caregivers work, and of this number approximately 70% report making work accommodations because of caregiving. Over 10% say they have to give up work entirely in order to care for their relative.

To see a list of the Coalition on Aging's agency and organization members in support of these priorities, go to <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/members.html>.

For more information, contact Mary Bethel, Coalition President, at mmbethel72@gmail.com or (919) 881-0881