



## COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

### **NC Coalition on Aging Mid-Month Update – April 16, 2016**

**Governor Releases Proposed Budget to Support Families and Vulnerable Citizens** – At a press conference on April 11 at the Governor’s Mansion in Raleigh, Governor Pat McCrory unveiled his budget priorities for health and human services for the 2016 legislative short session. Included in the priorities is a recommendation to expand Medicaid and state services for older adults, including those with Alzheimer’s. Specifically, the Governor is asking the General Assembly to appropriate \$3 million to add 320 slots to the Community Alternative Program for Disabled Adults (CAP/DA) through the Medicaid program. In his remarks about this recommendation, the Governor noted that this investment allows individuals and families facing Alzheimer’s and older adults and those with disabilities who need support to stay in their homes and that adding these slots will reduce the waiting lists for these critical services. In addition, the Governor is requesting the Legislature appropriate \$1 million to increase funding for family caregiver support services, including respite care for caregivers. To read more about the Governor’s priorities for health and human services go to <https://governor.nc.gov/press-release/governor-mccrory-proposes-budget-priorities-support-families-vulnerable-citizens>.

Aging advocates attending the press conference were Suzanne Merrill (Director of the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services), Mary Bethel (President of the NC Coalition on Aging), Lee Covington (Chief Operating Officer of Senior Services Inc. of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County and Board Member for the NC Association on Aging and the Meals on Wheels Association of North Carolina), and Peggy Best (Associate Director for Programs and Advocacy with the Alzheimer’s Association Eastern NC Chapter).

### **Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services Approves**

**Recommendations for Legislative Short Session** – On April 12 at its final meeting before the convening of the legislative short session on April 25, this Committee approved its report on issues studied during the 2015-16 interim which included its recommendations for action by the General Assembly in the short session. To see a copy of the Committee’s report go to <http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/DocumentSites/browseDocSite.asp?nID=144>. Several recommendations by the Committee which resulted from the report presented to the Committee on the Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias State Plan are of particular interest to aging advocates. These recommendations are:

- General Assembly enact House Bill 816 (Study the Needs of Working Caregivers)
- General Assembly enact House Bill 817 (Enact Uniform Law on Adult Guardianship).
- General Assembly appropriate to the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services \$300,000 to fund Project CARE (Caregiver Alternative to Running on Empty) which provides support to individuals with dementia and their caregivers.
- General Assembly appropriate to the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services \$200,000 to create two full-time equivalent staff positions within the Division to oversee continued development and implementation of the No Wrong Door to Accessing Benefits initiative. Development and implementation of this initiative shall include at least all of the following:
  - Enhancement of the NC 2-1-1 database by migrating Alzheimer’s disease and dementia-related information from community resources into the existing NC 2-1-1 database.
  - Management of the Alzheimer’s disease and dementia-related stakeholder partnership.
  - Evaluation and planning for statewide implementation of the No Wrong Door to Accessing Benefits initiative.
- By October 1, 2016, the NC Department of Health and Human Services shall explore and report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and the Joint Oversight Committee on Medicaid and NC Health Choice on options for expanding the number of slots and the types of services available under North Carolina’s Medicaid Home and Community Based Services Waiver programs, including the Community Alternatives Program for Disabled Adults (CAP/DA) and the Community Alternatives Program for Choice (CAP/Choice) to increase access to adult day care, personal care, and caregiver respite services. The report shall include:
  - A description of the expansion options considered by the Department.
  - Estimated costs and the savings for each option considered by the Department.
  - An evaluation by the Department of the advantages and the disadvantages of each option considered.

**Medicaid Personal Care Services Class Action Lawsuit Settlement Approved** – The state has settled a longstanding class action lawsuit (filed in 2011) over Medicaid personal care services. In the settlement agreement, which was approved by a federal District Court on April 1, the state agrees to make sure eligibility is the same whether a person lives at home or in an institution. Per the settlement, the Medicaid agency is required to use comparable practices and procedures for assessing a person’s need for the service as well as reinstate or reassess some class members who were previously denied or lost the service. To read more about this, go to <http://www.disabilityrightsncc.org/>.

**Changes for State Legislature** – State Senator Dan Soucek, a Republican from Boone, who represented Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Caldwell, and Watauga Counties in the General Assembly resigned from the House on April 8. Senator Soucek was not running for re-election. Chris Sgro,

executive director of Equality, NC, was appointed on April 13 to fill out the term of state Representative Ralph Johnson (D Guilford) who died in March. This seat for House District 58 will be filled by Amos Quick, who won the Democratic primary, when the General Assembly convenes in 2017.

**April's Coalition on Aging meeting** will be held on Friday, April 22, at 10:00 a.m. in the first floor conference room at the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services located in Taylor Hall on the Dorothea Dix campus in Raleigh (693 Palmer Drive). The call in number for those joining the meeting by phone is 1-866-215-3402 and the pass code is 5080266#. Agenda items for the meeting include a presentation by Joyce Massey-Smith, Chief of the Adult Services Section at the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services, on adult protective services in North Carolina. Plans for the **Coalition's Day at the Legislature on May 10** will also be discussed and there will be time for sharing by Coalition members.

**Fire at Assisted Living in Eden Claims Life of Resident** – We were saddened to learn that a resident of Arbor Ridge, as assisted living community in Eden, died in a fire at the facility on April 11. Here is a article with more details: [http://www.greensboro.com/news/local\\_news/resident-dies-in-fire-at-arbor-ridge/article\\_b5388fe1-92c1-5d1a-b7da-b7a120f47985.html](http://www.greensboro.com/news/local_news/resident-dies-in-fire-at-arbor-ridge/article_b5388fe1-92c1-5d1a-b7da-b7a120f47985.html).

**Department of Labor Finalizes Rules to Strengthen Protections for Retirement Savers** – On April 6, the Department announced the completion of its conflicts of interest rules to strengthen protections for workers and retirees who turn to financial professionals for advice on how best to save and invest for retirement. Long advocated for by groups such as AARP, these rules are designed to ensure that all financial professionals who offer retirement investment advice act in their consumers' best interest. To learn more, go to <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/06/fact-sheet-middle-class-economics-strengthening-retirement-security>.

**Other Reports and Resources of Interest:**

- From the National Council on Aging - **“Recommendations to Improve Data Collection to Monitor, Track, and Evaluate State Approaches to Family Support Services”** - ([https://www.ncoa.org/resources/recommendations-to-improve-data-collection-to-monitor-track-and-evaluate-state-approaches-to-family-support-services/?utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=NCOAWeek](https://www.ncoa.org/resources/recommendations-to-improve-data-collection-to-monitor-track-and-evaluate-state-approaches-to-family-support-services/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=NCOAWeek)) – Released March 2016.
- From National Institutes on Health – **“An Aging World 2015”** – (World's older population grows dramatically - NIH-funded Census Bureau report offers details of global aging phenomenon) – (<http://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/worlds-older-population-grows-dramatically>) – Released March 28, 2016.
- From National Public Radio – **“Just Turned 40? An Architect Says It's Time to Design for Aging”** (<http://www.npr.org/sections/healthshots/2016/04/04/472186457/just-turned-40-an-architect-says-its-time-to-design-for-aging>) — Aired April 4, 2016.

- From National Public Radio – “**Life Expectancy Study: It's Not Just What You Make, It's Where You Live**” (<http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/04/11/473749157/its-not-just-what-you-make-its-where-you-live-says-study-on-life-expectancy>) – Aired April 11, 2016
- From ABC News – “**Grace and Frankie' Stars Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin Talk Aging and Dating Over 70**” (<http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/grace-frankie-stars-jane-fonda-lily-tomlin-talk/story?id=38427178>) – Aired April 15, 2016.

**Additional North Carolina Site Added for Age of Disruption 2016 Tour** – In addition to the previously announced Tour stops in Charlotte on April 20 and Chapel Hill on April 21, a third site has been added for this Tour which features *Disrupt Dementia*, a community-based workshop, and Dr. Bill Thomas’ signature “non-fiction theater” performance, *Life’s Most Dangerous Game*, featuring the unconventional pairing of a physician (Dr. Thomas) and a musician, [Nate Silas Richardson](#). This third workshop and theatre performance in the state will be held on April 19 at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem. To find out more go to <https://drbillthomas.org/news/age-of-disruption-2016-world-tour-lineup/>.

**7<sup>th</sup> Annual Creative Aging Symposium (Move and Be Moved)** will be held on Friday, May 6, at Southminster in Charlotte. The keynote presenter for the Symposium is Michelle Person who is a choreographer, dancer, and master teacher actively working in many communities in North Carolina and abroad. She makes dances with people of all ages and abilities including veterans, inmates, retired clowns, preschoolers, politicians, and professional dancers. She was recognized by the NC Arts Council with a Choreographic Fellowship in 2002-2004 and was selected by the US Department of State to lead Cultural Diplomacy missions to Sierra Leone and China in 2011, 2014, and 2016. She is a William Friday Fellow committed to improving human relations in the state of North Carolina. To find out more information, go to <http://www.can-nc.org/creative-aging-symposium/>.

**Rebecca Chaplin has been hired by AARP North Carolina to be their Associate State Director for Community Outreach/Advocacy** for western North Carolina. She is currently an independent contractor working as an Aging and Disabilities Program Association for the Land of Sky Regional Council Area Agency on Aging in Asheville and is Director of Interbeing Consulting. She will begin work with AARP on May 23.

**Coalition on Aging Membership** – Membership in the Coalition on Aging is open to any agency, organization, group, or individual who is interested in aging in North Carolina. To renew your membership or to sign up for the first time, go to <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/membership.aspx>.

**Have questions about the Coalition on Aging or need more information, check out our website at <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/>.**