



COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

**NC Coalition on Aging
April Update – April 23, 2018**

Mark Your Calendar - The May meeting for the NC Coalition on Aging will be May 18 in the Brown Building on the Dix Campus at 10:00 a.m. It is moved up a week due to the Memorial Day Holiday.

March for Meals: On March 22, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed into law a measure that amended the Older Americans Act of 1965 and established a national nutrition program for seniors 60 years and older. For more than 45 years, these critical programs – commonly referred to as Meals on Wheels – have delivered nutritious meals while providing friendly visits and safety checks to seniors all year in virtually every community across the country. Meals on Wheels programs have come together each March since 2002 to celebrate this collaboration of local community organizations, businesses, all levels of government and compassionate individuals who make local Meals on Wheels program possible.

On April 17, Dr. Mandy Cohen (second from the left), Secretary of the NC Department of Health and Human Services, partnered with Audrey Edmisten (first from the left), Aging Program Specialist with the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services, to deliver meals for Meals on Wheels of Wake County. Joining them for a picture before they left for their meal route is Alan Winstead, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels of Wake County and Treasurer of the Coalition on Aging, and Manju Karkare, Meals on Wheels of Wake County Board President.



FY 18 OmniBus Bill Good News for Programs for Older Adults: Fear about potential cuts in federal funding for programs which impact older adults proved unfounded, for the most part, when Congress passed and President Trump signed into law the “omnibus” appropriation bill for FY 2018 on March 23. This legislation, which finalized all 12 appropriations bills, did not contain many of the proposals put forward by the Administration or Congress to cut or eliminate programs and even included significant increases for some programs. Advocacy from older adult and their families as well as by agencies and organizations that serve and represent them played a big part in this effort as did the budget deal that raised caps on annual spending. A summary prepared by the National Council on Aging (NCOA) which is provided below gives a good overview of key provisions in the bill pertaining to aging related programs.

The following programs had been slated for cuts or elimination, but they were preserved and/or received increases:

- **Medicare State Health Insurance Program (SHIP)**, proposed for elimination by the Administration and House, was increased by \$2 million to \$49.1 million.
- **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)**, proposed for elimination by the Administration and a \$100 million cut by the House, was level-funded at \$400 million.
- **Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME)**, proposed for a \$3 million cut by the Administration and House, was level-funded at \$8 million.
- **Adult Protective Services (APS) and the Elder Justice Initiative**, proposed for a \$2 million cut by the Administration and House, was increased by \$2 million to \$12 million.
- **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**, proposed for elimination by the Administration, a \$115 million cut by the House, and a \$15 million cut by the Senate, was level-funded at \$715 million.
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**, proposed for elimination by the Administration and a \$40 million cut by the House, was increased by \$300 million to \$3.3 billion.
- **Social Security Administration (SSA) administrative funding**, proposed for a \$400 million cut by the Senate, was increased by \$480 million.
- **Prevention and Public Health Fund** allocations, which were replaced by regular appropriations for CDSME and Falls Prevention at the Administration for Community Living by the Administration and House, were restored.

The following programs that were proposed for elimination by the Administration but protected in Congress also fared well in the final legislation:

- **Falls Prevention** at the Centers for Disease Control was level-funded at \$2.1 million.
- **Senior Corps** was level-funded at \$202.1 million.
- **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** was increased by \$250 million to \$3.6 billion.
- **Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)** was level-funded at \$1.7 billion.

Older Americans Act (OAA) programs that weren't under threat but continued to be underfunded received notable increases:

- Supportive Services and Senior Centers: \$34.9 million
- Congregate Nutrition Program: \$40 million
- Home-Delivered Nutrition Program: \$19 million
- National Family Caregiver Support Program: \$30 million
- Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: \$5 million
- Aging Network Support Activities: \$2.5 million
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs): \$2 million
- Native American Nutrition and Supportive Services: \$2 million
- Native American Caregivers Support: \$2 million
- Protection of Vulnerable Older Americans: \$1 million

Section 202 Housing for the Elderly also received an increase of \$175.6 million.

Unfortunately, Congress did not include a long-overdue extension of the **Money Follows the Person (MFP)** program. Enacted in 2005 with strong bipartisan support, MFP has helped 44 states transition over 75,000 older adults and individuals with disabilities from nursing homes back to their homes and make it easier for them to access home and community-based services. The bipartisan EMPOWER Care Act to extend the program, introduced in the Senate by Sens. Portman (R-OH) and Cantwell (D-WA) and in the House by Reps. Guthrie (R-KY) and Dingell (D-MI), was not included in the final bill.

Coalition Advocacy in Short Legislative Session: In addition to on-going advocacy efforts, the Coalition on Aging will have a Virtual Advocacy Day on May 22. Members are encouraged to make calls and send e-mails to their Senate and House members as well as Health and Human Service Committee leaderships regarding our priority issues. On June 6, Coalition members who are available, are invited to meet at the Legislative Building to make in-person visits with legislators about our priorities. Materials will be sent to Coalition members in early May about these activities and they will be discussed in more detail at the May 18 Coalition meeting.

What's Next on the Federal Funding Front: President Trump has reported that he is hearing from many constituents about the increased level of funding in the Omnibus bill and the raising of the caps on annual spending, and he has indicated that he is considering a proposal to rescind some of the funding. Key Republican members of Congress have indicated that a rescissions package is a “non-starter as they are concerned about how moving forward with such a package would affect future bipartisan negotiations over spending bills. Congress is now working on FY 19 appropriations. Republican appropriation leaders in both the House and Senate have already held strategy sessions to talk about how to get individual spending bills to the floor as soon as possible. A fast paced spring schedule is planned with markups slated to start up weeks earlier than last year. First floor votes could come as soon as early June with action on all 12 appropriation bills by the July Fourth break. An important driver in this process is the fact that it is an election year and many House and Senate members are in competitive races and they want to get the budget done as soon as possible so they can spend time on the campaign trail.

Aging Policy Listening Sessions: As was announced at last Friday’s Coalition meeting, the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services has added two additional Aging Policy Listening Sessions for the 2019-2023 State Aging Services Plan. This brings to five the number of listening sessions that will be held in May and June. These Listening Sessions, which are co-hosted by the NC Association of Area Agencies on Aging, will help identify the needs of the state’s older citizens, disabled adults, and their caregivers. As noted, the information gathered will also inform North Carolina’s 2019-2023 Aging Services Plan and will likely guide policy work for the Division, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and other agencies of state government in the next several years. Therefore, it is important that aging consumers, providers, and advocates come out in full force at these Sessions to make their voices heard. DHHS Assistant Secretary for Human Services, Michael Becketts, indicated at Friday’s Coalition meeting that it is his intention to attend all of the Listening Sessions if possible. Within the next two weeks, the Coalition will be sending materials to members that can be helpful in preparing remarks about priorities of the Coalition.

The dates and locations of the listening sessions are as follows:

May 8, 2018

The Folk-Art Center
Milepost 382 Blue Ridge Parkway
Asheville, NC
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

May 22, 2018

Piedmont Triad Regional Council
1398 Carrollton Crossing Drive
Kernersville, NC 27284
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

May 30, 2018

New Hanover Senior Resource Center
2222 S. College Rd. Wilmington, NC 28403
Wilmington, NC
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

New Announced Locations:

June 19, 2018

Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation Building
[4561 County Home Road](#)
[Greenville, NC 27858](#)
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

June 27, 2018

Centralina Council of Governments
[9815 David Taylor Drive](#)
[Suite 100](#)
[Charlotte, NC 28262](#)
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

The Division is currently checking about the use of technology to join the sessions and will communicate if this is possible.

Attendees may register to speak upon arrival at the meetings or in advance by completing the on-line [Listening Session Sign-Up Form](#). Speakers will be limited to three minutes and are encouraged to provide a written copy of their comments when registering. The scheduled meeting locations are accessible to people with disabilities. Those planning to attend who need assistance or special accommodations are asked to complete the [Listening Session Sign-Up Form](#).

Those who are unable to attend one of the meetings may submit written comments by June 29, 2018 to: Aging Plan, NC Division of Aging and Adult Services, 2101 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-2101.

Comments may also be e-mailed to agingplan@dhhs.nc.gov or faxed to Aging Plan at (919)733-0443.

The current Aging Services Plan is available at <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/aging/plan.htm>.

Legislative Committees Winding Down: In preparation for the convening of the short legislative session on May 16, legislative committees are beginning to complete their work for the interim period. The [Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services](#) met on April 10 and approved its [report](#) which included a recommendation that the Cochairs of the Committee allow the Subcommittee on Aging to continue its study of the State's delivery of services for older adults during the interim period following the 2018 Regular Session of the 2017 North Carolina General Assembly. The Committee is proposing four draft bills for the coming short session pertaining to medical education and residency, telemedicine, psychology interjurisdictional compact, and health issues in local confinement facilities (jails and prisons). The Committee also heard a [presentation](#) about and received the Stage One [Report](#) from the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group.

The [Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid and NC Health Choice](#) also met on April 10 and continued to hear reports about these two programs. At the meeting, a presentation was made on the [study](#) recently completed by NC Division of Medical Assistance, per the direction of the General Assembly in the last legislative session, on the Efficacy of the Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE).

[The Legislative Research Commission Committee on Access to Healthcare in Rural North Carolina](#) met on April 12 and also approved its Committee [report](#) that contained seven recommendations including ones pertaining to graduate medical education funding, funding for loan repayment program targeted to rural health providers, and support for implementation of a statutory framework for telemedicine.

The [Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee](#) heard and approved a [report](#) from the Joint Subcommittee on Medical Education and Medical Residency Programs on April 3. The Subcommittee, which only had time to hold two meetings before its reporting deadline, called

for further study over two interim periods, with a final report set for March 1, 2020. The Joint Subcommittee noted that more information is needed to identify specific measurable objectives, along with specified timeframes for achievement, which will be used by the State when funding medical education and residency programs that address healthcare needs throughout the State. The Subcommittee reported that it found that the State does not appear to have a specific set of objectives for medical education and residency programs. The report also calls for legislation directing the Department of Health and Human Services to "gather and report information to facilitate the development of measurable objectives, along with specified timeframes for achievement" for funding the state's medical education and residency programs.

Is Welfare Overhaul In the Works? Last week House Republicans pushed forward with a plan to strengthen work requirements for food stamps, even as Democrats denounced the proposal as an “ideological crusade” that would hurt the poor, burden state governments and endanger the passage of major food and farming legislation. The plan which was introduced as part of the 2018 Farm Bill, would dramatically expand mandatory state workfare programs in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), better known as food stamps, and require that most adults between 18 and 59 enroll or work at least part time to receive benefits. This launches the first major skirmish in Republicans’ push to overhaul welfare and nudge recipients closer to self-sufficiency through work. To read more about the plan, click [here](#). To read a statement from the NCOA about this, click [here](#). Separately, earlier this month President Trump signed an [Executive Order](#) directing federal agencies to enforce or add [work requirements for public assistance](#) programs such as Medicaid and SNAP. Agencies must submit recommendations within 90 days.

Reminder: Deadline for commenting on the following Medicaid Transformation concept papers is April 27.

[Using Standardized Social Determinants of Health Screening Questions to Identify and Assist Patients with Unmet Health-related Resource Needs in North Carolina](#)

[North Carolina's Vision for Long-term Services and Supports under Managed Care](#)

Other News and Updates

A three-judge panel of North Carolina trial-court **judges refused on April 13 to delay state legislative elections in and around Raleigh** next month while litigation challenging several House districts continues. The panel declined to halt the May 8 primary for at least four Wake County House races because voting is already happening. This decision will also likely preserve the use of those and surrounding Wake districts in the November general election.

Following an **audit of the State Health Plan**, which took nearly a year to complete, 601 people have been kicked off the Plan. The State Health Plan provides health care benefits for about 730,000 state employees, retirees and lawmakers, as well as many of their dependents. According to the State Treasurers Office which oversees the State Health Plan, everyone who was removed had been listed as a dependent of someone else enrolled in the Plan. Some were removed because the person they enrolled through the Plan never submitted proof that they were a legitimate dependent while others admitted they did not qualify for coverage.

A 73-year-old man who lives in Florida is being accused of **defrauding the state pension plan** by more than a quarter of a million dollars in a scheme involving his dead mother. A Wake County grand jury has indicted Ben Colvard III for obtaining property by false pretenses, a felony. He's accused of collecting pension checks meant for his mother for more than 15 years after she died.

March 31 was the official end of the 2017-18 **flu season**, but through the week that ended April 14 several additional deaths in the state were reported from the flu bringing the total deaths for the year to 372, a modern day record. The 2016-17 and 2014-15 seasons each had 218 confirmed flu-related deaths.

Changes in the recent **federal tax cut bill will result in a \$30 million increase in state revenue** for the coming fiscal year, but proposed legislation presented in a legislative committee on April 11 which **changes the state tax code would increase revenue by \$54 million instead**. The draft legislation would prevent aspects of the federal legislation that reduce state revenue from applying to North Carolina's tax code. It would stop the state from adopting several of the federal tax code changes including the new federal rules governing deductions for mortgage insurance premiums and tuition expenses, as well as tax incentives for making investments in areas deemed "opportunity zones" for new economic development. The bill didn't get a vote on the 11th but will be reviewed again at a future committee meeting.

The latest **state revenue projections show a \$265.8 million surplus** over what was budgeted for the current fiscal year, but the state's budget director, Charlie Perusse, says that number will likely shrink a bit when the final numbers are released in early May. Perusse reports that this surplus which appeared in the Office of State Controller's February report reflects an unusually high number of early tax payments. The next consensus revenue forecast is scheduled for May 4 and will be used by state leaders in making budget decisions. Perusse expects the surplus to be between \$100 million and \$200 million, which amounts to about 0.5% of this year's \$23 billion budget.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has rescinded its decision to cut off Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center from the Medicare program**. Medicare officials decided in March to cut the hospital off from Medicare billing after they were notified of errors in the health system's pathology lab. Hospital managers last fall discovered errors that affected the diagnosis and treatment of 10 patients. The decision to not cut the Medical Center off Medicare came after surveyors returned to Wake Forest Baptist last month and found corrective actions in place and evidence of ongoing monitoring and improvement.

On March 22, Attorney General Josh Stein announced that Christopher Leon Brown and Mark Rayfield Brown, Jr., both of Raleigh, were sentenced to 40 months in prison and 30 months in prison, respectively, for **health care fraud conspiracy**. Together with Darryl Stanford, another co-conspirator who pleaded guilty, the defendants are to pay \$755,225 in restitution. Brown and Brown, Jr. used stolen Medicaid beneficiary and clinician information to submit thousands of false and fraudulent claims for reimbursement for health care services that were not delivered through a shell company called Christian Medical. This conviction was obtained with the partnership of the North Carolina Department of Justice, Medicaid Investigations Division, U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

UNC Lenoir Health Care and Lenoir County EMS are working together to **help Lenoir County residents with congestive heart failure avoid repeat hospital stays**. In January, the organizations partnered to start a Community Paramedic Partnership program that sends paramedics to visit patients at home for regular check-ups and assistance. The number of visits a patient gets and the length of those visits are determined on a patient by patient basis.

High Point-based vTv Therapeutics has announced that its **experimental Alzheimer's drug, Azeliragon, failed** to slow the progress of the disease. The company has been working with the drug for almost 20 years, hoping for a breakthrough in treating Alzheimer's disease, which afflicts 5.7 million Americans. The company will not be seeking FDA approval. No new Alzheimer's drugs have been approved in 14 years.

Last year, state legislators came close to passing a bill ([S.114](#)) that would improve the **public's trust in nonprofits** (without imposing much of a burden on nonprofits themselves) by creating a [simple, no-fee annual reporting system](#) for North Carolina nonprofits. There is a good chance that legislators will likely revisit this bill in the short session.

Since 2009, North Carolinians looking for an adult care home have used a **star rating system** designed to show how well these assisted-living centers look after older residents and those with disabilities. Now a multi-disciplinary team mandated last year by the General Assembly is studying whether the four-star system should be retained, modified or scrapped. As a result of a 2017 act of the legislature, people can leave their opinions about the ratings on a statewide web-based survey through July 31. To read more about this go to this [NC Health News article](#).

Gov. Roy Cooper is expected to appeal judicial rulings issued this month which uphold laws that reduced the number of Court of Appeals judges and directs the governor to include increased funding for taxpayer-funded private school tuition in his budget documents. He is also expected to appeal another ruling that upheld Republican legislator action involving control of federal grants and Volkswagen emissions settlement funds. These cases mark the latest legal fight over laws Republican lawmakers passed that Cooper argues unlawfully eroded gubernatorial powers.

Community service organizations across North Carolina have until May 4 to **apply for state-funded grants of up to \$150,000 to fight the opioid epidemic** in their areas. According to the state Department of Health and Human Services, these grants will help local communities work together to turn the tide of the opioid crisis through treatment and recovery assistance.

The progressive National Partnership for Women and Families has analyzed Census data and determined that North Carolina women earn about 82 cents on the dollar compared with men. The **wage gap** accounts for a yearly pay difference of more than \$8,000 per woman.

Metal detectors and x-ray machines are being installed at the entrances to the Legislative Building. This is part of an effort to heighten security around the General Assembly. Lobbyists, journalists and members of the public will soon be required to pass through the security screening each time they enter the building. A separate entry process will allow legislators and staff to bypass the lines. The change does not affect the entrances to the Legislative Office Building.

Data released by federal health officials shows **that North Carolina had continued strong enrollment in the federal health insurance marketplace** during the most recent signup period. Close to half of North Carolina's 519,803 signups for insurance available under the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obamacare) took place during the final week of enrollment. This year's open enrollment period was half the length of prior years.

North Carolina is joining a group of 17 states in suing the Trump administration over a new **question added to the Census that asks people whether they are U.S. citizens.** State Attorney General Josh Stein says asking such a question would diminish Census turnout in states with large immigrant populations, like North Carolina. The lack of turnout could threaten the states' congressional representation and the states' share of federal funding.

North Carolina's largest health insurer, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, is **clamping down on coverage of opioid prescriptions.** It has announced it will no longer cover first-time prescription of short-acting opioids for more than a seven-day supply. Initial prescriptions for more than seven days of immediate-release opioids will be automatically rejected at the pharmacy. Limiting initial opioid prescription lowers the risk of addiction and chances of unused drugs hitting the street. Blue Cross says up to 4,000 opioid prescriptions filled each month were exceeding seven days. That's about one out of seven prescriptions of this kind, down from one out of five three months ago.

The issue of **medical burnout is being called a serious national industrywide problem** that can put patient health and lives at risk and ruin careers. A 2017 research report by prominent research physicians Tait Shanafelt of the Stanford Medicine and Christine Sinsky of the American Medical Association showed that more than half of U.S. physicians are experiencing substantial symptoms of burnout. Physicians working in the specialties at the front lines of care - - emergency medicine, family medicine, general internal medicine, neurology -- are among the highest risk of burnout. Burnout is nearly twice as prevalent among physicians as workers in other fields, according to the report. A 2016 survey of America's 3.6 million nurses by the American Nurses Association also showed that 82% of respondents reported that they are at significant risk for workplace stress.

According to a news release from the N.C. Academy of Family Physicians, **more North Carolina medical students chose to enter the specialty of family medicine** than ever before this year. As the 600 graduates of North Carolina medical schools recently "matched" with their

residency programs, North Carolina had 92 students (15.4%) choose family medicine as their specialty of choice. To foster greater participation in family medicine, the academy developed a "pipeline" program to help medical students pursue the practice. Over the past several years, the Academy has partnered with the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation to invest approximately \$2 million in programs designed to increase medical student interest in family medicine. Efforts include scholarships, early medical school experiences in rural family medicine, policy and leadership rotations, mentoring experiences, and travel stipends to attend both state and national family medicine conferences.

The N.C. Department of Insurance and the North Carolina Rate Bureau announced on April 18 that they have agreed on a **4.8% increase statewide for homeowners' insurance**. The Rate Bureau had asked for an 18.7% rate increase. The 4.8% increase will vary according to territory with a cap of 5.5% statewide instead of the 25% increase on the coast proposed by the Rate Bureau.

The state elections board has voted unanimously to **certify the North Carolina Green Party** as a political party in the state. The party's candidates can now automatically be on state ballots through at least 2020.

Newly released **U.S. Census Bureau data** (population estimates from July 2016 to July 2017) shows:

- The three fastest-growing counties in the Carolinas border the coast: Pender, Brunswick and Horry County, S.C.
- Three counties grew by 10,000 people or more: Wake, Mecklenburg and Horry County, S.C.
- 52 of the 146 counties in the Carolinas lost people. Cumberland County, N.C. lost the most -- nearly 1,000 people.

The **NC Center for Nonprofits** is moving. Effective May 1, its new address is 5800 Faringdon Place, Raleigh, NC 27609.

Coalition member the **Center for Responsible Lending (CRL)** reports that efforts are down to the final 6-8 weeks for defending the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's **national payday rule** from Congressional interference. Two fast track bills, one in the House and one in the Senate, would:

- Repeal the Consumer Bureau's final payday rule, and
- Prevent the Bureau from regulating payday and car title lenders in the future.

According to CRL, H.J. Resolution 122 and S.J. Resolution 56 would fast track the repeal of the national payday rule (no committee review, simple majority vote, etc.) and stop future rulemaking to rein in 300% interest rate debt-trap loans. CRL is asking Coalition members to call Senator Tillis and Senator Burr today and ask that they commit to opposing S.J. Res. 56. The phone number for Senator Tillis is (202) 224-6342 and for Senator Burr is (202) 224-3154. You are also urged to call your House Representative and ask that he/she oppose H.J. Res. 122. To find contact information for your House member go to [Find out here](#).

AARP North Carolina is accepting applications for its **2018 Community Challenge grant** program to fund “quick action” projects that spark change in local communities. This program, which is in its second year, is part of AARP’s nationwide Livable Communities initiative which aims to make communities great places to live for everyone. The deadline for applications is 5 p.m. on May 16. To learn more, click [here](#).

The NC Department of Transportation has an [on-line brochure](#) that can be used as a reference when collecting required documents to obtain a NC REAL ID.

The deadline for registration for the [2018 Annual Meeting and Conference of the NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse](#) is May 7. The theme of the Conference is “Elder Abuse Doesn’t Discriminate.” Elaine Marshall, NC Secretary of State, will be the keynote speaker. The Conference will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Southern Wake Campus of Wake Technical Community College (9101 Fayetteville Road outside of Raleigh) in the Student Services Building.

In March, Mark Hall, Professor of Law and Public Health at Wake Forest University, released a report entitled [Do State’s Regret Expanding Medicaid?](#) According to Hall’s findings, **claims are not well founded that Medicaid expansion will cost states considerably more than what objective analysts project** and that although it is unlikely that Medicaid expansion will turn out to be entirely free to states, based on considerable experience to date, the probable costs appear to be quite low in comparison with the economic and public health benefits of expansion.

Down Home NC is a new organization that was founded in June of 2017 and is dedicated to the power of working people in small towns and rural places across the state. Organizers from the group knocked on close to 1,000 doors in the summer and fall of 2017 and asked "What issues are you worried about? What solutions do you want to see?" The findings from that survey describe a rural working class that is multiracial, surprisingly unified and ready to speak out. Overwhelmingly, the dominant concern of those surveyed had to do with economic pressures and meeting basic needs. The majority (59%) said they regularly worried about "losing access to healthcare, Medicaid or Medicare. Almost half (48%) have regular concerns about "not having a job that pays enough money." More than 40% say they worry regularly about "putting good food on the table" and "having a roof over your head." When it came to solutions, respondents expressed complex feelings about government, but they do expect government to act on their behalf. While 45.3% said they believed the federal government has failed them, they want and expect government to address their essential needs, such as health care. Fully 63.5% of respondents support "guaranteeing health care for all."

At a recent Coalition on Aging meeting we heard about a **proposal that might be introduced in Congress that would allow new parents to trade future Social Security benefits for a few months of paid leave**. Projections from the [Urban Institutes’ Dynamic Simulation of Income Model \(DYNASIM\)](#) show that providing a progressive, 12-week leave benefit averaging about half pay without raising taxes would require raising the Social Security full retirement age for leave program participants about 25 weeks. This increase would permanently reduce participants’ monthly Social Security retirement benefits about 3%. The proposed program

would raise Social Security’s annual costs, net of benefit offsets, about 1%, worsening the program’s financing shortfall.

Two new resources are available for **community-based organizations to help with business planning and contracting with health care organizations and payers**. “[Fundamentals of Community-Based Managed Care: A Field Guide](#)” from the American Society on Aging is the second in a series of three issues of the publication *Generations* to focus on how best to build and preserve community-based organization (CBO) partnerships with the healthcare sector, in the interest of helping CBOs survive in the new financial climate, and for addressing the Triple Aim of improving care, improving population health, and reducing costs. This issue also addresses the social determinants of health and the role they play in aging in the community. A [resource guide on pricing](#) from the [Aging and Disability Business Institute](#) explores financial contracting and provides guidance to community-based organizations on how to build competitive pricing models for contracting with health care payers. The pricing guide also explains the differences between common types of payment arrangements such as Per Member Per-month (PMPM), per episode, and capitation

Data collected by GoodRx, a website and mobile app that tracks prescription drug prices which came from pharmacies and insurers around the country, shows the **10 most widely-prescribed drugs in each state**. In North Carolina, Norco and Vicodin which are pain pills ranked number one as the most prescribed medication. The second most prescribed drug in the state was Synthroid, a hormone replacement used to treat hypothyroidism, followed by Adderall.

Oral Health America has released a national [report](#) examining factors impacting the oral health of older adults entitled *A State of Decay: Are Older Americans Coming of Age Without Oral Healthcare?* North Carolina ranked 12th among states on an overall score based on six performance measures pertaining to oral health. According to the report, one-third of older adults have lost six or more teeth.

Check out the **National Institute on Aging** [website](#) for a wealth of information about health topics from A to Z including extensive information on Alzheimer’s and related dementias, caregiving, and end of life issues.

Earlier this month, the National Information and Referral Support Center invited aging and disability I&R/A programs to take its **2018 Aging and Disability I&R/A National Survey**. Given the comprehensive nature of this survey, the Center is giving programs more time to complete and submit survey responses. The deadline has been extended to **April 30**. The survey is available online at <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/4261360/Aging-and-Disability-2018-Information-Referral-Assistance-National-Survey>.

Last month, the **National Council on Disability (NCD)**, an independent federal advisory body, released the findings and recommendations of a seminal national report, *Beyond Guardianship: Toward Alternatives that Promote Greater Self-Determination for People with Disabilities*. The report thoroughly examines guardianship, the process through which an adult can be found legally incapable of making decisions for him or herself and another adult appointed to make decisions on behalf of that individual. According to the NCD, the report examines “civil death” of the rights of

people with disabilities and the elderly under guardianship and it calls on the Department of Justice to ensure full and fair due process rights.

It was reported in mid-April that the U.S. Treasury Department has relinquished some of its authority over implementation of tax cuts passed in December to the White House Office of Management and Budget. In the agreement reached between the two agencies, **more power is centralized within the White House, giving it more control over how the tax bill, including some of its murkier provisions, is interpreted.**

People in the News

Milton "Toby" Fitch Jr. was appointed to the state Senate on March 23 to replace state Sen. Angela Bryant, who resigned her position to serve on the state's Post-Release Supervision and Parole Commission. Fitch is no stranger to politics. In February, he retired from serving as a Superior Court Judge, a position he held for more than 16 years starting in 2001. Before that he served in the NC House of Representatives, representing Edgecombe and Wilson counties, from 1984 to 2001.

Amy Auth, Senate leader Phil Berger's deputy chief of staff, announced on April 18 that she is leaving her position to take a job lobbying for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill -- her alma mater. She has been on Berger's staff for 7.5 years.

The North Carolina Legislative Black Caucus Executive Committee has elected **Sen. Erica Smith, D-Northampton**, as its new caucus chair. Smith is in her second term in the legislature, and previously served as Second Vice-Chair of the NCLBC. She represents District 3, currently comprised of Bertie, Chowan, Edgecombe, Hertford, Martin, Northampton, Tyrrell and Washington counties. Her new legislative district includes Beaufort, Bertie, Martin, Northampton, Vance and Warren counties.

Damon Circosta, executive director of the A.J. Fletcher Foundation, has been named the ninth member of the new State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement. This board plays a major role in where, when and how North Carolina votes and who has control over investigating ethics complaints against lawmakers and campaigns. Before he joined the A.J. Fletcher Foundation, Circosta ran the N.C. Center for Voter Education. He also listed on his resume that he worked as a legal intern for Republican U.S. Sen. John McCain in 2002 and worked for Democrat Barack Obama's election in 2008.

Teresa Johnson Troup, Executive Director of the NC Adult Day Services Association, has received the Outstanding Alumni Award from the Campbell University School of Education. She is a graduate of the School's Social Work program.

Lisa Diaz Riegel has been hired by AARP North Carolina as Manager of Advocacy and Communications. Prior to joining AARP, she was Executive Director of BikeWalk North Carolina.

Long time aging advocate and charter delegate to the NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature, **Willie Mae Currin**, from Alamance County died in Burlington on March 22 at the age of 95.

Edna Faye Cobb who worked for the NC Division of Aging (what it was called at that time) in the 1990's, died in Chapel Hill on April 13.

Katelyn Cheek is the new Manager of Communication and Member Services with The Carolinas Center effective March 30. **Marsha Van Hecke** retired from this position on March 29.

Valerie Arendt has been named as the Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers North Carolina Chapter (NASW-NC). Prior to assuming this position, she served for seven years with the Chapter as the Director of Membership, Marketing and Communications. **Kathy Boyd**, the long-serving Executive Director of the Chapter, retired the end of March.

Deby Dihoff has been named as the Acting Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, North Carolina (NAMI NC).

North Carolina **Congressman Patrick McHenry** (10th U.S. House District) ranks fourth in Republican House leadership and could potentially move up with the retirement of House Speaker Paul Ryan if Republicans keep control of the House.

The conservative advocacy group Americans for Prosperity-North Carolina has announced that **Chris McCoy** will be its new state director. McCoy previously served as senior field director.

Equality North Carolina has announced that **Kendra R. Johnson** will become its Executive Director next month. Johnson worked recently as Arkansas state director for the national group Human Rights Campaign.

William "Beau" Mills has been named as the new Executive Director of the N.C. Metropolitan Mayors Coalition. He served as the Coalition's first Executive Director from 2001 to 2008. He also worked previously as a program and policy analyst at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C., with Gov. Jim Hunt's policy office, in private consulting and in leading state Congressional offices in the state. Most recently, he was the Director of Federal Affairs for UNC-Chapel Hill. He replaces Julie White, who left the coalition in 2017 to serve as a Deputy Secretary at the N.C. Department of Transportation.

Upcoming Meetings/Events for the Next Month

April 24, 2018 – Community Conversation – “Health Care in Your Community” at Campbell University School of Osteopathic Medicine, Leon Levine Hall, Room 200 in Lillington from 5:30 to 7:15 p.m. – Sponsored by Health Advocacy Project of the NC Justice Center

April 28, 2018 - NC Baptist Aging Ministry (NC BAM) Rampin' Up 2018 - (building wheel chair ramps across state)

April 30 – May 1, 2018 – NC Conference on Homelessness, “Bringing It Home: Ending Homelessness in North Carolina” at McMimmon Center in Raleigh, NC.

May is Older Americans Month. Visit oam.acl.gov for materials, activity ideas, and resources to help promote and celebrate this year’s theme, *Engage at Every Age*.

May 2, 2018 – Health Advocacy Training sponsored by the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, and Care4Carolina at Novant Health Conference Center at Forsyth Medical Center located at 3333 Silas Creek Parkway in Winston-Salem from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

May 2-4, 2018 - NC Guardianship Association Annual Conference in Asheville, NC

May 3, 2018 - A Newer Problem in Older Age: Substance Use Disorders in Older Adults - at William F. Andrews Center/Wake AHEC from 9:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m

May 5, 2018 - NC Baptist Aging Ministry (NC BAM) Rampin' Up 2018 - (building wheel chair ramps across state)

May 5, 2018 – Alzheimer’s North Carolina’s Cinco de Mayo Celebration at Brian Creek Country Club (9400 Club Hill Drive) in Raleigh, NC at 6:30 p.m.

May 13 – June 17, 2018 – Elder Abuse Awareness in North Carolina (Mother’s Day to Father’s Day)

May 16, 2018 - NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse Annual Conference - at Wake Tech Community College, Raleigh, NC

May 16, 2018 - NC House of Representatives and NC Senate - Convene at 12 Noon for Short Legislative Session

May 17, 2018 - Senior Consumer Fraud Task Force Meeting - from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at AARP NC (5511 Capital Center Blvd., Suite 400) in Raleigh

May 18, 2018 – NC Coalition on Aging Monthly Meeting – Brown Building on Dix campus (801 Biggs Drive) at 10:00 a.m.

May 22-24, 2018 - NCOA Center for Healthy Aging Annual Meeting - in Arlington, Virginia

June 15, 2018 – [World Elder Abuse Awareness Day](#)

Additional Future Items Not Previously Added to the [Calendar](#) on the Coalition’s Website.

Articles/News Stories/Resources

[Getting Your Affairs in Order: Advanced Care Planning](#)

[Nine Steps to Respite Care for Family Caregivers of Persons with Dementia, including Alzheimer's Disease](#)

[Nine Steps to Respite Care for Family Caregivers of Children and Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#)

[The Cheater's Guide to Beating Alzheimer's: New Research and Prevention Breakthroughs](#)

[Five Things to Know About the New Medicare Card](#)

[The Health 202: Why Republicans don't talk about repealing Obamacare anymore](#)

[For people age 50 or older, doctors say the new shingles vaccine is a must](#)

[HIV-infected people are living for years, but age-related diseases set in early](#)

[Study: Drinking extra glass of wine shortens life by 30 minutes](#)

[Report ranks states by life expectancy; here are the top 10](#)

[Doctors Who Get Drug Company Money More Likely To Prescribe Company's Meds](#)

[New way of defining Alzheimer's aims to find disease sooner](#)

[Scammers use new Medicare card announcement as opportunity to trick seniors](#)

[The Final Obamacare Tally Is In. About 400,000 Fewer People Signed Up This Year](#)

[The doctor is in: White House physician nominated to lead VA](#)

[Medicare Is Cracking Down on Opioids. Doctors Fear Pain Patients Will Suffer](#)

[The Health 202: Why the medical community is concerned about a genetic testing boom](#)

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[Antibiotic-resistant 'nightmare bacteria' found in NC, 26 other states, CDC says](#)

[State suspends Laurinburg nursing home's license to operate for neglect](#)

[OPINION, Tom Campbell: Our rural areas are suffering. What will help?](#)

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[Our Opinion: Home health care may no longer be government's role](#)

[NC Health News Stories:](#)

- [High Point Company's Alzheimer's Drug Trial Fails](#)
- [NC's Star Rating System for Assisted Living Homes Gets Close Scrutiny](#)
- [Trump Administration Says It Will Reduce Medicare Drug Prices](#)
- [NC SHIP Hangs on to Funding in \\$1.3 Trillion Federal Budget](#)
- [Wake Forest Baptist Back in Medicare's Good Graces](#)
- [Rebates May Help Some, But Are No Silver Bullet for High Drug Costs](#)
- [New DHHS Map Puts Communities' Needs in Sharp Relief](#)
- [Review: NC Emergency Health Preparedness Improving](#)
- [To Curb Rising Health Insurance Costs, Some States Try 'Reinsurance Pools'](#)
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- [State Employees to See Some Changes with the State Health Plan](#)
- [By the Numbers: Incarcerating Mental Illness and Addiction](#)
- [Behavioral Health Plan Still Needs Refining Adult Day Care Promotes Seniors' Health and Sense of Community, But Faces Challenges](#)
- [Advocates On Road Trip to "Change the Rural Narrative"](#)

[NPR Aging Series:](#)

[How Medicare's Conflicting Hospitalization Rules Cost Me Thousands Of Dollars](#)

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[To Prevent Falls In Older Age, Try Regular Exercise](#)

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[Ineffective Treatment Often Prescribed For Lower Back Pain, Report Says](#)

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['The Neuroscientist Who Lost Her Mind' Returns From Madness](#)

[Time's Running Out For Many Frail, Older People In Puerto Rico](#)

['Aggressive' Advance Directive Permits Halting Food And Water In Severe Dementia](#)

[Why Not Talk About Death?](#)

[Forum: How Discrimination Damages Health In LGBTQ Communities](#)

Dates for 2018 Coalition Meetings: Mark your calendar for all the Coalition's meetings for the rest of the year. The schedule is as follows:

May 18
June 22
August 24
September 28 (annual meeting at NC State University Club)
October 26
December 7

Meetings are held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in room 104 of the Brown Building on the Dix Campus (801 Biggs Drive) unless notified otherwise. For those who can not attend in person but can call in, the call in number is [1-866-215-3402](tel:1-866-215-3402) and the passcode is 5080266#.

Membership Registration and Renewal: Coalition on Aging membership registration/renewal can be done in one of two ways.

Option 1: Go to <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/membership.aspx>. And print off a membership registration/renewal form which can be completed and returned along with dues payment (payable to the NC Coalition on Aging) to the address noted on the form.

Option 2: Complete the registration and payment process (PayPal) on-line. Contributions in addition to dues can also be paid in this way.

The Coalition has a hardship provision for those who wish to join the Coalition but are unable to pay the full dues amount. To apply for this hardship provision, please contact Mary Bethel, Coalition President, at mmbethel72@gmail.com.

Submitting Information for Updates: If you have news or information on activities and events you would like to have included in an *Update* to Coalition members, please send details to Mary Bethel, Coalition President, at mmbethel72@gmail.com. The Coalition also posts a master calendar of aging related events and activities on its website.

Have questions about the Coalition on Aging or need more information, including information about joining the Coalition or renewing membership, please contact us at mmbethel72@gmail.com or check out our website at <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/>.