



COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

NC Coalition on Aging Update for August 2016

Dual Eligibles Advisory Committee Meetings Underway – Medicaid reform legislation passed by the NC General Assembly called for the establishment of a Dual Eligible Advisory Committee. The Committee is to advise the newly established N.C. Division of Health Benefits on the development of a long-term strategy to cover dual eligibles through capitated prepaid health plan (PHP) contracts and report the strategy to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid and N.C. Health Choice by January 31, 2017. Mary Bethel, President of the Coalition on Aging, represents the Coalition on the Advisory Committee and is a member of the Steering Committee for the Advisory Committee. Several other members of the Coalition are also on the Advisory Committee and the Steering Committee. Advisory Committee meetings, which are open to the public, have been set through February of 2017. The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be on August 23 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at McKimmon Center in Raleigh. To learn more about the Dual Eligibles Advisory Committee and to get a list of Committee meeting dates, click [here](#).

Overall Hospital Quality Ratings Released – On July 27, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released its first overall hospital quality ratings. A total of 3,617 hospitals were rated on a one to five star scale with five stars being the highest rating. The ratings were based on 64 individual measures, including death and infection rates and patient reviews. The hospital industry had been lobbying CMS and Congress to not release the ratings saying that the ratings made hospitals that treat the toughest patients look bad. The health of patients is factored in when comparing hospitals, but not as much as some hospitals would like. Four hospitals in North Carolina received a five star rating: Novant Health Medical Park in Winston-Salem, Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital in Greensboro, Carolina East Medical Center in New Bern, and North Carolina Specialty Hospital in Durham. To learn more about the rating system click [here](#).

Voter ID Update – One almost needs a program to keep up with all the developments related to where voter ID stands in North Carolina. Last month, a 4th U.S. Circuit of Appeals ruling struck down voter ID requirements approved by the N.C. General Assembly in 2013. On August 15, Governor Pat McCrory asked the U.S. Supreme Court to stay the 4th Circuit's ruling and reinstate the voter ID law. On August 16, the Supreme Court stated that it wants a written response from those who sued to overturn the state's ID law about the state's request to restore the photo ID requirement for the November election. This response is due by August 25. Older adults are reported to be one of the population groups in the state to most likely not have a photo ID.

More State Legislators Resign – Two Republican members of the N.C. House of Representatives resigned their seats last week. Minority Leader Mike Hagar (R-Rutherford) resigned on August 16 and Rep. Rick Catlin (R-New Hanover), who was not running for re-election, resigned on August 15. Their resignations follow the resignation on July 25 of Rep. Charles Jeter (R- Mecklenburg) who served as the Republican conference chair. Regardless of the outcome of the November elections, there will be many new faces in the General Assembly when the session convenes in January.

Party Platforms Back Home-Based Care for Older Adults – For the first time, both the Republican and Democratic parties have recognized in their party platforms the need for community-based long-term care. Although neither platform offers very many specifics, acknowledging the importance of home-based services and supports could signal a change in future policies. For more on this, click [here](#) to read an article from Forbes. To view the full Republican party platform, click [here](#), and to review the Democratic party platform, click [here](#). Attached to the e-mail accompanying this Update is a side-by-side comparison of the wording from the platforms for the two parties related to their proposals on Social Security, universal health care/Medicare/Medicaid, prescription drugs, long-term care, family caregiving, pensions, elder abuse, Older Americans Act, disability rights, and voting rights.

Aging Boomers and Paying for Long-Term Care - On July 19, the *Raleigh News and Observer* ran a story entitled [“Aging Boomers a Looming Crisis for States That Have to Help Pay for Long-Term Care.”](#) The article by Jenni Bergal with *Stateline* was picked up by media outlets across the country and has garnered significant attention. As the article points out, states have a huge stake in where aging seniors and persons with disabilities end up getting their long-term care because many of them will not be able to afford to pay for their care and will have to rely on Medicaid. Nearly two-thirds of all Medicaid spending on services is for older adults and persons with disabilities who together make up a quarter of the Medicaid enrollment. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, Medicaid pays for 52% of all long-term care and federal and state Medicaid spending on long-term care in 2014 was about \$152 billion.

Greenlee Steps Down as Head of Administration for Community Living – Last month Kathy Greenlee ended her seven year tenure as head of the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL). She was a popular with the aging network community and respected for her contributions to the field. She will return to Kansas where she worked for 18 years in public service before going to the federal level. To see her farewell blog post, click [here](#). ACL was initially established on April 18, 2012 by bringing together the Administration on Aging, the Office on Disability and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. Since then, ACL has grown significantly. Through budget legislation in subsequent years, Congress moved several programs that serve older adults and people with disabilities from other agencies to ACL, including the State Health Insurance Assistance Program, the Paralysis Resource Center, and the Limb Loss Resource Center. The 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act moved the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research and the

independent living and assistive technology programs from the Department of Education to ACL.

Report on Independence, Technology, and Connection in Older Age – In March the President’s Council on Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) released its second and final report on the Council’s work on the topic of technology for graceful aging. As noted in the report, technology has played an important role in increasing life expectancy, but it also has an important role to play in increasing the quality of life, by maximizing American’s ability to function in their later years. The report looks at three areas where older adults experience change: social engagement and connectivity, cognitive function, and physical ability. PCAST examined technologies that promote individuals’ continued independence and productivity as these changes happen. The report includes four cross-cutting recommendations that span a wide range of technologies and eight targeted recommendations concerning specific applications to improve mobility, cognitive function, and social engagement. Some of the technologies that will support healthy aging for all Americans are Internet access, telehealth, monitoring technology, emergency preparedness systems, and intentional design. The report focuses on near-term federal actions to advance these possibilities. To see a copy of the report, click [here](#).

Medicaid Expansion Improving Access to Care and Health Outcomes for Low-Income Adults – Staff with the American Heart Association has shared with the Coalition that several recently released studies are touting the benefits of Medicaid expansion which North Carolina has not done. First, Benjamin Sommers et al. published a study comparing care utilization patterns and survey responses from individuals in Arkansas and Kentucky - two expansion states - with individuals from Texas, which has not expanded Medicaid. Two years post-expansion, low-income adults in Arkansas and Kentucky use more primary and preventive care services, report better care for chronic conditions, and note bigger improvements in overall health than their counterparts in Texas. Individuals in the expansion states are also less likely to delay care or skip medication doses due to cost, have difficulty paying medical bills, or use the emergency department as a normal source of care. You can read a [summary](#) of these findings, published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, on the Commonwealth Fund website or at the [New York Times](#). Also, two studies in *Health Affairs* found that Medicaid expansion effectively reduced hospital uncompensated care costs by 25% ([Dranove et al.](#)) and increased the share of emergency department visits paid by Medicaid without increasing the overall use of the emergency department ([Pines et al.](#)).

Division of Aging and Adult Services’ Annual Awards – The N.C. Division of Aging and Adult Services is seeking nominations for their annual awards which recognize individuals, organizations, programs and communities that have made significant contributions in support of the Division’s efforts to enhance resources, services, and opportunities for our state’s older citizens. The awards are:

- The **Ewald W. Busse Award** which recognizes an individual or organization that has had a significant impact on enhancing the health status of older North Carolinians through

efforts to direct health related policies and/or to provide leadership in developing innovative solutions to health care problems.

- The **George L. Maddox Award** which recognizes an individual or organization in the state that has excelled in creative programming for older adults.
- The **Ernest B. Messer Award** which recognizes a community (a defined geographic area) in the state that has excelled in addressing the needs of its older citizens.

The deadline for submission of award nominations is September 16. To find out more, contact Mary Edwards at the N.C. Division of Aging and Adult Services at mary.edwards@dhhs.nc.gov.

Medicare Preventive Benefits Town Hall Meetings Scheduled – The Seniors’ Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) has three town hall meetings scheduled in August and September to help inform older adults about Medicare’s preventive benefits and extra help as well as other services offered by the N.C. Department of Insurance. To register for one of the events listed below, contact Marcia Kelly with SHIIP at marcia.kelly@ncdoi.gov or 1-855-408-1212.

- Cleveland County – August 30, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. (H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Life and Conference Center at 909 E. King Street in Kings Mountain)
- Stanly County – September 7, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. and includes Medicare 101 Class from 12:00 noon – 2:00 p.m. (Stanly County Senior Services at 283 N. Third Street in Albemarle)
- Harnett County – September 15, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. and includes Medicare 101 Class from 12:00 noon – 2:00 p.m. (Harnett County Division of Aging/RSVP at 309 W. Cornelius Harnett Blvd. in Lillington)

Listening Sessions on Adult Protective Services and Guardianship Continuing Across The State – Eight listening sessions sponsored by the N.C. Division of Aging and Adult Services and County Departments of Social Services will be held in September and October. Three sessions were held in August. The goal of these sessions is to hear from local stakeholders on the issues and concerns related to older adults and adults with disabilities who may need the rights and protections provided through guardianship and adult protective services (APS). The input from these listening sessions will inform the work of the Department of Health and Human Services for the next several years in addressing the growing number of APS reports along with efforts to ensure the least restrictive alternatives are made available when adults need surrogate decision makers or other alternatives to guardianship. These sessions are modeled after the successful effort the Department conducted in 2015 around child welfare issues. Sessions will be held in Catawba County on September 7, Watauga County on September 8, Craven County on September 13, Madison County on September 21, Henderson County on September 22, Martin County on September 27, Cumberland County on September 28, and Wilson County on October 4. To find out more about these sessions, contact the local County Department of Social Services or the N.C. Division of Aging and Adult Services at (919) 855-3400.

Congressional Action – On July 14, the Senate unanimously passed **Kevin and Avonte’s Law** (S. 614) sponsored by Sen. Chalres Schumer (D-NY). The bill provides resources to help families locate loved ones with Alzheimer’s disease, autism, or other related conditions that make them prone to wander. North Carolina’s Senators were co-sponsors of the legislation. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations and to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

H.R. 5254, **Senior Accessible Housing Act**, has been introduced by Rep. Patrick Murphy (D-FL) and referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means. The bill would amend the Internal Revenue Code to create a nonrefundable tax credit for seniors who modify their residences to enhance their ability to remain living safely, independently, and comfortably in their residences.

Deputy Secretary for N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Announced Retirement – Sherry Bradsher, Deputy Secretary for Human Services in DHHS for the last four years, has announced her retirement effective October 1, 2016. Prior to being named as Deputy Secretary, she was Director of the N.C. Division of Social Services. It is reported that at this time, Secretary of DHHS Rick Brajer does not have plans to fill the Deputy Secretary role, but will instead, ask Claudia Horn, Senior Director for Employment Services, and Wayne Black, Senior Director for Social Services and County Operations, to join the DHHS Executive Team.

Senior Games President Makes National News – Louise Gooche, President of N.C. Senior Games and founder of the award winning Durham Senior Divas ‘N Dude cheerleading squad, is a celebrity. In July she was featured in a national [ABC News story](#) about not letting aging dictate your life as you get older. This was followed by feature stories on WRAL TV and other media outlets. She is pictured below doing her “signature split” move.



Hurrah for The Next Generation of Aging Advocates – Congratulations to Kay Castillo, Vice-President of the Coalition and Director of Advocacy, Policy, and Legislation for NASW – North Carolina Chapter, and her husband on the birth of their son on June 20. Congratulations also to

Charmaine Fuller Cooper, Associate State Director for Advocacy for AARP North Carolina, and her husband on the birth of their son on August 3. We expect to see both of these bundles of joy at a Coalition meeting in the future.

New State Long Term Care Ombudsman Named - Victor Orija has been named as the State Long Term Care Ombudsman at the N.C. Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS). Prior to being named to this position, he served as Interim State Ombudsman and as an Ombudsman Program Specialist at DAAS. Before coming to North Carolina, Victor served as Delaware’s State Long Term Care Ombudsman.

Riley Joins Health Advocacy Project – Brendan Riley joined the Health Advocacy Project (formerly called the N.C. Health Access Coalition) with the N.C. Justice Center as a Policy Analyst in July. Prior to assuming this position, he worked for the N.C. Association of Community Health Centers.

Annual Meeting Registration Open Until September 15 – The Coalition’s 2016 Annual Meeting and Luncheon will be held on September 23 at 12:00 noon (registration opens at 11:30 a.m.) at the N.C. State University Club located at 4200 Hillsborough Street in Raleigh. Keynote speaker for the event is Dr. Robert B. Friedland, Director of the Health Care Management and Policy Program at Georgetown University. His presentation will be on “Politics, Policy, and People: The Future of Supportive Care.”



Dr. Friedland

The agenda will also include brief comments by the Coalition President, the election of the Vice-President and Treasurer for the Coalition for the next two years, an approval of the budget for next year, and the presentation of the new Pioneer Award established by the Coalition to recognize individuals who have made long-time outstanding contributions to the field of aging in the state. Registration for the meeting/luncheon is \$20 for Coalition members and \$30 for non-members. To register for the meeting, click [here](#). Scholarships are available for students and for those for whom the registration cost is a challenge. To request a scholarship, contact Mary Bethel, Coalition President, at mmbethel72@gmail.com.

August Coalition on Aging Meeting – The Coalition meeting for the month of August will be held on Friday, August 26, 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). In addition to routine agenda items, there will be a presentation on the N.C. Medicaid Waiver and the Dual Eligibles Advisory Committee as well as a panel discussion on the reimbursement rates and wages for home care. Plans for the annual meeting on September 23 will also be shared, the Nominating Committee will make a report on recommended officers for 2017, and the process and timeline for selecting the 2017 legislative agenda will be discussed.

Hold the Date for October Meeting – The Coalition is pleased that Secretary of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Rick Brajer, will join us for the Coalition’s monthly meeting on October 28. Secretary Brajer will give very brief remarks but he wants to spend most of his time at the meeting hearing from Coalition members about the needs of older adults and their family caregivers and about what is working well as well as where challenges exist in providing programs and services for our state’s older residents.

Other News and Resources of Interest:

- From *Washington Post* – August 21, 2016 – [Are Aging and the Economic Slowdown Linked?](#)
- From *Justice in Aging* – Special Report, June 2016 – [How Can Legal Services Better Meet the Needs of Low-Income LGBT Seniors?](#)
- From *N.C. Health News* - July 26, 2016 – [States Attack a Severe Doctor Shortage](#)
- From *N.C. Justice Center* – Brief, July 2016 – [Miles Apart: North Carolina’s Homecare Workers Earn Too Little to Make Ends Meet](#)
- From *The Huffington Post* – August 19, 2016 – [Our Short-Sighted Approach to Alzheimer’s Funding](#)
- From *The Huffington Post* – July 3, 2016 – [In Sickness and In Health: The Critical Role of the Caregiver](#)
- From *The National Council on Aging* – June, 2016 – [An End to Stigma: Challenging the Stigmatization of Public Assistance Among Older Adults and People with Disabilities](#)
- From *Gallup* – May 27, 2016 – [In U.S., Support Up for Doctor-Assisted Suicide](#)
- From *News and Observer* – Op Ed, July 27, 2016 – [Like Mental Health Reform, N.C. Medicaid Changes Would Be Disastrous](#)
- From *News and Observer* – Op Ed, July 24, 2016 – [Mangling North Carolina’s Model Medicaid System](#)
- From *NPR* – July 18, 2016 – [Cardiac Rehab Saves Lives. So Why Don’t More Heart Patients Sign Up?](#)
- From *Associated Press* – July 24, 2016 – [Behavior Changes Offer Clues That Dementia Could Be Brewing](#)
- From *NPR* – August 15, 2016 – [Will Your Prescription Meds Be Covered Next Year? Better Check!](#)
- From *NPR* – August 9, 2016 – [Hospital Units Tailored to Older Patients Can Help Prevent Decline](#)

- From *NPR* – August 8, 2016 – [Federal Officials Seek to Stop Social Media Abuse of Nursing Home Residents](#)
- From *NPR* – August 3, 2016 – [Medicaid Safety Net Stretched to Pay for Seniors' Long-Term Care](#)
- From *NPR* – July 26, 2016 – [A Sniff Test for Alzheimer's Checks for The Ability to Identify Odors](#)
- From *NPR* – July 21, 2016 – [Rehab Hospitals May Harm a Third of Patients, Report Finds](#)

New Events for Calendar

- September 10, 2016 – [N.C. Justice Center's 20th Anniversary Celebration](#), Raleigh Convention Center, Raleigh, N.C.
- September 15, 2016 – N.C. Adult Foster Care Annual Conference, Burlington, N.C.
- September 23, 2016 – [High Country Care Transitions Summit](#) sponsored by High Country Area Agency on Aging, Grandfather Golf and Country Club, Linville, N.C.
- September 23, 2016 – [2016 Aging for the Future Conference](#) sponsored by Centralina Area Agency on Aging, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C.
- September 26-28, 2016 – [Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Excellence in Senior Centers](#) sponsored by the National Institute of Senior Centers; at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- October 18, 2016 – Dementia Friendly America Workshop hosted by the [Senior Information and Networking Group of Wake Forest, N.C.](#) and the Town of Wake Forest; at The Renaissance Centre, Wake Forest, N.C.

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.

Coalition on Aging Membership – Are you interested in getting more involved in being an advocate for older North Carolinians? If yes, consider becoming a member of the Coalition on Aging. Membership in the Coalition 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/>.