



COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

NC Coalition on Aging
August Update – August 24, 2018

Judges Rule and Another Special Legislative Session Scheduled: After a loss in court on Tuesday, legislative leaders called for a special session for Friday, August 24, to rewrite ballot questions for two proposed constitutional amendments. A three-judge panel sided Tuesday with Gov. Roy Cooper, who had sued to stop two amendments that would shift many of the governor's appointment powers to the legislature. [All five living former North Carolina governors](#) have come out against these two amendments and, on Thursday, all six living former chief justices of the state Supreme Court [came out against them as well](#). The 2-1 ruling by the judges found that the questions on the ballot would mislead voters about the true impacts of the amendments. The court order gives legislative leaders two options to keep the proposed amendments on November's ballot: Appeal the decision or "act immediately to correct the problems in the language of the Ballot Questions so that these proposed amendments, properly identified and described, may yet appear on the November 2018 general election ballot." Attorneys for legislative leaders filed a notice of appeal on Wednesday afternoon with the NC Court of Appeals and called for the special session on Thursday. Late Thursday evening, legislative leaders released the language legislators will start from when they convene Friday to rework the proposed constitutional amendments. To read more about this, click [here](#) and [here](#). (@NC Capitol)

Another amendment-related lawsuit was also appealed to the Supreme Court on Wednesday morning. The NC NAACP and other groups want the Supreme Court to overturn the three-judge panel's decision to keep proposed amendments calling for a 7-percent income tax cap and a voter ID requirement. The legal wrangling over constitutional amendments and other ballot issues will likely delay the start of absentee balloting. In a related development, State Republican Party Executive Director Dallas Woodhouse put Democrats on the Supreme Court on notice last week that they could face impeachment if they decided against Republican leaders in a lawsuit over constitutional amendments. (The Insider, 8/22/18)

Coalition's Annual Meeting and Luncheon: Only four weeks is left to register for the 2018 annual meeting and luncheon of the NC Coalition on Aging which will take place on Friday, September 28. We will once again return to the NC State University Club located at 4200 Hillsborough St. in Raleigh, the location of our last several annual meetings, for this gathering. The program will begin at 12:00 noon (registration opens at 11:30 a.m.).

We are pleased to welcome to North Carolina keynote speaker for the event Howard Bedlin, Vice-President for Public Policy and Advocacy with the National Council on Aging, who is regarded as one of the most effective aging policy and advocacy leaders in the country. He will provide his take on the issues impacting older adults and their families that are taking center stage as well as those likely to emerge. In addition he will also share insights about the effectiveness of collaborative efforts such as the national Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, a national coalition of over 70 organizations, and things our state Coalition might learn from such endeavors.



Registration information on the meeting/luncheon can be found [here](#). The registration fee for the annual meeting and luncheon remains at \$20 for members and \$30 for non-members. A copy of the registration form for the meeting is also attached to the e-mail transmitting this *Update*. Scholarships are available for students and for those for whom the registration cost is a challenge. **The registration deadline is September 21.**

Consider Becoming a Sponsor of the Coalition's Annual Meeting/Luncheon: Sponsorships, at four different levels, are still available for the annual meeting/luncheon. Outside of membership dues, sponsorships of the annual meeting and luncheon are the largest source of financial support for the Coalition. In addition to helping the Coalition, sponsors also receive a number of perks. To find out more, contact Mary Bethel at mmbethel72@gmail.com.

Coalition's Nominating Committee Presents Recommendations for Board: At the Coalition's monthly meeting on August 24, the Nominating Committee for the Coalition on Aging presented its recommendations of the seven individuals to serve on the Coalition's first Board of Directors. These individuals, all active Coalition members, represent the diversity of the Coalition membership and bring a collective set of skills that will be critical as the Coalition moves to becoming a 501(c)3 organizations. The recommended Board members are: Tracy Colvard (Association for Home and Hospice Care of North Carolina), Martha Fowler (State Employees Association of North Carolina), Charmaine Fuller Cooper (AARP NC), Frances Messer (NC Assisted Living Association), Ray Riordan (The Carolinas Center), Janice Tyler (Orange Co. Department on Aging and NC Association on Aging), and Chad Walker (Transitions LifeCare).

Elections for the Board of Directors will be held at the Coalition's September 28 annual meeting/luncheon.

Addressing Senior Hunger in North Carolina: On August 14, the Coalition sent a letter to North Carolina DHHS Secretary Dr. Mandy Cohen to express our concern about the prevalence of food insecurity among our state's older citizens. In the letter we ask the Department to take the lead in addressing this challenge, and we note that the Coalition stands ready to assist the Department in any way we can to help tackle this problem. Coalition members have been sent a copy of this letter. The letter is a follow up to a recent Coalition meeting where a significant amount of time was devoted to hearing from presenters about senior food insecurity in the state, efforts underway to address this, and gaps and challenges that exist in decreasing food insecurity among seniors. The most recent (2016) *Feeding America* report on "The State of Senior Hunger in America" ranks North Carolina's older adults 60+ second in the country for being marginally food insecure (20.5%) and fifth for being food insecure (11.6%). Furthermore, a 2014 study of UNC Chapel Hill emergency room visits found that in an eight-week period, 60% of patients 65 and older presenting at the emergency room were malnourished or at risk of malnutrition.

RFP for Medicaid Prepaid Health Plans Issued/Enrollment Broker Contractor Announced: On August 9, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) issued a Request For Proposal (RFP) for organizations wishing to participate in Medicaid managed care as Prepaid Health Plans (PHPs) when the program launches in 2019. DHHS notes that the RFP reflects three years of collaboration with and extensive feedback from beneficiaries, clinicians, hospitals, counties, health plans, elected officials, advocates and other stakeholders to design the managed care program. Among the innovations touted by DHHS in this RFP for the North Carolina Medicaid managed care program are: (1) The integration of physical health, behavioral health and pharmacy services so all managed care beneficiaries will have one insurance card and one health plan managing their care, (2) An Advanced Medical Home (AMH) program that will preserve broad access to primary care services for Medicaid enrollees while strengthening the role of primary care in local care management, care coordination and quality improvement, and (3) Encouraging smart investments in areas that impact health outside of health care services, known as Opportunities for Health, in the domains of housing, food, transportation, employment and interpersonal safety, to build on work already being done in communities. This procurement is only for the Standard Plans in which most Medicaid managed care beneficiaries will be enrolled. DHHS will accept proposals from potential PHPs until Oct. 12, 2018. Both DHHS and the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services will have to approve the contract awards, which are anticipated to be announced on Feb. 4, 2019.

In a related development, on August 3, DHHS announced that it has awarded its contract for Medicaid managed care enrollment broker services to MAXIMUS, a government services provider based in Reston, Va. This is the first procurement contract award as the state prepares to move toward Medicaid managed care. MAXIMUS will provide choice counseling, enrollment assistance and education to beneficiaries as they select from a variety of health plans. As part of

the enrollment broker function, MAXIMUS will help members select the health plan and primary care provider that is most appropriate to meet their needs and, to the extent possible, maintain existing physician-patient relationships. MAXIMUS staff will be available to help members enroll over the phone via a call center, online through an interactive and user-friendly website and face-to-face in some communities. To help ensure a seamless and streamlined beneficiary experience, MAXIMUS will establish an ongoing partnership with the state's 100 county departments of social services and provide dedicated liaisons who will work closely with caseworkers and other county staff to provide managed care training, make beneficiary materials available locally and conduct outreach services. (From DHHS News Releases).

U.S. Senate Approves Funding for HHS: On Thursday, August 23, the U.S. Senate approved its third "minibus" package of spending bills which included funding for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Labor and Education and Defense. This is often difficult funding to approve because of fights over issues like abortion. This time Senators were able to avoid those fights. Leadership made a deal earlier in the year to avoid attaching proposals to the bill which would threaten bipartisan support. The vote marked a big win for the Senate leadership which had not been able to pass funding for HHS, Labor, and Education, outside of an omnibus bill, since 2007. An omnibus bill rolls the 12 traditional spending bills into one piece of legislation. President Trump warned in March he would not sign an omnibus bill again. With this vote, the Senate has now passed nine of the 12 appropriations bills needed to fund the government past September 30. The Senate and House will need to merge their competing bills once the House returns from vacation. The time frame for getting agreement on the three packages as well as a short-term continuing resolution (CR) that is expected to be needed to fund part of the government will be very tight to avoid a shutdown. Although President Trump is keeping a shutdown on the table, Senate leadership and Republican Senators are working to prevent one from happening less than two months before midterm elections. But a fight remains on how to fund the Department of Homeland Security past September. Using a continuing resolution to keep part of the government open into the next fiscal year would allow leadership to delay a fight over funding for the border wall between the U.S. and Mexico until after the midterm election. Read more about this by clicking [here](#).

Aging Award Nominations Sought: The NC Division of Aging and Adult Services will present four awards this year to 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. These 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 Dorothy R. Crawford Award which recognizes an individual or organization that has developed innovative strategies related to or had a significant impact on the lives of older adults through Adult Protective Services or guardianship. (This is a new Award this year).

The Division of Aging and Adult Services is now soliciting nominations for these 2018 Awards. Nominations will be received until September 28, 2018. To find out more about the Awards contact Mary Edwards at the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services at (919) 855-3437 or Mary.Edwards@dhhs.nc.gov.

Study on Paid Family and Medical Leave: Columbia University and The Arc are conducting a study on paid family and medical leave with people affected by disabilities. For the study, they are interviewing workers with disabilities and those who provide support to a friend or family member with a disability in California, New Jersey, New York, and **North Carolina**. They plan to conduct remote, one-on-one interviews by phone, web conference, or email to look at how paid family and medical leave programs can work better for them. Help is needed to recruit people who: (1) Work in California, New Jersey, New York, or North Carolina or have worked in these states in the past 2 years, AND (2) Have a disability OR provide support to a friend or a family member with a disability? Interested people can: (1) call 929-900-5398, OR (2) email paidleavestudy@outlook.com with 'The Arc' in the subject line, OR (3) take the screening survey at https://cumc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bKoreYdj5F1VfeJ. Anyone who is eligible and completes a 30-60 minute phone/video interview will receive a \$20 gift card. Visit <http://www.thearc.org/paidleavestudy> to learn more and get sample social media and flyers. This research project of Columbia University is sponsored by The Arc of the United States. Questions or concerns should be directed to Suma Setty at 212-304-6093 or ss4358@cumc.columbia.edu.

Other News and Updates

For the second time this month, **a new state law targeting individual candidates running for office this November has been found unconstitutional**. The state's newly formed Constitution Party and three of its candidates won a victory in federal court on Wednesday, when a judge ruled that they must be on the ballot this fall despite a law that the state legislature passed earlier this summer taking their names off the ballot. That follows a victory in state court for Chris Anglin, a state Supreme Court candidate whose campaign had been targeted by a different law seeking to stop him from having his Republican Party affiliation listed on the ballot. (News and Observer, 8/22/18)

The state Commerce Department has reported that North Carolina reached a **17-year low in its unemployment rate** of 4.1% during July. The rate was down 0.1 percentage point from June and down from 4.4% a year ago. The last time the state jobless rate was at 4.1 percent was from July to October 2001.

State government wrapped up the last fiscal year with a **slightly higher revenue surplus** than initially projected, according to numbers released by the legislature's nonpartisan Fiscal Research Division. The \$400.2 million surplus for the fiscal year that ended June 30 was \$43.5 million higher than the previous surplus projection announced several months ago ahead of the budget process. Overall, the state collected \$23.565 billion during the fiscal year, about 1.9% higher than the \$23.125 billion budgeted in 2017. Individual income and franchise tax collections came in higher than expected, while June's sales tax refunds ended up \$65 million lower than forecasters had expected. (THE INSIDER, 8/16/18)

North Carolina will be one of the first states to start **collecting sales taxes on online purchases**. State tax-collectors issued a directive this month requiring online retailers to collect sales tax on purchases by North Carolina consumers. The move comes after a U.S. Supreme Court decision in June that states can collect sales tax even if the seller lacks a physical presence in that state. North Carolina's Revenue Department says it will start enforcing an existing state law on November 1. That means companies selling more than \$100,000 or having at least 200 transactions into North Carolina last year or this year would have to collect sales taxes and turn it over to the state. State officials say they don't know how much additional money the collections will bring. (THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 8/08/18)

The \$100-billion pension fund for the **North Carolina Retirement System posted overall gains** of 7.3% for fiscal year 2017-18 that ended on June 30, but earnings to date for the 2018 portion reflected only a 1.3% increase, according to an earnings report issued at the beginning of August from the State Treasurer's Office. The earnings report comes as a national survey confirmed that North Carolina continues to have the second-lowest administrative costs among U.S. public pension funds in its peer group, according to a news release from the Treasurer's Office. Pension administration costs for North Carolina are \$23 per member, which is \$70 below the peer average of \$93 per member, reflecting an annual savings of over \$55.3 million, the report said. (THE GREENVILLE DAILY REFLECTOR, 8/15/18)

The State Health Plan was able to **freeze health plan premiums for this year thanks** to savings from reduced Medicare Advantage plan rates from UnitedHealthcare. State Treasurer Dale Folwell has reported that the state's deal for 2019 Medicare Advantage plans for state retirees cut costs for the state health plan by \$55 million. The state pays for Medicare Advantage plans, which typically come with an expanded set of benefits beyond what traditional Medicare provides, as a

way of providing retirees with the health benefits they were promised. The state negotiated lower premiums, but the biggest cost reduction came from a temporary suspension of the health insurance fee charged by the federal government under the Affordable Care Act. Most of the savings - about \$40 million - will be used to freeze premiums for state employees. (NC Health News, 8/9/18)

Duke University Hospital has again emerged as the **top hospital in North Carolina** for complex medical conditions, and one of only two in the Southeast in the national top 20, according to the latest national hospital ranking by U.S. News & World Report. The Triangle is the only region of the state with two top-rated hospitals. UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill ranked third in the state, according to U.S. News & World Report, after second-ranked Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem. (THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 8/14/18)

The Capital Area Food Network (CAFNA) has a grant from Community Food Strategies to create a series of short videos that will focus on the **needs and stories of food insecure Wake County seniors**. Meals on Wheels of Wake County is a co-producer of the videos which will be used to bring awareness about older adults struggling with food insecurity.

The North Carolina Center for Nonprofits, NC Network of Grantmakers, and QENO are partnering to offer the **2018 Foundation Fair** for nonprofits on October 16 at the Warwick Center at UNC Wilmington (601 S. College Rd) in Wilmington. The Fair provides the opportunity for nonprofits to meet and connect with foundations whose missions and funding align with those of their organization. [Learn more](#) about how to prepare and sign up for the morning (10:00-11:45 a.m.) or afternoon (1:00-2:45 p.m.) session. Each organization may register 1-2 staff or board members for one session only. Registration is free but is required.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, the state's largest insurer, has announced that it wants to **reduce its rates by 4.1% on health insurance plans it offers through the Affordable Care Act (ACA)**. This is the first time that Blue Cross has requested a rate decrease on the individual plans it offers on the federal marketplace since the ACA went into effect in 2014. The rate reduction request is a statewide average so some customers could see savings while others may have to pay more. To learn more about this click [here](#).

A recent [article](#) in the News and Observer highlighted the **survey responses of "NC Influencers" on health care**. The "Influencers" or "thought leaders" in the state represent a wide range of backgrounds, political, business, academic and faith communities. Overall the group expressed the extreme importance of health care and that society should provide it to all their citizens. Of those responding to the survey, three fourths support closing the health insurance coverage gap. Further, the article reports the responders considered the lack of affordable health insurance as the number one challenge among North Carolinians today. The state's economic security, a healthier workforce, and reducing social costs were leading reasons cited in favor of

closing the gap, while the biggest concern to closing the gap was the huge economic cost. (Care4Carolina Newsletter, 8/17/18)

A national health insurer that's been fined \$1.5 million by regulators in Washington state for not having enough health care providers in its network to meet the medical needs of its customers and is the subject of a class action lawsuit in that state **plans to enter North Carolina's federal health care market**. Missouri-based Centene Corp., the nation's largest provider of individual health insurance under the Affordable Care Act, is expanding its coverage throughout the country, including North Carolina where it will offer plans in Durham and Wake counties under the name Ambetter. The Fortune 100 company is also eyeing North Carolina for bigger spoils: a coveted contract to manage a part of the state's \$14.6 billion Medicaid market. (THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/30/18)

The **1% one-time bonus for state retirees and retired teachers** will be paid in a lump sum in the October retirement check on October 25, 2018. This cost-of-living allowance (COLA) is based on 1% of the retiree's annual retirement benefit. Related to retiree benefits, the General Assembly in the short session passed House Bill 651 (State Pension/Retiree Health Benefit Fund Solvency). This bill would establish the unfunded solvency reserve where funds can be allocated and applied to the unfunded liability of the retirement system's health and pension plans. The total unfunded liabilities are estimated to be \$37 billion.

In July, Coalition member, the **NC Retired Governmental Employees Association (NCRGEA)**, received the **Jim Long Outstanding Seniors Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) Service Award**. NCRGEA was honored as a valuable partner with SHIIP in their efforts to bring SHIIP services across the state.

Gov. Roy Cooper has announced a **new web portal for North Carolina boards and commissions** to streamline the application process for people who wish to serve and provide more information to the public. The new website will feature profiles of state boards and commissions, a list of recent appointments, current openings, member resources and portals to submit applications and recommendations. This will be the first online portal for governor's appointments to Boards and Commissions in North Carolina history, and the first time in 17 years that the system has been updated to provide a more open and streamlined process. The office of the Governor oversees over 2,400 appointments to more than 350 boards and commissions. (NEWS RELEASE, 7/26/18)

North Carolina has four national cemeteries which are located in Raleigh, New Bern, Salisbury, and Wilmington. The only one of these with space still available is the Salisbury National Cemetery, which recently was expanded to offer more than 8,000 burial spaces for veterans. Space does periodically become available because of cancellations. **The state also has four VA-supported state cemeteries for veterans:** Sandhills in Spring Lake, Coastal in Jacksonville, Eastern in Goldsboro and Western in Black Mountain. The federal government pays

for the development of those cemeteries, but the state has to cover the operation costs. All except Eastern were built in the 1990s, and each has less than a few thousand gravesites left open. Eastern was opened in 2016 and has 50 acres available. The N.C. Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has recently been awarded grant funds from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the expansion and improvement of the Sandhills Cemetery and Western Carolina State Cemetery. (THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 8/02/18)

The NC Alliance for Health (NCAH) is seeking to hire a Grassroots Coordinator who will be responsible for membership engagement and grassroots organizing, capacity and partner building, developing educational materials, and coordinating and conducting advocacy trainings to support NCAH's tobacco use prevention and obesity prevention campaigns. To find out more, click [here](#).

Coalition Member Friends of Residents in Long Term Care is now accepting **nomination for its Sharon Wilder Advocacy Award and Best Practice Awards in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities**. The Sharon Wilder Advocacy Award is presented to an individual who has made outstanding contributions protecting consumer rights and improving the quality of long term services and supports in North Carolina. Awards are also given for best practices in facilities (nursing homes and assisted living) when facilities adopt exemplary programming which reflects person-centered values, supports the rights of residents and improves quality of care. Nominations for any of these awards should be submitted by to friends@forltc.org no later than September 30 to be considered. Awards will be given at the October 20th Evening with Friends Event to be held at Glenaire Retirement Community in Cary. Nomination forms can be downloaded using the following links:

[Sharon Wilder Advocacy Award Nomination](#)

[Long Term Care Best Practice Nomination](#)

As the 2018 midterm elections draw closer, The News & Observer (N&O) is **expanding the fact-checking efforts** it began in the leadup to the 2016 elections with PolitiFact NC. A \$50,000 grant from the North Carolina Local News Lab Fund will help create a partnership between the three McClatchy newspapers in North Carolina (N&O, The Herald-Sun of Durham, and the Charlotte Observer) and student-journalists and professors from Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill. Another partnership, announced last month, will team up the N&O with the International Center for Journalists, which plans to devote one of its TruthBuzz fellows to promote fact-checking all around the state. In the past two years, PolitiFact NC - a partnership staffed by a single News & Observer reporter and managed by editors at both The N&O and the Pulitzer Prize-winning website PolitiFact - has fact-checked politicians making claims about everything from voter fraud to pork in the state budget. The main focus of PolitiFact NC in the past two years has been on the highest-profile politicians in the Tar Heel state. This new grant will help expand its scope to include less well-known politicians, like those in the state legislature who represent only parts of the state. It will also focus more on politicians in rural areas -- where journalism resources have been steadily shrinking for years. (THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 8/01/18)

For tax years 2018-2025, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) of 2017 allows for a **\$500 per dependent non-refundable tax credit** for anyone previously claimed as a dependent on a tax return but who did not meet the definition of a qualifying child. This could, for example, include dependent parents.

Late last month Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Ways & Means Ranking Member Richard Neal (D-MA) introduced **The Lower Out-of-Pocket Costs for Seniors Act**, which would make permanent an Affordable Care Act provision that limits the growth of consumer out-of-pocket spending in the Medicare Part D program. Under the current system, once Medicare beneficiaries hit an annual out-of-pocket spending threshold they can access what is known as catastrophic coverage that allows seniors to pay significantly less for their prescription drugs. However, the catastrophic coverage threshold is scheduled to jump in 2020, increasing the amount of money beneficiaries must spend to access the lower catastrophic coverage rates for prescription drugs. The Lower Out-of-Pocket Costs for Seniors Act would make the current out-of-pocket threshold permanent.

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) has introduced the **Aging Mastery Starter Kit**, a self-directed version of its successful **Aging Mastery Program®** (AMP). The Starter Kit, like the in-person program, offers real-life tips and solutions for aging well, and couples these with activities that encourage self-reflection and action steps. The kit includes numerous tools including an Aging Mastery Playbook and exercise DVDs. More information on the Starter Kit is available [here](#).

Older Adults are more likely to experience conditions that result in pain, such as arthritis or cancer, and are also more likely to undergo procedures that result in acute pain, such as joint replacement or spine surgery. This increases **older adults' exposure to opioids**. A recent report from the University of Michigan found that more than one in four older adults (29%) said they filled a prescription for an opioid pain medication for themselves within the past two years. This study asked adults age 50-80 about their use of opioids for pain management, perceptions of opioid policies, and the education they received about the drugs and their disposal. Nearly half of those surveyed had leftover opioid medication. This raises concerns about misuse or abuse and highlights an important opportunity for better education among health care practitioners. [Click here](#) to read the full results of the study.

The Office of Disability, Aging and Long-Term Care Policy, within the federal Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, has released a **new report examining the role of formal long-term services and supports (LTSS) in Medicaid**. The report focuses on how sociodemographic changes will impact the demand for LTSS in the future, and as a result, Medicaid use and expenditures. One major theme of the report is that the aging of the baby boom population is expected to increase demand for LTSS services dramatically. The report also found that LTSS is a major part of the Medicaid program, accounting for 42% of total Medicaid medical and LTSS expenditures. The final theme identified by this report was that Medicaid is the

dominant payer for LTSS. Historically, Medicaid has primarily financed institutional services, but policy changes have shifted emphasis towards home and community-based services (HCBS). [Click here](#) to read the full report.

AARP has released the results of an **in-depth survey on the value of experienced workers**. This survey was fielded in September 2017, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967. The survey gathered insights from workers 45+ and asked questions regarding their experiences in the workplace, especially regarding age discrimination. Of those surveyed, nearly 9 in 10 work for financial reasons. The survey results underscored continued bias against older Americans in the workplace. Sixty-one percent of older workers report that they've seen or experienced age discrimination in the workplace. Among those concerned about losing their job in the next year, one-third list age discrimination as a reason. By 2022, nearly 35% of workers will be fifty years old or older. [Click here](#) to read the full survey results.

On July 17, 2018, the Senate passed H.R. 6042, which implements a **12 month delay of the Medicaid Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) penalties** for personal care services delivered without Electronic Visit Verification. The bill was passed using the unanimous consent process, which allows the Senate to quickly pass legislation without performing a formal vote as long as no Senator objects. The bill was signed by the President Monday, July 30, 2018. FMAP penalties will now become effective on January 1, 2020 instead of 2019 as previously scheduled.

On July 30, 2018, U.S. Representative Kathleen Rice announced that she will introduce the **Younger-Onset Alzheimer's Disease Parity Act**. This bill would amend the Older Americans Act to serve individuals who are under the age of 60 years-old but living with younger-onset Alzheimer's disease or other degenerative diseases, thus expanding access to services for people living with younger-onset Alzheimer's Disease. [Click here](#) to read more about this bill.

An AARP report, **Social Isolation: Myths vs. Realities Among Adults Age 40 and Older**, explores mid-life and older Americans' knowledge of the risk factors of social isolation. Social isolation refers to an objective condition which involves quantifiable measurements such as the size of one's social network, availability of transportation, and ability to access resources and information. Most people surveyed were aware that social isolation has serious health consequences, but didn't believe that it was an issue which could personally affect them. Additionally, few people reported being asked about this issues by a health professional. Overall, people tended to underestimate the health dangers of social isolation. Prolonged social isolation is in fact equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Many people also incorrectly believed that social isolation is brought on by a single event, such as the death of a spouse. In reality, social isolation is often the result of a variety of factors. [Click here](#) to read the full report.

CMS's new 2019 plan year guidance **expands the definition of "primarily health related" supplemental benefits that Medicare Advantage plans can offer**. This means many services offered by community-based organizations in the aging network will now be included. NCOA has published guidance on what this change means. This guidance discusses specific examples of newly allowable benefits, including adult day care services, in-home support services, and transportation. NCOA also gives a brief overview of what this change means for the aging network and provides tips for reaching out to Medicare Advantage Plans about new supplemental benefits. [Click here](#) to read NCOA's complete guidance.

AARP has invested \$60 million in the **Dementia Discovery Fund** to kick-start its **“Disrupt Dementia” campaign**. The campaign aims to help drive new diagnostics and treatments for dementia while providing education, support and hope for patients and family caregivers impacted by the physical, emotional, and financial stress of dementia. The Dementia Discovery Fund is the first and largest venture fund focused on discovering and developing effective new drugs for treating dementia. United Health Group has also invested \$10 million and Quest Diagnostics has invested \$5 million in the Fund.

On August 7, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that it will provide **Medicare Advantage plans the option of applying step therapy for physician-administered and other Part B drugs**. Step therapy requires patients to try one or more similar, lower cost drugs to treat their condition before the plan covers a higher priced medication. A memo from CMS to Medicare Advantage plans provides details about this new authority beginning with 2019 policies, including offering enrollee’s drug management care coordination activities, incentives for enrollee participation, and an exceptions process. To find out more about this, click [here](#).

The Congressional Budget Office has issued a new report that presents information on **managed care's enrollment and spending**. Between 1999 and 2012, managed care enrollment grew from 63 percent to 89 percent. This report explores the contributing factors to the growth of enrollment in Medicaid managed care in the United States. It also analyzes the fact that funding does not directly parallel enrollment growth, as the share of total Medicaid spending that went to managed care only grew from 15% to 37% during the same time period. Explanations for this spending pattern are also examined as part of the report. [Click here](#) to read more.

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an ongoing state-based, random-digit-dialed telephone survey of noninstitutionalized U.S. adults. The 2016 BRFSS survey included questions about six disability types; hearing, vision, cognition, mobility, self-care, and independent living. **One in four (61 million) U.S. adults reported a disability that impacts major life activities**. Mobility disability was the most common type of disability reported. Notably, the percentage of adults with disability increased as income decreased. [Click here](#) to read more.

The National Institute on Aging at NIH has published a new **infographic spotlighting the issue of elder abuse**. About 1 in 10 adults over age 60 are affected by this issue. This infographic describes the different types of abuse older adults can experience: physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, financial, and abandonment. It also provides information on how to recognize the signs and where to get help. [Click here](#) to read and share this infographic.

The Center for Benefits Access (the Center) at **NCOA is seeking grant proposals from qualified organizations to become Benefits Enrollment Centers (BECs)**. BECs use person-centered strategies in a coordinated, community-wide approach to find and enroll Medicare beneficiaries—both seniors aged 65+ years and adults living with disabilities — who have limited income and resources into available benefits. Grants will run for a 20-month period (January 1, 2019 to September 29, 2020). Applicants are required to match 15% of their funding under this grant through a cash or in-kind match. Grants of up to \$115,000 each will be awarded to selected organizations. Proposals are due by 12 p.m. on Wednesday, August 29, 2018. More information is available [here](#).

The U.S. House of Representatives continues its summer recess, working in local districts. This would be a good time to visit your member of Congress while she/he is home, and/or to send an e-mail to your U.S. Senator while they debate legislation in Washington. There are reports that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) are in talks to move a package of judicial and executive nominees this week so vulnerable **Senate colleagues can go home** and campaign next week.

The **Call for Presentations is open for the 2019 National Lifespan Respite Conference** to be held in Buffalo, NY on April 30-May 2, 2019. [Click here](#) for more information about the conference.

People in the News

Dr. Victor Marshall, who served as the Director of the UNC Institute on Aging from 1999 until 2009 died on August 18, 2018 after a period of declining health.

Jerry Passmore, 74, first President of the North Carolina Association on Aging, passed away unexpectedly on August 7, 2018 in Florida. Jerry worked for many years in aging services including leading the local aging programs in Guilford County and Orange County. While in Orange County, he created the first county department of aging in the state. The senior center in Hillsborough is named after him. A service and celebration of Jerry's life will be held on Saturday, October 20, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. at the Jerry M. Passmore Center located at 103 Meadowlands Drive in Hillsborough, NC.

Heather Hooper has been named Executive Director of Dementia Alliance of North Carolina. She has more than a dozen years of experience in the field of nonprofit management and philanthropy. Prior to assuming her role with Dementia Alliance of North Carolina she worked for the College of Veterinary Medicine at NC State University and with the Lung Cancer Initiative of North Carolina.

Senate Leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) has named **Andrew Tripp** his new chief of staff. Tripp has served as Sen. Berger's general counsel since September 2013 and prior to that acted as counsel to the chairman of the Senate Rules Committee. Sen. Berger has also announced that **Pat Ryan** will be deputy chief of staff for communications, effective immediately. Ryan joins Bill D'Elia on Berger's communications team.

Coalition member **Nathan Robinson** has recently changed jobs. He is now the Executive Director at Sunrise of Raleigh, a senior living community that offers assisted living, memory care, and coordination of hospice care.

Mitch Leonard, retired in March from Coalition member, the State Employees Association of North Carolina (SEANC), after 41 years of service. He covered the state as a field representative for many years, and in recent years he also served as a lobbyist. In 2015, he came out of retirement to serve as Executive Director of SEANC, a position he served in until January 1 of this year.

Dr. Goldie Byrd, Founding Director of the Center for Outreach in Alzheimer's, Aging, and Community Health (COACH) at NC A&T University in Greensboro, resigned this position to join the Maya Angelou Center for Health Equality and Research at Wake Forest University.

Gov. Roy Cooper has appointed the following persons to the **Governor's Advisory Council on Aging: Paula Kohut of Wilmington** as a member at-large, **The Honorable Annie Mobley of Garner** as a member at-large (she was a North Carolina State Representative from 2007 to 2015), **Roger Manus of Raleigh** as a member at-large, and **Tom Rothrock of Charlotte** as a member at-large.

Gov. Cooper has appointed the following individuals to the **Social Services Commission: Andy Anderson of Whiteville** as a Representative of the 7th Congressional District and **Dan Briggs of Lexington** as a Representative of the 13th Congressional District.

House Speaker Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, was recently unanimously selected to serve as the 2018-2019 chair-elect of the Southern Legislative Conference by delegates to the group's 72nd annual meeting in St. Louis, Mo. The Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) is a non-partisan, member-driven organization comprising presiding officers and key legislators from 15 Southern states. It's the largest of the four regional conferences of The Council of State Governments. As chair-elect, Moore will assist incoming chair and Louisiana House Speaker Taylor F. Barras in guiding the SLC during the coming year. Moore is anticipated to serve as chair of the SLC during their summer 2020 meeting in North Carolina.

Vickie Sawyer was appointed August 2 to the District 44 Senate seat held by Sen. David Curtis who resigned June 30. Senate leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) has announced he has appointed Sen. Sawyer (R-Iredell) to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services.

Rep. Linda Hunt Williams (R-Wake) has resigned her House District 37 seat effective August 31 because her husband accepted a job in Louisiana. Williams, who moved to North Carolina from Louisiana in 1986, was a first-term House member. Previously she'd served on the Holly Springs Town Council. She opted not to run for re-election this year.

Rep. Ed Hanes (D-Forsyth) resigned his District 72 House Seat effective August 7. Winston-Salem City Councilman Derwin L. Montgomery was appointed August 15 to fill this seat. Montgomery also owns a newspaper.

Upcoming Meetings/Events Through October and Meetings/Events New (In Bold) to the Calendar

August 24, 2018 – NC Coalition on Aging Monthly Meeting – Brown Building on Dix campus (801 Biggs Drive) at 10:00 a.m.

August 27-30, 2018 - National Home and Community Based Services Conference - at Baltimore Marriott Waterfront, Baltimore, Maryland

September is National Senior Center Month - and the theme is Senior Centers: Building Momentum! The National Council on Aging has [materials](#) to help celebrate the month.

September is National Disaster Preparedness Month – for more information about the month and about resources, click [here](#).

September 6, 2018 – Administration for Community Living Webinar on Resources for Integrated Care: Person-Centered Approaches to Support People Dually Eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. 2:00-3:30 p.m. [Register for the event](#)

September 7, 2018 - – NC Institute of Medicine Annual Meeting at McKimmon Center in Raleigh from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

September 10-12, 2018 - The Carolinas Center 42nd Annual Hospice and Palliative Care Conference "How We Strengthen the Tools in Our Toolbox" - at Hilton Charlotte University Place in Charlotte

September 12, 2018 – National Alzheimer’s and Dementia Resource Center Webinar on Improving Healthcare for People Living with Dementia - 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. [Click here to register](#).

September 12-14, 2018 - 2018 NC Nonprofits Conference - at Sheraton Imperial Hotel, Research Triangle Park, NC - Information at: www.conference.ncnonprofits.org

September 17-18, 2018 – The National Transit Institute hosts a course called "Advancing Mobility Management" in Dallas, Texas, The course explores a community vision in which the entire transportation network - public transit, private operators, cycling and walking, volunteer drivers, and others - works together with customers, planners, and stakeholders to deliver the transportation options that best meet the community's needs. [Click here](#) to learn more.

September 18, 2018 - Dementia Care: Opioid Use & Impact for Persons Living with Dementia Call from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. During this call, gain insight on opioid use in the post-acute and long-term care setting. Also, learn about the impact of opioid use on persons living with dementia. Additionally, CMS will share updates on the progress of the [National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Homes](#).

September 20, 2018 – Webinar hosted by the National I&A Support Center on the National Volunteer Caregiving Network - 3:00-4:00 p.m. Learn about volunteer caregiving programs that help promote the health, well-being and independence of older adults and people with disabilities. Pre-registration is required. Click [here](#) to register.

September 21, 2018 - High Country Care Transitions Summit at Grandfather Golf and Country Club, Linville, NC

September 22, 2018 – Fall Prevention Awareness Day – It raises awareness about how to prevent fall-related injuries among older adults. To learn more, click [here](#).

September 25, 2018 is National Voter Registration Day. Find out how to come a partner for **National Voter Registration Day**.

September 28, 2018 – NC Coalition on Aging Annual Meeting – NC State University Club (4200 Hillsborough St.) in Raleigh at 11:30 a.m.

October 2, 2018 - Caregiver Summit - at Campbell University, Leon Levine Hall of Medical Sciences (4350 U.S. 421 S) in Lillington from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm - Info. & Registration [Click Here](#).

October 9-11, 2018 – NC Assisted Living Association Fall Conference and Trade Show – Benton Convention Center, Winston-Salem, NC

October 11-12, 2018 – JESPY House inaugural symposium on *Aging in Place: Innovative Strategies to Support Adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities*. [Click here](#) to learn more information about the symposium.

October 15-16, 2018 – Association for Home and Hospice Care of North Carolina 2018 Leadership Conference – Holiday Inn Resort, Wrightsville Beach, NC

October 16, 2018 – 2018 Foundation Fair - UNC-Wilmington Warwick Center, Wilmington, NC.

October 20, 2018 – Triangle Festival of Hope/26th Annual Walk – Sponsored by Dementia Alliance of North Carolina – 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Knightdale Station Park, Knightdale, NC

October 20, 2018 – Evening with Friends (of Residents in Long Term Care) Fundraiser with Casablanca Orchestra – Glenaire Retirement Community Ballroom, 4000 Glenaire Circle, Cary, NC. Go to www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3591762 for tickets. Call 919-782-1530 for information.

October 22-24, 2018 - 2018 Consumer Voice Conference - at Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, Alexandria, Virginia

October 24-25, 2018 – NC Affordable Housing Conference – Raleigh Convention Center, Raleigh. For information [click here](#).

October 26, 2018 – NC Coalition on Aging Monthly Meeting – Brown Building on Dix campus (801 Biggs Drive) at 10:00 a.m.

October 30, 2018 - Caregiver Summit -2018 at McKimmon Conference Center (1101 Gorman St.) in Raleigh from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm - Info. & Registration [Click Here](#).

November 12-14, 2018 – AARP Livable Communities National Conference. Learn more at AARP.org/Livable2018

November 27, 2018 – Giving Tuesday: one-day annual movement focused on charitable giving

Check out the [Calendar](#) on the Coalition’s Website for additional activities and events.

Articles/News Stories/Resources

- 60 Minutes Overtime: [When opioids impact the whole family: Because of the opioid epidemic, grandparents are stepping in to raise their grandkids — and seeking support as they become parents once again](#)
- New York Times: [States Rush to Rein In Prescription Costs, and Drug Companies Fight Back](#)
- New York Times: [‘Too Little, Too Late’: Bankruptcy Booms Among Older Americans](#)
- Washington Post: [To Grow Old in Your Home, Renovate Accordingly](#)
- New York Times: [Transportation a Pressing Need in Senior Health Care](#)

- Washington Post: [Retired and broke: Bankruptcy filings surging for seniors](#)
- Association for Health Care Journalist: [Report finds antipsychotic drug use still rampant in some nursing homes](#)
- Politico: [Why “Medicare for All” Is Playing Poorly in Democratic Primaries](#)
- The Hill: [Seventy Percent of Americans Support “Medicare for All” in New Poll](#)
- McKnight’s Long-Term Care News: [CMS strengthens decentralization push, gives states more Medicaid authority](#)
- POLITICO: [Trump readies new round of controversial Medicaid changes](#)
- New York Times: [A Judge Blocked a Medicaid Work Requirement. The White House Is Undeterred.](#)
- New York Times: [Lyme Disease Is Spreading Fast. Why Isn’t There a Vaccine?](#)
- U.S. News & World Report: [The States Tackle Health Care Reform](#)
- Modern Healthcare: [ACA subsidies cost more per person than Medicaid. Is that sustainable?](#)
- Washington Post: [Trump administration proposes further dismantling of Affordable Care Act through Medicare](#)
- Washington Post: [Death reports make the opioid crisis personal for doctors](#)
- NPR/WFAE: [Doctors With Disabilities Push For Culture Change In Medicine](#)
- Washington Post: [The Health 202: Mississippi quietly amends its Medicaid work requirement waiver](#)
- Washington Post: [The Health 202: Medicaid advocates now have two more studies to back them up](#)
- Washington Post: [Trump administration widens availability of skimpy, short-term health plans](#)
- Kaiser Health News: [Red States May Be Ready to Expand Medicaid — In Exchange for Work](#)

North Carolina Related

- News and Observer (Sunday Forum, August 19, 2018): [What Should Affordable Health Care Look Like in NC?](#)
- News and Observer (Letter to the Editor from Coalition Member Richard Rogers, NCRGEA): [Pension Health](#)
- NC Medical Journal: [Running the Numbers: Aging and Cost of Health Care in North Carolina](#)
- NC Medical Journal: [Addressing the Root Cause: Rising Health Care Costs and Social Determinants of Health](#)
- News and Observer (Editorial): [The Affordable Care Act Lives; Now Let It Thrive](#)
- News and Observer: [In 20 Years, Latinos Will Make Up 14 Percent of NC’s Residents](#)
- Wake County Gov: [The Citizens Well Check Program](#)

- Carolina Public Press: [Private equity merger includes 8 NC hospitals, flying under the radar](#)
- News & Observer/Charlotte Observer: [Blue Cross, UNC Health deal will cut rates — and could change health care for all](#)
- Triad Business Journal: [Applicants abound, yet nursing shortage looms](#)
- Triad Business Journal: [Health systems get creative to bridge nursing gap](#)
- Triad Business Journal: [State buying land near Kernersville hospital, VA center for veterans nursing home](#)
- NC Policy Watch: [Medicaid and Medicare mark 53rd anniversary by continuing to serve millions of North Carolinians today](#)
- WRAL: [Does North Carolina’s “CON” Law Help or Hurt Access to and Cost of Health Care?](#)
- Asheville Citizen-Times: [Why Mission Health may donate as much as \\$90 million to rural communities](#)
- WRAL: [New shingles vaccine recommended for everyone over 50](#)

NC Health News Stories:

- [Medicaid Changes Get Closer to Reality](#)
- [Triangle, Charlotte Customers Get Biggest Share of Blue Cross ACA Rate Cuts](#)
- [N.C. State Health Plan Enlists Employees to Rein in Health Costs](#)
- [Red States May Be Ready to Expand Medicaid — In Exchange for Work](#)
- [NC Counties Gear Up for Accreditation Tests by Looking at Local Needs](#)
- [First For a Reason](#)
- [No Gaps In Understanding: Here’s Your Primer On Medigap Coverage](#)
- [Opioid-related Deaths in NC Surpass Trend Projections](#)
- [Advances In Treating Hep C Lead To New Option For Transplant Patients](#)

NPR Aging Series:

- [Medicaid Officials Target Home Health Aides' Union Dues](#)
- [Genetic Tests Can Hurt Your Chances Of Getting Some Types Of Insurance](#)
- [Puerto Rico's Wounded Medicaid Program Faces Even Deeper Cuts](#)
- [HHS Inspector General's Report Finds Flaws And Fraud In U.S. Hospice Care](#)
- [Off Your Mental Game? You Could Be Mildly Dehydrated](#)
- [Some Doctors, Patients Balk At Medicare's 'Flat Fee' Payment Proposal](#)

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:

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/>.