



COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

NC Coalition on Aging
August/September Update – September 4 , 2019

Hurricane Preparedness: As this *Update* is being distributed, the top story in our state is Hurricane Dorian. Currently, the patch of the Hurricane, which is expected to reach North Carolina on Thursday, is becoming more defined, and it does appear that parts of our state will be significantly impacted by the storm.



Gov. Roy Cooper has already declared a state of emergency, several coastal communities have mandated evacuations, and people are being called on to prepare now for the storm. To assist in the evacuation, Gov. Cooper has signed an [executive order](#) waiving fees for using ferries to evacuate and transport supplies. The Governor [requested a federal disaster declaration](#) from President Trump which has been approved. This will allow federal disaster assistance if it is needed after the storm passes. He announced on Monday that plans for shelters are being finalized, including a 100-bed medical support shelter for medically fragile evacuees. Additional shelters inland are preparing for evacuees. He has activated 300 members of the North Carolina National Guard to assist with logistics, transportation and a variety of operations. The Department of Transportation has moved resources eastward to patrol major evacuation routes. State Highway Patrol troopers are prepared to assist motorists and coordinate evacuation traffic. The state's swift water and search and rescue teams have also been activated. Gov. Cooper stressed that people in the potential path of the storm should make sure they:

- Can access reliable weather information,
- Know the route to evacuate and review emergency plans,
- Stock an emergency supply kit, which should contain food, water, prescription medicines, charging cords, batteries and other essentials to support your family for several days.

The latest information on the storm, including preparation and response efforts can be found on the state's Hurricane Dorian website (<https://www.ncdps.gov/dorian2019>), on Twitter [@NCEmergency](#) and [Facebook](#). Visit [DriveNC.gov](#) for traffic conditions statewide. Real-time traffic, weather and preparedness information is also available via the [ReadyNC mobile app](#), available for free for iPhones and Android devices. (Governor's Press Release, 9/2/19)

Annual Meeting Deadline Approaching:

Don't delay! The deadline for registering for the Coalition's 2019 annual meeting and luncheon is September 13. The meeting/luncheon will take place on Friday, September 27, at the NC State University Club located at 4200 Hillsborough St. in Raleigh, the location of our last several annual meetings. The program will begin at 12:00 noon (registration opens at 11:30 a.m.). As was recently announced, Gov. Roy Cooper who had committed to be the speaker has had to cancel due to a conflict. The Coalition is excited and pleased that Elaine Ryan, Vice President of State and Strategy Integration in the Government Affairs Department at AARP (national office), will now be the keynote presenter. Elaine leads a team of legislative staff who work with AARP's state offices in the 50 states, D.C. and the territories to advance AARP's advocacy agenda with Governors and state legislatures throughout the nation to enable individuals age 50+ and their families to attain and maintain their long-term financial security and health. Prior to joining AARP in 2007, she worked as Deputy Executive Director of the American Public Human Services Association, was Chief of Staff and House Budget Staff Associate for a member of Congress, and served on the senior staff of a state governor for nine years. She has been involved in the enactment and implementation of a number of landmark laws including the Affordable Care Act, the creation of the Children's Health Insurance Program, Welfare Reform, and the Medicare Modernization Act.



Elaine Ryan

Registration information on the meeting/luncheon is available on the Coalition's [website](#).

Budget Update: It has been over two months since Governor Cooper vetoed the budget sent to him by the General Assembly because it did not include Medicaid expansion. As the stalemate between the Governor and legislative leadership continues, last week the General Assembly took up and passed several "baby" budgets for various state employee raises (not for retirees). The

Governor signed these bills. Also, last week the Senate Pro Tempore Phil Berger and House Speaker Tim Moore announced that the General Assembly will take off this whole week and when they return the week of September 9, they will take up another series of piecemeal budgets on issues that have broad bi-partisan support. The next round of these mini budget proposals is expected to feature funding for rape kit testing, prison safety, school safety and disaster relief, all of which were in the vetoed budget bill. (@NCCAPITOL, 8/28/19 and News and Observer 8/30/19)

Big News – Medicaid Transformation Delayed: A Medicaid overhaul years in the making got pushed back Tuesday because of the state's ongoing budget fight. Gov. Roy Cooper [vetoed nearly half a billion dollars last week](#) that would have helped pay for Medicaid transformation, a plan to move some 2 million people who rely on the taxpayer-funded program for health insurance into new plans managed more closely by private providers. Cooper's veto came shortly after the General Assembly sent him the mini-budget bills. For years, the state has been moving toward a managed care system in an effort to make costs more predictable and perhaps save money. For some people, open enrollment in the new plans is already underway. But without a new budget in place, Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. Mandy Cohen said the November go-live date planned for a roughly quarter of the state will be pushed back to February. That means her department plans to roll these changes out statewide in February, instead of starting this fall with some counties and adding the rest in February. "I think it's sort of a black and white," Cohen said in a conference call Tuesday. "We don't have the budget, so we can't move forward." Open enrollment in 27 counties will be extended until Dec. 13, the department said. In the rest of North Carolina's counties, open enrollment will still begin mid-October as planned, the department said. Things could be delayed again, though, if the budget fight between Cooper and the Republican-controlled General Assembly goes on for months. To read more about this decision and the reaction from Republican legislative leaders, click [here](#). (@NC Capitol, 9/3/19)

Possible Discussions on Closing the Coverage Gap???: Has Sen. Phil Berger opened the door to discussions on closing the health insurance coverage gap? News outlets reported last week that Berger said that Medicaid expansion should be resolved as a separate issue from the budget. He said he's recently had productive conversations with Gov. Cooper's secretary of health and human services, Mandy Cohen, and he left open the possibility of some form of healthcare expansion measure. "There is some broad agreement that there are some folks in North Carolina that through their employment have no access for care and are not eligible for policies on the (ACA) exchange and Medicaid," Berger said. Berger has expressed concerns about full expansion and a modified version with bipartisan support in the House, typically called "Carolina Cares," which includes work requirements. The hundreds of thousands of people eligible under those plans, Berger has said, would include people who can buy subsidized health insurance now from the Affordable Care Act exchange, siphoning away paying customers. But a smaller population – perhaps 200,000 people – can't get exchange plans and aren't eligible for the

state's existing Medicaid program, he has said. "I think there's a need for us to have a conversation and, hopefully, a solution for those folks," Berger said last week. Cohen said that she was heartened by this. "I think our jobs are now to sit around that table and do the hard work," she said. One issue complicating that path: With regular Medicaid expansion, the federal government would cover 90 percent of the costs. Changing the population also changes the federal reimbursement rate, potentially to something closer to the 67% the federal government pays now toward regular Medicaid, and upping the state government's share. (@NC Capitol, 9/3/19)



Sen. Berger

More Big News – Judges Order Redraw of Legislative Districts: A three judge panel ordered another redraw for North Carolina's legislative maps Tuesday, finding them overly partisan in a closely watched case based on the state constitution. In a unanimous ruling, the judges said N.C. House and Senate maps "are significantly tainted" and "do not permit voters to freely choose their representative, but rather representatives are choosing voters based upon sophisticated partisan sorting." The court gave the Republican-controlled legislature two weeks to redraw 57 North Carolina House districts and 21 Senate district maps and ordered the body to do so only during public hearings, with computer screens used in the process visible to the public. In an order posted Tuesday, the court found that:

- "The General Assembly had a partisan intent to create legislative districts that perpetuated a Republican-controlled General Assembly."
- "The General Assembly deployed this intent with surgical precision to carefully craft maps that grouped many voters into districts predominantly based upon partisan criteria by packing and cracking Democratic voters to dilute their collective voting strength."
- "Partisan intent predominated over all other redistricting criteria resulting in extreme partisan gerrymandered legislative maps."
- "The effect of these carefully crafted partisan maps is that, in all but the most unusual election scenarios, the Republican party will control a majority of both chambers of the General Assembly."

The ruling in *Common Cause v. Lewis* is likely to be appealed to the state Supreme Court, but at the moment represents a victory for Democrats in North Carolina, who hope to pick up seats, and a win in the larger fight over partisan gerrymandering. *Common Cause NC's* Executive Director Bob Phillips called the decision "a historic victory for the people of North Carolina." "The court has made clear that partisan gerrymandering violates our state's constitution and is

unacceptable," Phillips said in a written statement. "Thanks to the court's landmark decision, politicians in Raleigh will no longer be able to rig our elections through partisan gerrymandering." The court reserved the right in its order to delay next March's primaries if needed, but said that wasn't necessary at the moment. It said that the General Assembly, in reworking district lines over the next two weeks, could not use the unconstitutional district lines as a starting point. Related to this case, last month, for the second time in two years, a bi-partisan group of four former North Carolina governors came together to file a court brief opposing the practice of partisan gerrymandering. To read more about today's ruling, click [here](#). (@NC Capitol, 9/3/19)

Concerns of Aging and Disability Rights Advocates Addressed in Absentee Ballot

Legislation: At the August 23 Coalition on Aging meeting, Lisa Riegel with Coalition member AARP NC shared information about [SB 683](#), a bill introduced as a result of the alleged voter fraud in Congressional District 9. The Bill had a provision which stipulated that absentee ballot requests must be signed by the voter or the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian. There was concern from aging and disability rights advocates that older adults and persons with disabilities who may need assistance in getting an absentee ballot may not have a near relative or verifiable legal guardian and this could prevent them from receiving a ballot. Rep. David Lewis, Chair of the House Rules Committee, listened to advocates and introduced an amendment when the bill was heard on second reading which states the following:

“(e1) Assistance by Others. If a voter is in need of assistance completing the written request form due to blindness, disability, or inability to read or write, and there is not a near relative or legal guardian available to assist the voter, the voter may request some other person to give assistance notwithstanding any other provisions of this section. If another person gives assistance in completing the written request form, that person's name and address shall be disclosed on the written request form in addition to the information listed in subsection (a) of this section.”

In explaining the amendment, Rep. Lewis noted the amendment language should cover all those who need assistance in requesting a ballot. The amendment passed by a vote of 113-1. The Bill easily passed both second and third readings and was ordered engrossed and sent to the Senate for concurrence.

Election Security: The State Board of Elections voted on August 23 to certify new voting equipment from three companies, including machines that produce paper bar code ballots that advocates asked the board to reject over security concerns. The vote followed months of back-and-forth on the issue and negated a previous board move toward changing state rules to specifically require hand-marked ballots. New Chairman Damon Circosta cast the deciding vote, breaking with his fellow Democrats on the board and siding with its two Republicans. The vote was 3-2, and Circosta said after the vote that he had confidence in each of the new systems. (WRAL NEWS, 8/23/19)

Governor Signs Bill Authorizing Study of Retirement Options for Small

Employers: On August 27, Gov. Cooper, signed HB 604 that would create a study committee to explore ways the state can help small businesses - including nonprofits - offer more retirement plan options to their employees. This study could ultimately lead to greater availability of employee benefits for small nonprofits. (Public Policy Update, 8/9/19)

Help for Rural Hospitals: The General Assembly is taking a second look at a loan program to help rural hospitals that are on the brink of closing. A proposed committee substitute for HB 704 has been approved by the Senate and sent to the House for action. HB 704 contains the original language from Senate Bill 681, the Rural Health Care Stabilization Act. SB 681 passed the Senate earlier in the session but the House tacked on two unrelated bills to it related to sales tax flexibility and utility accounts, and the Senate voted not to concur. "We feel very strongly that the bill needs to be addressed as a separate entity, and are sending it back to the House in this HB 704," said Senate leader Phil Berger. The new version of the bill would establish a loan program for struggling rural hospitals. The program would be administered by UNC Health and was written specifically to address concerns about a hospital in Randolph County closing in the near future. The original HB 704 dealt with dental patient rights, and it has already become law through its Senate companion version. (Lauren Horsch, THE INSIDER, 8/23/19)

Association Health Plans Bill Becomes Law: SB 86, which would allow small businesses, real estate agents and others with statewide trade groups to work together to set up health insurance plans, became law on August 25 without the signature of Gov. Roy Cooper. Under the new law, trade groups of smaller businesses would be treated much like large companies, letting them pool their membership and offer insurance plans regulated by the state Department of Insurance. Those plans would have to cover pre-existing conditions, but they wouldn't always come with the coverage generally required now by the Affordable Care Act, such as maternity care. The governor, who said, "People have a right to be frustrated with the cost of private health insurance plans ..." hesitated to sign the bill despite bipartisan support, citing concerns that cheaper plans would mean less coverage. (Travis Fain, WRAL NEWS, 8/25/19)

Tax Refund Legislation: General Assembly leaders say that the state's \$900 million budget surplus should be partly returned to taxpayers and on August 22, HB 74 (The Taxpayer Refund Act) was introduced to do that. The bill had originally been introduced early in the session as a bill pertaining to a school safety grants program and then changed to a bill authorizing the Department of Public Instruction to carry forward funds for the anonymous safety tip line application before it was changed to become the Taxpayer Refund Act. As proposed, HB 74 would give roughly \$680 million in tax refunds of \$125 to taxpayers who filed singly or \$250 to couples who filed jointly. That is 3.6 million tax returns for 5.1 million taxpayers. The taxpayers would only get the \$125 or \$250 if they paid at least that much in taxes, and the refunds would be capped at those amounts. If the bill becomes law, checks would be mailed by Dec. 15. The refunds would cost the state's general fund a bit more than \$5 million in

administrative costs. The Senate passed HB 74 on August 27 and has forward the bill to the House for concurrence. (THE NEWS & OBSERVER and WRAL NEWS, 8/21/19)

Energy Rate Setting: On August 20, legislation that could overhaul the way North Carolina sets electricity rates turned into a bill that would study the issue instead, delaying changes the state's largest utility has pushed for. With bi-partisan support, the NC House voted 63-51 to rework a key section of Senate Bill 559, which has seen some of the heaviest lobbying of the legislative session. The bill would still change the way Duke Energy and other utilities finance replacements and repairs in the wake of major storms, a part of the bill expected to save customers money and that has widespread backing in the General Assembly. But another section -- a section the energy giant and bill supporters repeatedly declined to split off from the more popular measure -- now calls on the North Carolina Utilities Commission to assemble a study group to look at modernizing the state's regulatory structure instead of moving forward on that modernization in a way Duke proposed. This bill was sent back to the Senate for concurrence on the House committee substitute. Concurrence failed on August 27 so a conference committee has been named to iron out the differences in what was passed by the House and Senate (WRAL NEWS, 8/20/19)

Public Charge Rule: (This is an update to the Pubic Charge Rule issue which has been discussed at several Coalition on Aging meetings and addressed in previous *Updates*). On August 14, 2019, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a final rule related to public charge in the Federal Register. According to DHS, the rule will not take effect until October 15, 2019. Additionally, many organizations have indicated they will file lawsuits challenging the legality of the rule. Thus, even after publication, legal challenges could delay implementation. Here are a few important points regarding the public charge rule:

- The new rule interprets a provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) pertaining to inadmissibility. The inadmissibility ground at issue says a person is inadmissible if they are likely to become a public charge. INA § 212(a)(4). This law only applies to individuals seeking admission into the United States or applying for adjustment of status. This provision of the law does not apply to all immigrants.
- Public charge and this rule do not apply in the naturalization process, through which lawful permanent residents apply to become U.S. citizens.

The Immigration Legal Resource Center has prepared an excellent overview of the current public charge rule and what is in the new rule. To learn more about this, click [here](#). Many aging advocacy and health care groups have expressed concern about the effects the new DHS regulation will have on vulnerable older immigrants who are in this country legally, on their

caregivers, and on the diverse communities where they reside. To read the statement from James Firman, President and CEO of the National Council on Aging (NCOA), on this click [here](#). A statement from the American Hospital Association is [here](#).

Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Grant: The UNC Center for Aging and Health has received a five-year \$3.75 million grant from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) to provide geriatrics training throughout North Carolina. This Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) grant is one of 48 awarded throughout the nation. The UNC Center first received a GWEP grant in 2015. This latest award will continue to integrate geriatrics throughout the health care workforce and implement training to improve dementia care, increase rates of advance care planning, target chronic opioid use, and lower both falls rates and rates of uncontrolled diabetes. East Carolina University's College of Nursing will lead the grants efforts to provide dementia screening, caregiver education, and support to older adults in collaboration with the NC Area Health Education Centers. (Press Release, UNC School of Medicine, Department of Medicine, 8/5/19)

NC Registry for Brain Health Launched: Memory disorder researchers, community stakeholders for Alzheimer's disease and aging care, and members of the public gathered in Asheville on June 1 to mark the launch of the [North Carolina Registry for Brain Health](#). This registry, the first of its kind in the state, will allow the people of North Carolina to play a greater role in research ongoing across the state, leading to a better understanding of how to manage, treat, and prevent Alzheimer's disease and related conditions.

“The registry will expand the scope of Alzheimer's disease research in two much-needed areas,” said Duke Professor Kathleen Welsh-Bohmer, PhD, who oversaw the creation and launch of the registry. “First, by partnering with the community, the registry will facilitate promising research studies to improve brain health for all people across the state. Second, by partnering with trusted organizations, like state universities and other groups providing services, the registry will connect people to the resources they need for getting help with memory concerns.” Adults of all ages from North Carolina are encouraged to join the registry, which will keep them up to date with ongoing research in the areas of aging and overall brain health as well as Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. Once a part of the registry, members will learn about enrolling in studies at Duke University, East Carolina University, North Carolina A&T State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Wake Forest School of Medicine, to consider getting involved if interested. No commitment is required and people can leave the registry whenever they like. To learn more, click [here](#). (Duke University School of Medicine, Department of Neurology, News Article, 6/10/19)

Other News and Updates

New Federal Budget Deal Protects Aging Services:

Congress and the White House have reached an agreement on a deal to raise the budget caps and the debt ceiling through FY21. This agreement would provide a total increase of \$56.5 billion over the 2019 level for non-defense discretionary programs. The deal still needs to be passed by Congress and signed by the President, and much work needs to be done by Oct. 1 on the 12 annual appropriations bills. (NCOA Week, 7/23/19)



NC DHHS and Counties Webinar: County leaders and partners are invited to join a conversation with NC Secretary of Health and Human Services Mandy Cohen, M.D. on Tuesday, September 17 from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. for a quarterly interactive webinar for county partners. The webinar will discuss the state's opioid epidemic, share recommended community actions, highlight county innovation, and share a toolkit to support county leaders. In addition, Secretary Cohen will provide an update on Medicaid transformation. Attendees will participate in the conversation through interactive polling. In addition, time will be set aside for Questions and Answers. To participate in the webcast, register [online](#).

Managed Care Webinars from NC Justice Center: The Health Advocacy Project of the Justice Center has conducted two webinars on Medicaid transformation: June 3 on NC Medicaid's Move to Managed Care – What Health Care Advocates Need to Know and August 13 on NC Medicaid Managed Care Enrollment: What's Going On? To see a recording, transcript and slide deck from each webinar, click [here](#).

Medicaid Transformation: Want to know more about the changes undergoing Medicaid in North Carolina, click here to be directed to the website for the NC Department of Health and Human Services that provides links to information about developments in the transformation.

Medicaid Stories: In July, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network released a Medicaid Storybook to reframe how people view Medicaid, and it includes several impactful stories from North Carolina residents. This is a helpful resource to use in advocacy efforts related to Medicaid expansion. To see the Storybook and what people from our state shared, go to:

Storybook: <https://www.fightcancer.org/sites/default/files/flipbook/book.html>

Website: <https://www.fightcancer.org/medicaid-stories/north-carolina>

Student Loan Debt Report: The Center for Responsible Lending has released a research report detailing the student loan debt crisis in North Carolina. More than 1.2 million state residents hold \$44 billion in student debt. One of the population groups with the largest amount of student debt is older adults. According to the report, collectively adults over 60 in North Carolina held almost \$2.5 billion in student loan debt in 2017. Because almost two-thirds of jobs now require at least some higher education, many older adults are returning to school. Others are still struggling with debt they incurred as co-signers for their children or grandchildren. In North Carolina, the number of borrowers age 60 and older with student loan debt grew from 56,112 to over 87,000 between 2012 and 2017. Within this group of borrowers, 18% are delinquent on their student loans. To view the report, click [here](#). (E-mail Announcement, Center for Responsible Lending, 8/22/19)

Robocall Deal: The average American has received more than 100 robocalls already this year: annoying and unwanted calls, scammers looking to exploit vulnerable populations, and all manner of alerts -- some important and others simply fake. Twelve of the nation's largest phone companies, including AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, Verizon, Charter and Comcast, will implement initiatives to prevent robocalls and encourage more enforcement as part of an agreement with the nation's 51 attorneys general. North Carolina AG Josh Stein led the group along with attorneys general in New Hampshire and Indiana. The deal was announced on August 22 in Washington, D.C. (McCLATCHY, 8/22/19)

Telemarketer Sentenced: A telemarketer has been sentenced to more than five years in prison for his role in a \$10 million telemarketing scheme. U.S. District Judge Max Cogburn, of the western district of North Carolina, sentenced Carlin Woods, of Merrillville, Indiana, to 63 months in prison and three years of supervised release. Prosecutors say the scheme defrauded primarily elderly victims in the United States from call centers in Costa Rica. Woods pleaded guilty in May 2017 to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, one count of wire fraud and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering. In a plea agreement, Woods admitted to working with co-conspirators who falsely posed as employees of U.S. government agencies. They contacted victims to tell them they had won a substantial "sweepstakes" prize. (THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 8/20/19)

Opioid Deaths: After years of rising deaths from accidental drug overdoses, the body count in North Carolina is finally going down. New data, announced by Gov. Roy Cooper on August 30, shows that overdose deaths dropped by 5% in 2018. It was the first time in five years that the number of overdose deaths hadn't increased. "This is a major milestone for North Carolina but the figures show we have much more work to do to keep people healthy and alive," Cooper said in a news release. There were 99 fewer accidental overdose deaths last year, as the fatalities dropped from 1,884 in 2017 to 1,785 in 2018. In addition to roughly 5% fewer deaths, Cooper said, the state also saw 10% fewer emergency room visits for opioid overdoses. (News and Observer, 8/30/19)

Utility Charges: North Carolina regulators have proposed new rules that would make clear that public utilities cannot charge customers for political and charitable contributions or lobbying expenses. The rules would apply to electric and gas utilities and large water and sewer systems. The rulemaking follows a petition last fall from environmental watchdog groups NC WARN and Friends of the Earth. While regulators in the past have disallowed most such expenses, the groups sought a formal rule. But the utilities commission denied another request from the groups -- that utilities be required to file annual reports detailing their lobbying and political expenses. (David Boraks, WFAE RADIO, 8/29/19)

Seniors Ride Free: GoTriangle offers free rides to seniors 65 and older. To ride free, older adults can show proof of age with a government issued ID card with birthdate, including Medicare ID cards. (GoTriangle Website)

Webinar on the State of Working North Carolina Report: The Budget and Tax Center of the NC Justice Center will hold a 30 minute webinar on September 12 at 2:00 p.m. to discuss its just released report “State of Working North Carolina: Equity In Employment (Embracing systems that connect people to good jobs and eliminating barriers helps all of N.C. thrive).” Report findings will be presented and promising policies that could advance employment equity in North Carolina will be discussed. To review the report, click [here](#). To register for the webinar, click [here](#). (Budget and Tax Center Release, 9/2/19)

Grant Supports Hospital to Home Meals: Meals on Wheels of Wake County is the recipient of the 2019 Beehive Collective’s grant of \$50,000 over two years. The new initiative made possible by the grant is the Hospital to Home program which will provide 10 days of meals to persons 60 and over who have been discharged from a hospital or rehab center. The service will allow seniors the chance to recover or make other arrangements for meals following a hospital stay. Patients are referred to the service by Raleigh area hospital staff, the patient’s doctor, or home-health agencies for patients located in Raleigh. The Beehive Collective is a giving circle that awards grants to nonprofits working toward making Raleigh a better place. Members of the Beehive Collective are also interested in supporting and promoting the development of women through leadership opportunities. (The Meal Times Newsletter, Meals on Wheels of Wake County, April 2019)

Medicaid Fraud: A Greensboro-based medical transport company has been ordered to pay more than \$5 million in restitution for health care fraud. Gate City Transportation Inc. pleaded guilty to one count of fraud in October 2018 in federal court, according to a news release from the Middle District of North Carolina. On August 16, U.S. District Court Judge Loretta Copeland Biggs ordered the transportation company to pay a \$100 fine, a \$400 special assessment, and \$5.25 million to the N.C. Fund for Medical Assistance. In April 2008, the company enrolled with the state's Medicaid Program as an ambulance provider, the U.S. Attorney's Office said. Initially, the company owned and operated convalescent ambulances

which are used for non-emergency transportation to stretcher-bound patients. From November 2010 until February 2015, the company stopped operating these ambulances and began using vans to transport convalescent patients, the U.S. Attorney's Office said. The majority of its clients were Medicaid recipients. However, Medicaid did not directly reimburse companies that used vans. (GREENSBORO NEWS & RECORD, 8/16/19)

Clearing Pricing Project Update: North Carolina's elected state treasurer has decided to stop efforts for now to bring on board dozens of additional hospitals to accept a new payment model for medical services incurred by state employees, teachers, retirees and their families called the "Clear Pricing" project. Treasurer Dale Folwell said on August 8 that the 727,000 participants in the state employee insurance health plan will still receive in-network hospital coverage next year through the current provider network offered through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. But they'll also have similar preferred benefits with providers who agreed to the new pricing model Folwell pushed for the past year for the State Health Plan, which his office oversees. Folwell said that model, which pegs payments to Medicare rates, would help create more transparency in expenses and could lead to significant cost savings. The plan spends over \$3 billion annually on medical expenses, and Folwell warns it could run out of cash in 2023 with no changes. (THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 8/08/19)

2020 Voters: The number of North Carolinians who are people of color, unmarried women and millennials is growing and will be more than half of eligible voters in 2020. They could help determine the outcome of the presidential election and whether a state that has gone for both Obama and Trump will turn blue. Those potential voters younger than age 38, which includes millennials and the generation that follows them, along with minority populations and unmarried women, has grown by 17% over the past five years in the state. They now represent 61.4% of eligible voters, according to a new report by the Voter Participation Center. (THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/25/19)

ACA Anti-Discrimination Rules: North Carolina's Josh Stein is one of more than 20 Attorneys General across the country opposing the Trump Administration's plan to amend the anti-discrimination rules in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Stein says this would impact women, LGBTQ, people with disabilities and people who don't speak much English. Stein, along with 21 other attorneys general sent this letter to the Department of Health and Human Services. In it -- they say the Trump Administration is trying to undermine section 15-57 of the Affordable Care Act which says when it comes to healthcare -- you can't discriminate due to race, sex, religion, age or disability. In a statement, Attorney General Stein says healthcare is a right and he will do everything in his power to protect the healthcare of all North Carolinians. (Dillon Huffman, WNCT NEWS, 8/15/19)

Judicial Nominee: President Donald Trump nominated UNC-Chapel Hill law professor Richard E. Myers on August 14 to fill the longest federal judicial vacancy in the county. Trump had twice nominated Raleigh lawyer Thomas Farr to be a judge in the U.S. District Court for the

Eastern District of North Carolina. But Farr never received a full vote in the Senate. The judgeship has been open since Jan. 1, 2006. Former President Barack Obama nominated two African-American women for the position, but neither Patricia Timmons-Goodson nor Jennifer May-Parker received a vote. Myers is a native of Kingston, Jamaica, and immigrated to Wilmington as a child. He is a two-time graduate of UNC-Wilmington and earned his law degree from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1998. He joined the faculty at UNC Law in 2004. (Brian Murphy, McCLATCHY, 8/14/19)

Congressional Races: Early voting is currently underway leading up to the September 10 special elections taking place in North Carolina Congressional districts 9 and 3. Due to pending bad weather from Hurricane Dorian, voters are being encouraged to vote early.

Healthcare Ranking: According to a WalletHub study, North Carolina is the second-worst state for health care. On August 5, WalletHub released its findings, 2019s Best & Worst States for Health Care, to determine where Americans receive the best and worst health care. WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across 43 measures of cost, accessibility and outcome. North Carolina took the 50th spot and ranked second to Alaska (51), for the worst healthcare. Minnesota took first place for the best healthcare. In the top three measures, North Carolina was ranked 50th for health care costs, 50th for health care access and 33rd for mortality outcomes. (RICHMOND COUNTY DAILY JOURNAL, 8/06/19)

Blue Cross Rates: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of N.C. plans to reduce premium rates for the second consecutive year for individuals signing up for 2020 coverage on the federal health-insurance exchange. The insurer said on July 31 it is requesting permission from the N.C. Insurance Department to lower Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium rates by an average of 5.2%. That's on top of reducing rates by 4.1% in 2019. For small businesses with one to 50 employees, Blue Cross is proposing an average rate decrease of 3.3% for their ACA plans. By comparison, state insurance officials approved in October 2017 a 14.15 premium increase for 2018. Blue Cross said the decreases were made possible primarily by its transition to value-based provider reimbursement and progress on reducing internal operating expenses. The combined rate decreases represent a \$238 million reduction in health care costs for 2020. (Richard Craver, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 7/31/19)

ARRP Continues Campaign to Lower Prescription Drug Prices: This spring AARP embarked on a national campaign aimed at lowering prescription drug prices. The goal of AARP's sustained campaign is to help drive down drug prices for all Americans by advocating for a variety of legislative, executive, and regulatory actions at both the federal and state level. The campaign includes national television, radio and digital ads, editorial content, emails to members, social media posts, ongoing advocacy and grassroots activity in D.C. and the states, and a petition calling on Congress and the Administration to take action now. In recent weeks, there have been significant T.V. ads in our state targeted to Sen. Thom Tillis. To learn more about the campaign, click [here](#). (Press Release, 3/12/19)

Senate Finance Committee Passes Prescription Drug Legislation: The Senate Finance Committee passed a bill that includes improvements to the Medicare Part D prescription drug program, including a provision that would cap beneficiary's out-of-pocket spending. The bill also featured a controversial provision requiring drug manufacturers to pay rebates if they increase brand-name drug prices beyond inflation rates. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) reports it is working with Sens. Cardin (D-MD) and Cornyn (R-TX) to include a provision that would improve Part D appeals before the package is considered on the Senate floor in the fall. NCOA is also working with House committees on improvements to the Part D Extra Help Low-Income Subsidy, with action expected in September. [Read the Senate Finance Committee prescription drug proposal.](#) (NCOA Week, 7/31/19)

NASUAD Announces New Name: The National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD) has rebranded to ADvancing States. "Our new name better reflects what the association strives to do for our members as we facilitate relationships, foster innovation, represent states' interests before Congress and the administration, and collaborate with our partners to advance states," said Martha Roherty, Executive Director of ADvancing States. "This name reflects our mission of empowering states to improve state systems delivering long-term services and supports for older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers." The brand was launched in August in Baltimore at the 35th national Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Conference, which attracted more than 1,500 attendees committed to advancing state systems. (ADvancing States Friday Update, 8/23/19)

Pay Gap Is Aging Issue: More than half of women responding to a survey the National Council on Aging (NCOA) conducted with Ipsos said they are worried about outliving their savings. Income is tied to many aspects of aging, but the way that plays out once a person turns 60 is very different for men and women. One major reason: the gender pay gap. [Read more](#) (NCOA Week, 8/28/19)

Act Now to Protect SNAP Eligibility for Older Adults: In July, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposed a regulation that would eliminate the broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE) state option for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Currently in use by over 40 states, this option allows states to waive asset tests and reduce their administrative burdens. The USDA's own analysis shows that older adults would be disproportionately hurt by this proposal. The USDA is accepting comments on the proposed changes until Sept. 23, 2019. To learn more about this and to make a comment, click [here](#). (NCOA Week, 8/21/19)

Falls Prevention Awareness - Falls Prevention Awareness Day is September 23. Click [here](#) to see activities planned by NCOA to reach thousands of people each year to increase awareness about how to prevent fall related injuries among older adults. (NCOA Week, 8/21/19)

Alzheimer's Disease - Communication and Challenging Behaviors Webinar: The National I&R Support Center will host this webinar on Tuesday, September 17, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Individuals living with dementia tend to experience behavioral symptoms and behaviors that can be challenging during the course of the progression of the disease. Join the webinar to learn person-centered care strategies for effective communication and challenging dementia-related behaviors. Hear more about the resources for caregivers and persons living with dementia provided by the Alzheimer's Association. [Click here](#) to register for the webinar. (NASUAD Friday Updates, 8/16/19)

Lifespan Respite Reauthorization: On July 24, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the [Lifespan Respite Care Program Reauthorization Act of 2019 \(H.R. 2035\)](#). S 995, which has not been acted on, is the Senate companion bill and is identical to the House bill. Both bipartisan bills authorize \$200 million for the program through FY 2024. As was reported in the last *Update*, the House passed the FY 2020 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill on June 19. This included \$10 million for the Lifespan Respite Care Program. The Senate is expected to act on its funding bills in early September. (National Respite Coalition Legislative Alert, 8/19/19)

Promoting Information Sharing by Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans to Improve Care Transitions: Many states contract with Medicare Advantage Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans (D-SNPs) to provide Medicare services to their dually eligible populations, but they do not require these D-SNPs to provide coverage of Medicaid long-term services and supports (LTSS) or behavioral health benefits. In 2021, under a recently released rule from CMS, D-SNPs will be required to notify the state or state's designee when enrollees experience Medicare-covered hospital or skilled nursing facility admissions. The goal of the new rule is to ensure timely initiation of care management activities around transitions of care, thereby helping to lower readmission rates and more effectively support D-SNP enrollees. The Integrated Care Resource Center, operated by the Center for Health Care Strategies, has released a brief that examines approaches to care transitions from three states - Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee - to develop and implement information-sharing processes for their D-SNPs that support care transitions. The brief will help states, D-SNPs, and other stakeholders assess how to meet the new D-SNP contracting requirements and improve the care of dually eligible individuals. D-SNPs must submit their 2021 contracts to CMS by early June 2020. [Click here](#) to read the report. (NASUAD Friday Updates, 8/9/19)

Medicare Plan Finder: Usability Problems and Incomplete Information Create Challenges for Beneficiaries: GAO has released a report to the Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means summarizing findings of a survey sent to State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIP) directors about the usability of the Medicare Plan Finder (MPF) website. The MPF website is a resource for comparing Medicare coverage options to help beneficiaries make informed decisions about their coverage. 73 percent of SHIP directors who answered the survey

reported that beneficiaries experience issues navigating the MPF website, while 18 percent of SHIP counselors also experience issues. The report also includes other areas of improvement to make the website more user-friendly, including plain language terminology, more complete cost estimates for coverage options, and more information on Medigap programs. [Click here](#) to learn more. (NASUAD Friday Updates, 8/9/19)

Workforce Matters: The Direct Care Workforce and State-Based Long Term Care Services and Supports (LTSS) Social Insurance Programs: PHI released a report about direct care workers in long-term services and supports with an emphasis on changes state agencies can make to strengthen their direct care workforce. The report provides an overview of the expected increased need for direct care workers and a demographic breakdown of the current direct care workforce. Challenges in the current structure of the direct care workforce are provided in the report. In each description of barriers facing the direct care workforce, PHI includes program and policy recommendations. Challenges and recommendations in this report include areas regarding: wages and benefits, training, advanced roles, supervision, recruitment and retention, data collection, decision-making, family caregivers, and matching service registries. [Click here](#) to learn more. (NASUAD Friday Updates, 8/9/19)

Strategies for Reducing Suicide in Older Adults Webinar: This webinar which is part of a series presented by the [National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging](#) (NCMHA) is co-sponsored by the [National Council on Aging](#) (NCOA) National Chronic Disease Self-Management Education Resource Center. It will be held on Wednesday, September 18, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. The presenter is Michael F. Hogan, Ph.D. The webinar will identify different strategies using multi-layered prevention approaches that combine universal, selective, and indicated interventions to provide the greatest benefit in reducing suicide in older adults. [Register for the webinar](#). (Administration for Community Living Announcement, 8/7/19)

Designing a State-Based Social Insurance Program for Long-Term Services and Supports: The National Academy of Social Insurance (NASI) has released a report on potential designs for universal family care programs. The report highlights state program design proposals for early child care and education, paid family and medical leave, and long-term services and supports (LTSS). The LTSS section of the report proposes four design issues states may face in developing a social insurance program for LTSS. These issues include program structure, financing approach, program integration, and program implementation strategy. This section looks further into the rationale for state action on LTSS, the current state of LTSS financing, potential program structures, social insurance financing options, cost comparisons, new program integration with the current LTSS payment and delivery systems, and considerations for implementation. [Click here](#) to read the report. (NASUAD Friday Updates, 8/2/10)

What is Dementia? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a new online resource that provides in-depth information about dementia. The webpage describes what

dementia is, the prevalence of dementia, signs of normal aging, symptoms of dementia, and other dementia-related topics. The resource also includes next steps if you suspect a loved one may have dementia. [Click here](#) to learn more. (NASUAD Friday Updates, 8/2/10)

Celebrating 54 Years of Medicare and Medicaid: Tuesday, July 30 marked 54 years since President Lyndon B. Johnson signed legislation that created the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Both are vital programs that provide millions of Americans with access to health coverage. (NASUAD Friday Updates, 8/2/10)

Issue Brief on Assistive Technology: The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has released a new [Issue Brief on Assistive Technology](#). Assistive technology (AT) includes software, devices, equipment and products that improve the functioning of individuals of all ages with disabilities. Assistive technology can affect a person's well-being by improving their ability to walk, eat, bathe, communicate, see, speak and live independently. Technologies also can help address social isolation and improve quality of life by assisting people with communication, mobility, and other daily activities. This issue brief discusses: 1) the important role of assistive technology in helping people of all ages with disabilities live full and independent lives in their communities; and 2) certain sources of public funding for the technology, including Medicare, Medicaid, and programs that the Administration for Community Living (ACL) manages. (ACL News and Events, 8/29/19)

Nursing Home Data Released: The Long Term Care Community Coalition (LTCCC) regularly publishes data on key indicators relevant to nursing home care. On August 21, the Coalition published the latest data on [nursing homes that have received a one-star overall rating on Nursing Home Compare](#). One-star is the lowest possible rating in the federal Five-Star rating system, which bases its overall rating on staffing levels, health inspection outcomes, and a range of quality measures. All files are searchable by facility name; location; ratings for health inspections, quality measures, and staffing; ownership type (for-profit vs not-for-profit); reported staffing; substantiated complaints against the facility; and number and amount of fines. The data were downloaded from Nursing Home Compare in August 2019. In addition, LTCCC recently reported the [Special Focus Facility candidate list](#), the latest information on [staffing levels for every nursing home](#) (in compliance with federal reporting requirements), and the [top ten & bottom ten nursing homes in each state](#) in respect to staffing levels. (Alert from Long Term Care Community Coalition, 8/21/10)

Webinar on Proposed Changes to Nursing Home Rules and Regulation: On August 8, the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care held a webinar on proposed changes to the 2016 federal nursing home regulations and final arbitration rules. The webinar discussed what CMS is proposing to eliminate or modify in the current nursing home regulations, the details and impact of the final rule on arbitration in nursing homes, and how to submit written comments by the deadline date of September 16. [Find the webinar recording and slides here](#). (News Article, The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care, 8/14/19)

People in the News

Ben Money has joined the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) as the Deputy Secretary for Health Services. Prior to coming to DHHS, he served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the North Carolina Community Health Center Association for ten years.

On August 2, Republican **Jake Johnson** was appointed to replace **Rep. Cody Henson** for NC House District 113 which serves Henderson, Polk, and Transylvania Counties. Henson resigned from the General Assembly on July 26.



Rep. Johnson



Rep. Henson

Dr. Evelyn Schmidt who served as Executive Director of the Lincoln Community Health Center in Durham for 40 years died in Durham on August 15. She was a passionate advocate for underserved and underprivileged persons in Durham and beyond.

Dr. Garry Crites has been named Executive Director of Coalition member the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – NC. Prior to assuming this position, he was Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Duke University.

The NC Chamber, the state's largest business advocacy organization, has picked **Gary Salamido** as president and CEO. He became chief operating officer and acting president in late 2018 after the resignation of Lew Ebert, who held the post for 12 years. Salamido joined the organization in 2011 as vice president of government affairs. (BUSINESS NC, 8/22/19)

Lt. Gov. Dan Forest officially launched his campaign for Governor on August 1 at a rally at the Winston-Salem Fairgrounds. He joins **Rep. Holly Grange, R-New Hanover**, in the Republican primary for the governor's office.

In July, **Sen. Brent Jackson, R-Sampson**, was elected to serve as president of the State Agriculture and Rural Leaders (SARL) group at its 2019 summit in Calgary, Canada. SARL is an international group of leaders from across the United States and Canada who come together to discuss and address issues facing the agriculture industry. (NEWS RELEASE, 7/17/19)

The state Board of Elections voted on August 13 to make **Damon Circosta** of Raleigh, the Executive Director of the A.J. Fletcher Foundation, its new chairman. He had been chosen by Gov. Cooper the week before as the Democrat to replace former chairman Bob Cordle. Circosta

was politically unaffiliated last year when he was named chairman of a different version of the elections board. (THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 8/13/19)

Kimberly Strach, former executive director of the N.C. State Board of Elections, will lead the search for the next UNC System president. Strach was appointed the director of the search committee charged with finding Margaret Spellings' permanent replacement and interim Bill Roper's successor. Her appointment was announced on August 2. (THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 8/05/19)

Breeden Blackwell of Fayetteville is the new chairman of the State Board of Community Colleges. The board oversees North Carolina's 58 community colleges. A key challenge that Blackwell wants to address is declining enrollment. The system had nearly 845,000 students in the 2010-11 academic year. It was down to just over 681,000 in the 2017-18 academic year, the latest for which data was available on the community college system's website. The cause is unclear, Blackwell said. (THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER, 7/24/19)

Upcoming Meetings: (Events New to the Calendar Are in Bold)

September is National Senior Center Month

September 5, 2019 - NC Institute of Medicine's Annual Meeting – Medicaid Transformation - 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., McKimmon Center, Raleigh, NC

September 9-11, 2019 - The Carolinas Center's 43rd Annual Hospice & Palliative Care Conference - Hyatt Regency , Greenville, SC. Presentation proposal deadline: March 15, 2019 (www.cchospice.org).

September 10-12, 2019 - NC Senior Living Association's 2019 Convention and Trade Show at Embassy Suites by Hilton Charlotte/Concord in Concord, NC

September 12-13, 2019 - 2019 Durham VA Health Care System and Community Mental Health Summit from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Durham County Administrative Building, Durham, NC

September 13, 2019 - Caregiver Summit at Central Carolina Community College, Lillington, NC. For information, click [here](#).

September 16, 2019 – NC Senior Game State Finals Events Begin in Raleigh, NC

September 19, 2019 - LeadingAge NC Workforce Summit - 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Friends Homes Guilford in Greensboro, NC

September 20, 2019 - NC Justice Center Defenders of Justice Awards - 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., Washington Duke Inn, Durham, NC

September 23, 2019 – Falls Prevention Awareness Day

September 24, 2019 – National Voter Registration Day

September 27, 2019 - Annual Meeting of the NC Coalition on Aging – NC State University Club in Raleigh NC. Check-in begins at 11:30 a.m.

October 3, 2019 – 14th Annual Bernstein Health Leadership Fund Dinner at Friday Center from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., Chapel Hill, NC

October 7-8, 2019 - NC Affordable Housing Conference at the Raleigh Convention Center

October 8-10, 2019 - Annual Conference of the NC Assisted Living Association - Benton Convention Center, Winston-Salem, NC.

October 25, 2019 - Monthly Meeting of the NC Coalition on Aging at 10:00 a.m. in Room 104 of the Brown Building on the Dix Campus (801 Biggs Drive) in Raleigh NC

October 26, 2019 - Friends of Residents in Long Term Care Fall Fiesta for Quality Long Term Care at Cantina 18 from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m., Raleigh, NC

October 26, 2019 - Caregiver Summit at McKimmon Center, Raleigh, NC

November 11, 2019 – 2019 Annual National Alliance on Mental Illness North Carolina Conference at McKimmon Center in Raleigh

November 13, 2019 – Geriatric Mental Health Conference: Care Beyond Disease and Diagnosis at Andrews Conference Center (3024 New Bern Avenue) in Raleigh. For information or questions about exhibiting, contact Lorie Houston at (919) 350-0471 or lhouston@wakeahec.org.

November 21-22, 2019 - NC Rural Assembly at N. Raleigh Hilton, Raleigh, NC

December 4-5, 2019 - NC Center for Nonprofits 2019 Conference at Benton Convention Center, Winston-Salem, NC

March 5-6, 2020 - NC Association on Aging Annual Conference - at Baliste Hotel in Wilmington

April 18-20, 2020 - 41st Annual Southern Gerontological Society Conference at The Hilton Norfolk/The Main, Norfolk, Va.

May 20, 2020 - NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse Annual Conference

Resources/Articles

- New York Times: [Inside North Carolina's Big Effort to Transform Health Care](#)
- Washington Post: ['This will be catastrophic': Maine families face elder boom, worker shortage in preview of nation's future](#)
- New York Times: [On the job, 24 hours a day, 27 days a month](#)
- News and Observer (Opinion): [To prosper, an aging U.S. needs immigrants](#) (by Dr. Jim Johnson and Dr. Allan Parnell)
- News and Observer: [Don't Be Fooled by NC Tax 'Refund'](#)
- Budget and Tax Center of the NC Justice Center: [State of Working in North Carolina: Equity In Employment \(Embracing systems that connect people to good jobs and eliminating barriers helps all of N.C. thrive\)](#)
- NCOA Blog: [4 Tips to Stop Scammers Now](#)
- RollCall.com: [North Carolina candidates spar in first and only debate of redo election](#)
- National Post: [Barbara Kay: Loneliness is a human catastrophe – and it's getting worse](#)
- AARP Public Policy Institute: [Trends in Retail Prices of Specialty Prescription Drugs Widely Used by Older Americans](#)
- Los Angeles Times: [Fighting the ravages of Alzheimer's and dementia with the beauty of baseball](#)
- NC Policy Watch: [Citizens, researcher make the case for Medicaid expansion at Winston-Salem hearing](#)
- Center for Health Policy Research, The George Washington University: [The Economic and Employment Benefits of Expanding Medicaid in North Carolina: June 2019 Update](#)
- The Center for Health Care Strategies: [Supporting the Critical Role of Family Caregivers: State Opportunities](#)
- Journal of the American Geriatrics Society: [The Health of Older Americans: A Primer on Medicare and a Local Perspective](#) (Coalition member Gina Upchurch is one of the authors)
- Journal of the American Geriatrics Society: [Medication Access in America and Medicare Part D: Prescription Shopping Saves but May Be Costly](#) (Coalition member Gina Upchurch is one of the authors)
- Journal of the American Geriatrics Society: [Senior PharmAssist: Less Hospital Use with Enrollment in an Innovative Community-Based Program](#) (Coalition member Gina Upchurch is one of the authors)

NC Health News: (click on story to open):

- [Despite increased pace of grants, NC nursing homes risk losing out on penalty dollars](#)
- [North Carolina continues to slow creation of beds for dementia patients](#)
- [State: Beware scammers posing as Social Security](#)
- [Rural hospital closures lead to higher mortality rates](#)
- [Legislative funding proposal needed to facilitate Medicaid changeover](#)
- [State unveils long-awaited psychiatric hospital in Morganton](#)
- [Mission Hospital purchase drives change for multiple local health foundations in WNC](#)
- [Opioid settlements spark debate on how to spend the money](#)
- [Want to prevent gun violence? Some states turn to 'red flag' laws](#)
- [Lawmakers move forward on small business health plan bill](#)
- [For mental health support, NC hospital hires those who live with it](#)
- [Can NC dental hygienists help fill coverage gap through public-private partnership effort](#)
- [It's no SNAP getting fresh produce to those who need it](#)
- [Complex factors create lack of health insurance competition in rural areas](#)
- [North Carolina's most remote clinic](#)
- [Eastern NC mental health unit slated for closure](#)
- [As the rate of lifestyle diseases rises, one obesity prevention strategy is gaining ground](#)

NPR "On Aging" Series: To view a story, go to <https://www.npr.org/sections/aging/> and click on the story.

- **Do You Need All Those Meds? How To Talk To Your Doctor About Cutting Back**
- **Trump Team Hits Brakes On Law That Would Curb Unneeded Medicare CT Scans, MRIs**
- **Bringing Together Young And Old To Ease The Isolation Of Rural Life**
- **\$2,733 To Treat Iron-Poor Blood? Iron Infusions For Anemia Under Scrutiny**
- **Isolated And Struggling, Many Seniors Are Turning To Suicide**
- **Ruth Bader Ginsburg On Love And Other Things**
- **Missouri Firm With Silicon Valley Ties Faces Medicare Billing Scrutiny**
- **Is Aerobic Exercise The Right Prescription For Staving Off Alzheimer's?**
- **LGBTQ Americans Could Be At Higher Risk For Dementia, Study Finds**
- **Researchers Explore Why Women's Alzheimer's Risk Is Higher Than Men's**
- **Medicare Advantage Plans Overbill Taxpayers By Billions Annually, Records Show**
- **Caregiving For A Loved One? How To Get The Help You Need**
- **Simple Ways To Prevent Falls In Older Adults**

Remaining Coalition Meetings for 2019:

September 27 (annual meeting at the NC State University Club), Speaker: Elaine Ryan, Vice-President of State Advocacy and Strategy Integration in the Government Affairs Department of the AARP National Office

October 25 (Brown Building), Speaker: Jay Ludlam, Assistant Secretary for Medicaid, NC Department of Health and Human Services

December 6 (Brown Building), Speaker to be determined

Meeting Location, Time, and Call-In Number: Regular meetings will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in room 104 of the Brown Building on the Dix Campus (801 Biggs Drive) in Raleigh. 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#.

Become a Member of the Coalition on Aging

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 membership dues for 2019 are \$100 for agencies and organizations and \$20 for individual supporters. 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 Executive Director, 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 Executive Director, 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/>.