



## COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

NC Coalition on Aging  
February Update – February 22, 2019

**Coalition's Day at the Legislature:** The General Assembly is back in full swing and now is the time to gather as a collective group to visit with state House and Senate members to talk about our five priority issues for this legislative session. Legislators have many issues competing for their attention so meeting with them to share key facts about the issues and to help put a face on aging in the state is an important step in our advocacy strategy. Join us for the Coalition's Day at the Legislature on Tuesday, February 26, and make your voice heard.

## Coalition's Day at the Legislature

**Tuesday, February 26, 2019**

On Our Day at the Legislature, we will convene as a group at 9:00 a.m. in the Media Room of the Albemarle Building, the home of the NC Department of Insurance, that is located at 325 N. Salisbury Street to get organized and to receive instructions for the day. The Albemarle Building is across the street from the Legislative Office Building. Visitor parking is available in the parking deck adjacent to the building at a cost of \$2.00 per hour. At this organizing time, everyone in attendance will be assigned to a diverse team of Coalition members that will visit designated legislators' offices and instructions/pointers for the Day will be shared. Visits with legislators will be completed in the morning. There will be a meeting of the Joint House and Senate Appropriation Committees on Health and Human Services at 8:30 a.m. that morning. The Committees will begin to hear budget information pertaining to Divisions in the NC Department of Health and Human Services. This meeting may be of interest to Coalition members and may also provide the opportunity to touch base with several key legislators who serve on these Committees. At the conclusion of the morning visits with legislators, Coalition members are asked to return to the 1200 quadrant in the Legislative Building (the one near the bridge that goes between the Legislative Building and the Legislative Office Building) to debrief and share information with Mary Bethel, Executive Director of the Coalition, about any follow up needed with legislators or their staff. This will also be a time to write thank you notes to those legislators with whom a connection was made. Coalition members are asked to wear a red shirt, sweater, or jacket for the Day as well as a name tag.

**Information on Coalition’s Priorities Posted:** Information, including a fact sheet, on the Coalition’s five priority issues for this legislative session can be found on the Coalition’s [website](#). The Coalitions five priorities are:

- Invest state dollars in adult protective services (APS), mandated core services provided by county departments of social services to our state’s most vulnerable adults.
- Close the health insurance coverage gap in the state.
- Increase the recurring state funding for the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) by \$7 million.
- Increase funding for the Housing Trust Fund and increase the Homestead Property Tax Exemption to help ensure older adults and persons with disabilities have safe and affordable housing.
- Conduct a comprehensive study about how the state can better support family care-givers, particularly caregivers who are in the workforce so they can continue to work.

**Support Grows for Legislative Action to Adequately Fund Adult Protective Services:** The Coalition on Aging is calling on the General Assembly to invest state dollars in adult protective services (APS) that are mandated core services provided by county departments of social services. Despite a continuing increase in APS complaints – 30,128 reported cases in SFY 17-18 – the state only provided 0.01% of the \$26.2 million expended on APS. Counties picked up the lion’s share of the cost – 82% - and the federal Social Services Block Grant covered 18%. Of the reported cases in SFY 17-18, 15,563 were “screened in” by county departments of social services and abuse, neglect, or exploitation was found in 6,066 cases, many of which were very complex in nature. The current level of funding does not provide adequate resources for staffing and for providing services to address substantiated abuse, neglect, or exploitation. In addition to funding for staffing and service delivery, there is a need to modernize the state APS statute which has not been examined in decades. Tommy Goldsmith with *NC Health News* did a recent [article](#) about the need for more funding for APS and the growing support for this. Groups in addition to the Coalition calling for state action on APS include the following:

- The North Carolina Partnership to Address Adult Abuse
- The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature
- The Social Services Consortium (NC County Directors of Social Services and Boards of Social Services)
- The Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging
- AARP North Carolina

**Push for Personal Needs Allowance Increase:** The primary public policy goal this year for Coalition member Friends of Residents in Long Term Care is to increase the personal needs allowance (PNA) for Medicaid residents in North Carolina’s nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The PNA is the monthly sum of money that residents who receive Medicaid may retain from their personal income. Any income above the allowance is applied toward the cost of their care. The amount and what expenses are expected to be addressed differ for residents in nursing homes vs residents of assisted living facilities. North Carolina has opted for the federal

minimum PNA for nursing home residents (\$30) since 1996. Nursing home residents use their funds to buy clothing, hair dressing, snack foods, activity expenses or other personal expenses. For assisted living residents, the \$46 PNA has not increased since 2003. There are a number of items assisted living residents have to use these funds for that are covered expenses in nursing homes. Most important are individual toiletries and co-pays on prescription drugs. Since 2006, Medicaid assisted living residents have been required to have a co-pay for prescription drug benefits (an average of over \$17 per month). In addition to prescription drugs, residents use their personal needs allowance to pay for other over-the-counter medications, haircuts, clothing, shoes, individual toiletries (shampoo, deodorant, tooth brushes, toothpaste, lotion, etc.) and snack foods. Residents often end up with no spending money at all after paying for all essential personal items and some facilities may subsidize the costs of these items on behalf of their residents. North Carolina ranks at the lowest level nationally for PNA for residents in nursing homes (\$30) and in the bottom third (\$46) for residents in assisted living. To see a related story on this by Tommy Goldsmith with *NC Health News*, click [here](#).

**Legislative Chambers Set Deadlines for Bill Request/Filing:** The House and Senate have established the deadlines by which bills in their respective chambers have to be requested and filled to be considered this legislative session. The crossover deadline is May 9. This is an arbitrary date set by legislative leaders by which bills that don't impact the budget have to cross from one chamber to the other to remain eligible for the remainder of the session. This deadline, however, is not a "hard and fast" rule, and bills that may appear to be dead, can sometimes come to life again. The Senate and House request/filing schedules are as follows:

### 2019 Senate Request/Filing Deadlines

Drafts	Requested by 4:00 p.m.	Filed in Senate by 4:00 p.m.
Local Bills	Wednesday, February 27	Thursday, March 14
Public Bills & Resolutions	Wednesday, March 13	Tuesday, April 2

### 2019 House Request/Filing Deadlines

Drafts	To Bill Drafting By 4:00 PM	Filed in House By 3:00 PM
Bills recommended by State Agencies	Wednesday, February 13	Thursday, February 28
Local Bills	Wednesday, March 6	Thursday, March 28
Public Bills & Resolutions (Not Approps or Finance)	Wednesday, March 27	Tuesday, April 16
Public Bills (Approps and Finance)	Wednesday, April 3	Tuesday, April 23

**Legislative Committees Named:** The leadership and membership of House and Senate Committees has been named and the schedule for committee meetings has been confirmed. In the Senate, particular committees which we will monitor include: Aging, Appropriations for Health and Human Services, Health, and Pensions and Retirement. In the Senate, committees are Appropriations for Health and Human Services, Health Care, and Pensions/Retirement/Aging. Information about the committees, as well as a current listing of upcoming committee meetings can be found on the [website](#) for the NC General Assembly.

**Nonpartisan Redistricting Legislation Proposed:** Four members of the N.C. House of Representatives have introduced legislation ([H.B. 69](#)) that would create a nonpartisan commission to draw the state's congressional and legislative districts. This is modeled after a process currently used in Iowa. Under this proposal, an 11-person commission would draw the state's congressional and state legislative maps every 10 years. Four members of the commission would be chosen by each major political party, and three members would be unaffiliated with either of the two major parties. The commission would have a transparent process for seeking public input and developing maps that are compact, contiguous, and follow state and federal law - taking politics out of the process. This proposal for a nonpartisan redistricting commission is not the only gerrymandering-related legislation filed this session. The nonprofit group North Carolinians for Redistricting Reform which is co-chaired by former UNC system president Tom Ross and Rep. Chuck McGrady, R-Henderson, wants to put a constitutional amendment before voters in 2020 that would insert new rules for the redistricting process directly into the constitution.

**New Congressional Elections in Two Districts:** The State Board of Elections called for a new election on in the 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District on Thursday after Republican Mark Harris acknowledged the mounting evidence of ballot fraud in his race and said a new contest was needed. Read more about this in an [article](#) by WRAL Statehouse reporter Travis Fain. A new election was already needed in the state's 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District due to the Feb. 10 death of longtime Rep. Walter Jones, who had represented Eastern North Carolina in the U.S. House since 1995. Three Republicans have announced their plans to run for the 3rd Congressional District seat: Michele Nix, the vice chair of the NC GOP; Rep. Phil Shepard, a five-term state House member from Onslow County; and Rep. Michael Speciale, a four-term state House member from Craven County. Gov. Roy Cooper must set the date for these special elections.

**NC Association on Aging (NC AOA) Identifies Top Budget Priorities:** For the 2019 legislative session, NC AOA has identified two issues as their top priorities for increased state funding. The Association is asking that the General Assembly increase the amount of funding for the State's Senior Center General Purpose Fund by at least \$750,000 on a recurring basis. The second request, is that the amount of state support for the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) be increased by at least \$7 million in recurring funds. They are also asking that the policy be maintained of allowing counties to determine how best to allocate their HCCBG funds locally to support a comprehensive and coordinated community-based system of services for older adults and their family caregivers.

**Scams Targeting Older Adults Topped list of NC Consumer Complaints in 2018:** Scams targeting senior citizens were the [biggest complaint to the state Consumer Protection Division](#) last year, according to Attorney General Josh Stein. Stein has reported that his office received 4,035 complaints of elder fraud in 2018, including "sweetheart scams" preying on widows or widowers, "grandparent scams" with people posing as relatives in trouble and IRS scams. About \$2.3 million was refunded to victims of these scams, he said. "There are always scammers trying to trick people into sharing their personal information or giving up their hard-earned money," Stein said in a statement. "This behavior isn't just wrong, it's illegal. My office will do everything in our power to investigate and resolve consumer complaints for North Carolinians and educate people on how to protect themselves from scams and frauds." Here are the rest of the top 10 consumer complaints in North Carolina in 2018:

- Telemarketing & Do-Not-Call: Telemarketing issues include unauthorized telemarketing scams, charitable solicitations and violations of the Do Not Call registry. The Consumer Protection Division received 1,663 telemarketing and do-not-call complaints during the year.
- Motor vehicles: Motor vehicles complaints involve car rentals, buying or selling new or used cars, failures to disclose car damages, recreational vehicles and auto repair issues. There were 1,551 such complaints last year.
- Lenders: Lending complaints include concerns about mortgage lenders, creditors and debt adjustment practices. The Consumer Protection Division received 1,144 lending complaints in 2018.
- Home repairs: There were 1,077 complaints involving home improvement and repair, construction and home and lawn care.
- Price gouging: 942 price-gouging complaints were lodged after Hurricane Florence, Hurricane Michael and the winter storms that hit North Carolina in 2018.
- Health care: Health care-related complaints cover health services and products, as well as professional services from hospitals, doctors and other healthcare providers. There were 784 health care complaints during the year.
- Telecommunications: Telecommunications complaints involve concerns with cellular providers and telephone utilities, and there were 701 such complaints last year.
- Cable TV and satellite: The Consumer Protection Division handles complaints against cable TV and satellite service providers with a state-issued franchise, and 614 were filed in 2018.
- Credit: Credit-related complaints involve credit reporting, recovery and collecting agencies. There were 597 credit complaints during the year.

Visit [ncdoj.gov](http://ncdoj.gov) to learn more about ways to protect from scams and fraud. Scam complaints can be filed with the Consumer Protection Division at [ncdoj.gov/complaint](http://ncdoj.gov/complaint) or by calling 1-877-5-NO-SCAM. (WRAL.com, 1/23/19)

## **Other News and Updates**

**State of the State Address:** Gov. Roy Cooper will deliver his "State of the State" address to a joint legislative session at 7 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 25.

**State Board of Elections Seeks Public Comment on Photo ID Rules:** The N.C. State Board of Elections has published [notice of its proposed temporary rules](#) to implement the requirements that North Carolinians provide photo identification when voting in elections in person. The draft rules for a [voter photo ID card](#) and for [approval of student identification cards](#) for voting (including IDs of private, nonprofit colleges and universities) will be open to public comment through March 15. Comments on these proposed rules can be [submitted](#) by mail, email, or through the State Board's online portal.

**Date Set for Gerrymander Trial:** A state three-judge panel has filed an order directing a July 15 trial start in a Wake County court in the lawsuit Democrats and election reform advocates filed alleging North Carolina legislative districts violate the state constitution because of excessive partisan bias favoring Republicans. (News and Observer, 1/2/19)

**County Housing Profiles Released:** [The North Carolina Housing Coalition's 2019 County Profiles](#) provide a snapshot of housing needs for each of North Carolina's 100 counties. They provide data on cost-burdened households paying at least 30% of their income for housing, a comparison of what different jobs pay and changes in home prices, foreclosures, and rental options in our communities. The County Profiles are designed to be used by advocates in their communities and with their local and state elected officials as an education tool around the housing issues in our cities and towns. In addition to the individual county profiles, a comparative tool depicting the comprehensive underlying data is available [here](#). The data is gathered from a variety of sources including:

- The National Low Income Housing Coalition's [2018 Out of Reach Report](#);
- The most recent [2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#) from the US Census Bureau;
- The most recent [2017 Occupational Employment Statistics](#) data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics;
- The [Low-Income Energy Affordability Data](#) from the US Department of Energy; and
- The 2016-2017 county court data from the [North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts](#).

**NC Senior Games State Finals:** [Dates](#) for most 2019 Senior Games State Finals events have been set. The "big week" for events in Raleigh which includes track and field activities, swimming, and Silver Arts is September 16-22. The dates for the Basketball Tournament are still to be determined. Other tournaments that have been confirmed are:

- Bocce and Cornhole Tournaments – September 25-26
- Softball Tournament – October 4-7
- Pickleball Tournament – October 15-17
- Golf Tournament – October 21-22

**DHHS Announces Prepaid Health Plans Selected:** On Feb. 4, the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced the selection of Prepaid Health Plans that will participate in Medicaid managed care when the program launches in November 2019. To read more about this, click [here](#). There are already signs; however, that organizations that were not selected intend to appeal which could result in implementation delays. Click [here](#) for more on this.

**State Auditor Questions Managed Care Contract Language:** Also on the managed care front, State Auditor Beth Wood has raised a red flag at North Carolina's ongoing transition to managed care. In newly released findings, Wood's office said that DHHS left holes in contract language that should have limited allowable profits for the seven locally run managed care organizations that provide services for Medicaid recipients with severe mental illness, developmental delays or substance-abuse problems.

**Food Stamp Distribution Adjusted:** Because of the federal shutdown at the beginning of the year, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is continuing to adjust distribution schedules for Food and Nutrition Services benefits. March benefits for all recipients will be distributed by March 3. The distribution, which will be early for most families, will help minimize the effects of their access to food due to the previous federal government shutdown from Dec. 22, 2018, to Jan. 25, which resulted in the early distribution of February benefits on Jan. 20. DHHS continues its process of getting families and individuals back on their routine schedules over the short term.

**Revenue Surplus:** North Carolina state government is on track to have a \$150.8 million revenue surplus for the current fiscal year, about 0.6 percent more than the expected number in this year's state budget. The estimate is part of the latest consensus revenue forecast released by the legislature's Fiscal Research Division and the Office of State Budget and Management.

**Flu Deaths Grow in State:** According to the NC Division of Public Health, 13 new flu deaths were reported in North Carolina between Feb. 10 and Feb. 16. This brings the total deaths this flu season to 68. More than a year ago, on Feb. 3, 2018, total flu deaths in the state were 140. Although the numbers are not as high this year, state health officials are still concerned and emphasize that it is not too late to get a flu shot. (WRAL, 2/21/19)

**Alzheimer's Policy Victories:** At the close of 2018, the National Institutes of Health approved the largest-ever funding increase of \$425 million for Alzheimer's and dementia research, and the Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act (S 2076/H.R. 4256) was signed into law. According to the Alzheimer's Association, the BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act will enhance and improve our nation's public health response to the Alzheimer's crisis and the funding increase will enable scientists to more rapidly advance understanding, prevention, diagnosis and potential treatments for the disease. The Association reports that one in three seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia. (Alzheimer's Update, Feb. 2019)

**Love in The Time of Retirement:** On Feb. 14, Valentine's Day, the National Public Radio program A1 had a very interesting program on what it means to be single and dating in your fifties and older. To listen to the program, click [here](#).

**Stories Sought on How Closing the Coverage Gap Can Expand Access to Affordable Health Care:** Coalition partner, the NC Justice Center, is collecting stories from people 50 to 64 who fall in the health insurance coverage gap so they can help put a face on North Carolina residents whose lives could be improved if our state expanded Medicaid and they could gain access to needed healthcare. To share a story, contact Rebecca Cerese at (919) 824-0811 or by

email at [rebecca@ncjustice.org](mailto:rebecca@ncjustice.org) or call the storyline at 1-833-831-2035 and leave your story as a message. Stories can also be completed at <https://goo.gl/forms/gVtywnG8T0pbcorO2> (for patients) or at <https://goo.gl/forms/Ed7F9GniI9BTJI0D3> (for providers).

### **Care4Carolina Shares Solutions for Closing Health Insurance Coverage Gap with**

**Freshmen Legislators:** More than 30 freshmen state legislators, from both political parties, attended a breakfast briefing on Feb. 5 to discuss possible solutions for closing North Carolina's health insurance coverage gap. In addition to hearing from a panel of legislative leaders (Reps. Donny Lambeth, Josh Dobson, Donna White, Greg Murphy, and Don Davis), the briefing also included presentations from John Coggins of the NC Rural Center on the positive economic impact of closing the coverage gap on the state's rural economy and from Rob Thompson of NC Child on the beneficial impact on children's health when parents are insured and have access to quality health care. (Care4Carolina Press Release, 2/6/19).

**AARP North Carolina Seeking State Director:** AARP is seeking a Director for the AARP State Office that is located in Raleigh. Information about the position can be obtained by clicking [here](#).

**Financial Abuse of Seniors Hits Record:** A Jan. 24 [article](#) in the Wall Street Journal reported that banks have reported a 12% increase in suspected cases of financial abuse of seniors and are stepping up efforts to detect and stop fraud. According to the article "Scamming Grandma: Financial Abuse of Seniors Hits Record," banks reported a record 24,454 suspected cases of elder financial abuse to the Treasury Department last year, more than double the amount five years earlier, according to government data. The increase occurred as new federal and state laws are prompting banks to take a more active role in trying to address frauds and scams that target older customers.

**Talking Elder Abuse:** This is a [toolkit](#) from the FrameWorks Institute that is a collection of framing research, recommendations, and sample communications that is designed to help experts and advocates who work in the elder abuse field to increase public understanding of why elder abuse is a matter of public concern; the causes of elder abuse, including the social determinants and environmental factors that can foster the occurrence of abuse; and what solutions can most effectively prevent elder abuse, address existing cases, and improve the conditions and wellbeing of those who have experienced abuse. The kit's materials include:

- sample communications, such as a "key points" guide and social media content, that can be adapted and repurposed for your organization's needs
- communications examples that demonstrate the "do's and don'ts" of the framing recommendations
- graphics that illustrate the key concepts of the recommendations
- annotations that explain the framing strategies being illustrated.

**Webinar on Supports and Tools for Elder Abuse Prevention and Resources To Help:** The [National Center on Elder Abuse](#) (NCEA), in partnership with the [National Association of Area Agencies on Aging](#) (n4a), launched the [STEAP \(Supports and Tools for Elder Abuse Prevention Initiative\)](#) to support and enhance the Aging Network's elder abuse prevention education and outreach activities. Join a [webinar](#) on Thursday, March 21 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. that

will introduce [practical and customizable tools](#) agencies can use to engage and educate the community about the role everyone can play in preventing abuse.

**Elder Justice Coalition Holds Opioid Meeting:** On Jan. 22, the nonpartisan Elder Justice Coalition held a meeting with Admiral Brett Giroir, the Assistant Secretary for Health and Senior Advisor for Opioid Policy, a top Administration official coordinating the Department of Health and Human Services' response to the opioid crisis gripping America. The Coalition sought the meeting to provide information showing the linkage between elder abuse and opioid abuse. The Coalition's main request in the meeting was that some of the billions of dollars in new funding directed to the opioid crisis should be dedicated to addressing the growing link to elder abuse and exploitation, both in terms of raising awareness and improving abuse prevention. (The Elder Justice Coalition Press Release, 1/23/19)

**Remaining Federal FY19 Appropriations Enacted:** Late last week, following the conclusion of the partial federal government shut down, a deal was reached to finalize the remaining seven FY19 appropriations bills that had yet to be enacted. The legislation largely level-funds programs and services that seniors rely on, such as Section 202 housing and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSBG). [Review a funding table](#) compiled by the National Council on Aging which provides more details. (NCOA Week, 1/19/19)

**Legislation to Politicize 501(c)(3) Nonprofits Reintroduced in Congress:** Several members of Congress have renewed their efforts to weaken the Johnson Amendment, the longstanding federal law that [protects charitable nonprofits, houses of worship, and foundations from being pulled down into divisive partisan, election-related activities](#), such as using charitable assets for political contributions and endorsing candidates for elective office. Two bills ([S. 330](#) and [H.R. 949](#)) would substantially weaken the law by allowing 501(c)(3) organizations to endorse candidates for public office and engage in partisan electioneering activities. Recently, more than 130 national nonprofit organizations delivered a [letter in support of the Johnson Amendment](#) to the Chairs of the House and Senate tax committees reiterating the importance of the longstanding protection and urging them to "uphold the Johnson Amendment and reject legislation that would compromise the integrity of our nation's houses of worship and other charitable nonprofits." (Public Policy Update from NC Center for Nonprofits, 2/15/19)

**AIRS Certification Program Changes:** In January 2019, the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) announced new names for the credentials that comprise its certification program. The AIRS credential designed for aging and disability professionals, previously the Certified Information & Referral Specialist for Aging/Disabilities (CIRS-A/D), is renamed the Community Resource Specialist - Aging/Disabilities (CRS-A/D). All AIRS credentials now share the common stem of Community Resource Specialist. In addition to the CRS-A/D, Community Resource Specialist (CRS) is the new name for a Certified Information and Referral Specialist, and Community Resource Specialist - Database Curator (CRS-DC) is the new name for a Certified Resource Specialist. For more information on AIRS certification, click [here](#). For more information on the CRS-A/D, see this [Fact Sheet](#). (National Information and Referral Support Center E-mail, 1/14/19)

**Innovations in Benefits Outreach National Contest:** Reaching potentially eligible individuals is a vital factor in increasing enrollment rates in benefit programs. The identification and sharing of promising practices can help strengthen the understanding of successful outreach strategies. To learn more, the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities' (NASUAD's) MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act) initiative, in partnership with the National Council on Aging (NCOA), is hosting an *Innovations in Benefits Outreach national contest* to identify and disseminate promising practices in benefits outreach to persons with disabilities and older adults. Organizations are encouraged to think broadly about the many ways that they reach out to, engage, educate, and assist individuals in need of benefits assistance. View the link below to submit an entry and find more detailed information about eligibility, selection criteria, and awards, which includes registration and lodging at this year's National Home and Community Based Services Conference. For the submission form in an alternate format, contact Samantha Gardner at [sgardner@nasuad.org](mailto:sgardner@nasuad.org). The deadline for submission entries is Friday, March 15, 2019. [Click here](#) to submit an entry. (National Information and Referral Support Center E-mail, 1/20/19)

**2019 HCBS Conference Call for Sessions Now Open:** NASUAD has announced the opening of its [Call for Sessions](#) for the 2019 Home and Community Based Services Conference, held August 26-29, 2019 in Baltimore, MD. The [HCBS Conference](#) highlights best practices from across the country in home and community-based services. The conference includes federal, state, and local policymakers as well as those who administer, manage, and deliver waiver and other HCBS programs. Click here to [submit](#) a session proposal. The deadline is March 15. (NASUAD Friday Update, 2/15/19)

**Minority Aging Statistical Profiles:** The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has released the [2017 Minority Aging Statistical Profiles](#). The profiles provide summaries of topical areas such as education, marital status, living arrangements, income and poverty, disability status, health insurance, and participation in Older Americans Act (OAA) programs. The profiles primarily use data from the U.S. Census Bureau to provide an annual summary of the most recent statistics. The 2017 Minority Profiles focus on older adults within the African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian American, and Hispanic American populations. The 2017 Minority Aging Statistical Profiles were published alongside the [2017 Profile of Older Americans](#), which focuses on the population aged 65 and older and looks at changing demographics across individual categories, including population, income and poverty, living arrangements, education, health, and caregiving. (NASUAD Friday Update, 2/15/19)

**2019 Federal Poverty Level Standards:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has released the 2019 federal poverty guidelines. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published an informational bulletin on Monday, February 14 related to the 2019 Federal Poverty Level Standards. This bulletin provides an overview of poverty guidelines and also includes the [2019 Dual Eligible Standards chart](#) that displays the new standards for the Medicare Savings Program categories. [Click here](#) to access this informational bulletin. (NASUAD Friday Update, 2/15/19)

**Medicaid Extenders Act of 2019:** CMS previously published a November 2018 bulletin advising states and stakeholders that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act's

spousal impoverishment-related provision was set to expire on December 31, 2018. CMS has [issued a new informational bulletin](#) about the Medicaid Extenders Act of 2019, signed into law (P.L. 116-3) on January 24, 2019. This bulletin discusses this bill's modifications to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). Specifically, this bill modifies section 2404 of the ACA to require that state Medicaid agencies apply the spousal impoverishment rules to married applicants and beneficiaries eligible for home and community-based services (HCBS) through March 31, 2019. (NASUAD Friday Update, 2/15/19)

**Safer Use of Opioid Pain Medication:** CMS has published a new fact sheet on the safe use of prescription opioid pain medications. This fact sheet discusses the process of safety reviews at the pharmacy, as well as the Drug Management Programs to help patients who are at risk for prescription drug abuse. Safety reviews and Drug Management Programs generally don't apply to those who have cancer, get hospice, palliative, or end-of-life care, or those who live in a long-term care facility. [Click here](#) to read more. (NASUAD Friday Update, 2/15/19)

**Alzheimer's Disease Programs Initiative - Grants to States and Communities:** The Alzheimer's Disease Program Initiative (ADPI), is dedicated to the development and expansion of dementia-capable home and community-based service (HCBS) systems in States and Communities. There are two application options contained in this initiative, one for States (Option A) and the other for Communities (Option B). No entity is eligible to apply for both State and Community options. The systems resulting from program activities under both program options are to provide quality, person-centered services that help individuals remain independent and safe in their communities. The deadline for applications is April 1, 2019. [Click here](#) to learn more. (NASUAD Friday Update, 2/15/19)

**Medicare Launches New Coverage App:** CMS has launched a new “What’s Covered” app that lets people with Original Medicare, caregivers, and others use their mobile device to check whether Medicare covers a specific medical item or service. The app is part of a broader eMedicare initiative using technology to inform and empower beneficiaries. [Learn how to download the app.](#) (NCOA Week, 2/12/19)

**The Medicare Advantage OEP Is Here:** The Medicare Advantage (MA) Open Enrollment Period (OEP) ends March 30, and is an opportunity for people to change their MA plans. A [fact sheet](#) developed for us by the Medicare Rights Center can tell older adults about this important opportunity. (NCOA Week, 2/12/19)

**Six Ways to Get Vision Coverage After Retirement:** Having access to quality vision care is critical as a person gets older. Vision impairment can increase the risk of falls and driving incidents and negatively impact quality of life. Medicare plans cover a wide variety of services, but when it comes to caring for their sight, beneficiaries' options are extremely limited. NCOA has written about what's available. [Read more.](#) (NCOA Week, 2/1/19)

**National Center on Advanced Person-Centered Practices and Systems Launched:** The [Administration for Community Living](#) and the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid](#)

[Services](#) recently announced the launch of the [National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems](#) (NCAPPS). NCAPPS will assist states, tribes, and territories to transform their long-term care service and support systems to implement U.S. Department of Health and Human Services policy on person-centered thinking, planning, and practices. It will support a range of person-centered thinking, planning, and practices, regardless of funding source. Activities will include providing technical assistance to states, tribes, and territories; establishing communities of practice to promote best practices; hosting educational webinars; and creating a national clearinghouse of resources to support person-centered practice. Visit the new NCAPPS website for more information: <https://ncapps.acl.gov>

## **People in the News**

**Carla Obiol**, began work January 2 as **Vice President of Programs for the Foundation for Health Leadership and Innovation**. Prior to assuming this position, she directed the Care4Carolina Campaign and also worked for many years for the NC Department of Insurance.

**Erica Palmer Smith** began work on Feb. 14 as **Campaign Director for Care4Carolina**, a statewide coalition that seeks to strengthen the economic and social wellbeing of our state by increasing access to affordable, quality healthcare for all North Carolinians.

**House Speaker Tim Moore has announced his new general counsel**, naming attorney **Neal Inman** to lead his legal team in the 2019-2020 legislative biennium. A graduate of Campbell University and the University of North Carolina School of Law, Inman previously served as House Rules Committee counsel for Rep. David Lewis, R-Harnett, and associate general counsel for Gov. Pat McCrory. Moore said Inman was promoted after proving to be a valuable asset to members of the General Assembly since 2017. Inman's hiring comes after Moore's deputy chief of staff, **Jonathan Sink, accepted a new role to serve as general counsel to state Superintendent Mark Johnson**. (NEWS RELEASE, 2/12/19)

**John B. McMillan**, 76 from Raleigh, a **lobbyist and former N.C. State Bar president**, died of Feb. 6.

**Vicki Smith** has joined the **Alliance for Disability Advocates as Executive Director**. She was the former director of Disability Rights North Carolina. **Dave Wickstrom**, the previous Director for the Alliance, has taken a position in Washington, D.C. with the **Administration for Community Living**.

**Gaylene Miller**, State Director for AARP West Virginia, will serve as **Interim State Director for AARP North Carolina**, beginning February 25.

**Jonathan Kappler** has stepped down as executive director of the N.C. FreeEnterprise Foundation to take a new job with the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. Kappler -- who led the organization and has been a prominent political analyst since fall 2017 -- will be the **senior advisor and chief of staff to the deputy secretary for behavioral health and intellectual and developmental disabilities at DHHS**.

The **North Carolina Psychological Association** (NCPA) Board of Directors and staff has announced that **Martha Turner-Quest is the organization's new executive director**. Turner-Quest succeeds Sally Cameron, who was the executive director for 38 years. She has over 15 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. Prior to joining NCPA, she was the manager of finance and administration for ACLU of Arkansas and the chief of staff to the president at a small historically black college in Little Rock. She has also been the executive director of the Georgia Psychological Association, a program specialist for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and the project manager for the Center of Black Women's Health at the Association of Black Cardiologists. (NEWS RELEASE, 1/31/19)

**N.C. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy Cohen** has been recognized by Modern Healthcare as one of **2019's Top 25 Women Leaders**. Modern Healthcare's biennial recognition program honors the top women healthcare executives who are influencing health policy and care delivery models across the country.

The **newest state Senator is Jim Perry, R-Wayne**, a retired Kinston businessman. He was selected to fill the unexpired term of District 7 state Sen. Louis Pate of Mount Olive who resigned in January. District 7 includes portions of Wayne and Lenoir counties.

The **N.C. Senate Republican caucus has named a new political director** to oversee campaigns in the 2020 election cycle. **Dylan Watts**, who'd previously served as Senate leader Phil Berger's finance director, will take over the role from Ray Martin who left recently to start a consulting firm with former Berger chief of staff Jim Blaine.

**Carolina Partnership for Reform (CPR)** has announced that **Stephen Wiley has joined the organization as Executive Director**. Prior to joining CPR, Wiley worked on campaigns and for the North Carolina General Assembly. In both roles, he was hands-on with messaging, communications, and policy. He helped craft legislation reforming public education, digital learning, tax policy, and information technology expansion. Wiley is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill. Carolina Partnership for Reform is a public benefit organization that conducts policy research and educates the public about freedom-based policy reforms and initiatives in order to further individual liberty, promote economic growth, and improve education in North Carolina. (NEWS RELEASE, 1/22/19)

**Former Rep. Joe Tolson** of Edgecombe County, a **longtime North Carolina Democratic legislator and budget writer** who focused on education, technology and the rural economy, died on Feb. 3 at Vidant Edgecombe Hospital in Tarboro at age 77.

**Fannie Corbett**, a founder of the **Wilson Community Improvement Association**, died on Feb. 19 at age 86, after a struggle with Alzheimer's disease. She was well known for her work with seniors in the Wilson area. She received many awards for her work, including the Nancy Susan Reynolds Award from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and the Nehemiah Award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (THE WILSON TIMES, 2/21/19)

**Dr. Walter "Dub" Dickson** died on February 18 at the age of 91. He **represented Gaston County in the N.C. House of Representatives from 1989 to 1998**.

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

**February 25, 2019 – Rethinking Guardianship for North Carolina Summit from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Royal Banquet Center, 3801 Hillsborough St., Suite 109, Raleigh, NC.**

**February 26, 2019 – NC Coalition on Aging Day at the Legislature – Convene at 9:00 a.m. in the Media Room of the Albemarle Building, 325 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh, NC for orientation and instructions.**

**February 27, 2019 – Medicaid Expansion Advocacy Day at the Legislature Sponsored by the NC Justice Center.**

**March 1, 2019 – West Regional Telehealth Summit in Asheville.**

March 1, 2019 - Meals on Wheels of Wake County Mardi Gras Ball at 7:00 p.m.- Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley, Raleigh, NC.

March 6, 2019 and 1st Wednesday of Each Month - Webinar Series: Moving Mountains, SNF Provider Training, Tools and Insight to Conquer 2019 Industry Changes. Contact Leslie at LeadingAge NC at [leslie.roseboro@leadingagenc.org](mailto:leslie.roseboro@leadingagenc.org).

March 6, 2019 - Social Work Advocacy Day at the Legislature (NASW-NC).

**March 12-13, 2019 – NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature Meeting at NC Rural Center in Raleigh, NC. The Senior Legislature will go to the General Assembly on March 13.**

March 13-15, 2019 - NC Association on Aging Annual Conference - at Biltmore Village Hotel in Asheville.

**March 13-15, 2019 – NC Conference of District Attorneys Course on Elder Abuse and Exploitation: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Justice at Hilton Garden Inn in Kitty Hawk, NC. Click [here](#) for information.**

March 15, 2019 - The Ethics of Cultural Awareness & Social Diversity by NASW - NC - McKimmon Center, Raleigh.

**March 22, 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.**

**March 26, 2019 – Rural Day Presented by the NC Rural Center at the Raleigh Convention Center, Raleigh, NC.**

March 28-29, 2019 - Palliative Care Bootcamp - Lake Junaluska Conference & Retreat Center, Lake Junaluska, NC.

**March 31-April 2, 2019 – National 2019 Alzheimer’s Impact Movement Advocacy Forum at Washington Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, D.C.**

April 3, 2019 - Long Term Care Advocacy Day at the General Assembly - sponsored by Friends of Residents in Long Term Care.

April 9-13, 2019 - 40th Annual Southern Geontological Society Conference at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort in Miramar Beach, Florida. [Information here.](#)

April 15-18, 2019 - 2019 ASA Aging in America Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

**April 24, 2019 – Oral Health Advocacy Day – Raleigh, NC.**

**April 26, 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.**

**April 28-30, 2019 – 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention and Expo of the Association for Home and Hospice Care of North Carolina at Raleigh Convention Center, Raleigh, NC.**

April 29-30, 2019 - 2019 Self-Direction Conference - (Hosted by Applied Self-Direction) - Hyatt Regency in Baltimore, Maryland.

**April 29 – May 1, 2019 – NC Public Transportation Association Annual Conference and Expo in Wilmington.**

April 30-May 2, 2019 - 2019 National Lifespan Respite Conference: Buffalo, NY at the Adams Mark Hotel.

**May 1-3, 2019 – NC Guardianship Association 2019 Annual Conference at Courtyard Marriott, Carolina Beach, NC. Click here to [register](#).**

**July 30-August 1, 2019 – 2019 NC Social Services Institute at Hickory Convention Center in Hickory, NC.**

**August 19-21, 2019 – National Adult Protective Services Association 2019 Conference and 1<sup>st</sup> National “Bridges to Justice” Conference at Omni Interlocken Resort in Denver, Colorado.**

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

Check out the [calendar](#) on the Coalition’s website for a listing of additional upcoming events and activities.

**[Resources/Articles](#)**

- Time: [A Growing American Crisis: Who Will Care for the Baby Boomers?](#)

- New York Times: [Medicare for All Emerges as Early Policy Test for 2020 Democrats](#)
- New York Times: [Democrats Push Plan to Increase Social Security Benefits, Boost Solveny](#)
- New York Times: [VA Seeks to Redirect Billions of Dollars into Private Care](#)
- NBC News: [Chronic Pain Top Reason for Medical Marijuana Use Study Says](#)
- NBC News: [Protein shakes don't count: Why older adults should eat real food](#)
- Medical News Today: [Does education really protect against dementia?](#)
- CNN: [A 5th grader's boredom while visiting her mom's job led to \\$70,000 for the elderly in need](#)

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

- [NC to consider hiking personal needs allowance for long-term care residents](#) (February 20, 2019)
- [Mistreated adults need support from state, not just counties and feds, advocates say](#) (February 7, 2019)
- [On State Health Plan changes, Folwell hits gas while lawmakers threaten to tap brakes](#) (February 20, 2019)
- [State employee health plan changes face legislative scrutiny](#) (February 18, 2019)
- [State Auditor: NC DHHS should limit profits, costs of behavioral health MCOs](#) (February 15, 2019)
- [Medicaid changes will become more visible to beneficiaries, providers](#) (February 13, 2019)
- [GoFundMe CEO: 'Gigantic gaps' in health system showing up in crowdfunding](#) (February 1, 2019)
- [Democrats start legislative session by calling for expanded Medicaid](#) (January 31, 2019)
- [State audit: NC DHHS's failure to set proper rates kept dollars from mental health patients](#) (January 25, 2019)
- [Five companies, \\$30 billion over five years: North Carolina announces its Medicaid managed care selections](#) (February 5, 2019)
- [Flu causes more hospitals across the state to restrict visitors](#) (February 8, 2019)
- [Most states don't do well with mental health parity, but others are setting an example for enforcement](#) (February 12, 2019)
- [Determining disparity in mental health treatment can be difficult](#) (January 30, 2019)
- [Mental health providers struggle with disparities in the system](#) (January 23, 2019)
- [Mental health parity isn't panning out for some patients and parents](#) (January 22, 2019)

**NPR Aging Series:** To view any of these stories, go to <https://www.npr.org/sections/aging/> and click on the story.

- [Scans Show Female Brains Remain Youthful As Male Brains Wind Down](#)
- [Federally Funded Companions Keep Seniors Connected To Their Neighbors](#)
- [Morphine, And A Side Of Grief Counseling: Nursing Students Learn How To Handle Death](#)

## **Remaining Coalition Meetings for 2019:**

**February 22** (Albemarle Building, home of NC Dept. of Insurance, in room 240)

**March 22** (Brown Building)

**April 26** (Brown Building)

**May 17** (Brown Building; meeting will be from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.)

**June 28** (Brown Building)

**August 23** (Brown Building)

**September 27** (annual meeting at the NC State University Club)

**October 25** (Brown Building)

**December 6** (Brown Building).

**Meeting Location, Time, and Call-In Number:** Unless indicated otherwise, 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#.

## **Have You Paid Membership Dues for 2019?**

**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.

For 2019, the membership dues remain the same as 2018 -- \$100 for agencies and organizations and \$20 for individual supporters. The Coalition has a hardship provision for those who which 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:mmbethel72@gmail.com) or check out our website at <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/>.