

Mid-January Update

Legislative Committee Meetings in Full Swing – The Legislature may not be in session, but Legislative Committee meetings have started back full steam this week. On Tuesday, January 12, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid and NC Health Choice (Medicaid Oversight Committee) met. Both Committees received status reports on issues under their umbrella. Rose Hoban, with NC Health News had a good article recapping the highlights of the Medicaid Committee meeting (<http://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2016/01/13/health-officials-scramble-to-meet-legislative-deadlines/>). Both Oversight Committees are scheduled to meet again on February 9. To see the agendas and handouts for both meetings this week, go to http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/Committees/Committees.asp?sAction=ViewCommittee&sActionDetails=Non-Standing_6507 and click on the Committee names.

Adult Guardianship Legislative Update - The American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging has posted its 2015 adult guardianship state legislative update at <http://ambar.org/guardianship>. The 28-page update includes information on legislation enacted on adult guardianship from 18 states.

The North Carolina Partnership to Address Adult Abuse is a partnership comprised of individuals, agencies, and businesses that is focused on eliminating abuse, neglect and exploitation of older adults and adults with disabilities. The Partnership purpose is to promote safe communities through awareness, education, and advocacy. For more information about the Partnership, contact Mary Edwards with the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services at Mary.Edwards@dhhs.nc.gov or (919) 855-3437 or check out the Facebook page at for the Partnership at <https://www.facebook.com/ncpartnership/>.

Seniors Decide 2016 – On February 17, the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations will sponsor Seniors Decide 2016, the nation’s only forum where all of the Presidential candidates are invited to address aging issues. To find out more and to learn how to get involved, go to <https://www.ncoa.org/news/ncoa-news/public-policy-news/seniors-decide-2016-ncoa-toolkit/>.

AARP has launched a 2016 **election accountability campaign called Take a Stand** which asks Presidential candidates to Take a Stand on their plans to update Social Security. In announcing the Campaign, AARP officials noted that they expect every Presidential candidate to lay out their plans to make Social Security financially sound so current and future generations can receive the adequate benefits they’ve earned. To see information on the Social Security plans offered by some of the Presidential candidates, go to www.2016takeastand.org.

Radio Program on End of Life Planning – Frank Stasio with WUNC Public Radio, had an interesting program on his January 12 The State of Things radio show about planning for the end of life (<http://wunc.org/post/greensboro-man-celebrates-life-plans-death>) On the show, he had a conversation with Stimp Hawkins, an 81-year old retired minister and hospice chaplain, and Lisa

Miller, Executive Director of Creative Aging Network – NC (CAN-NC), a Greensboro based organization that works to enhance the well-being of older North Carolinians through creative arts programming, education, and training. Rev. Hawkins, who has Do Not Resuscitate tattooed across his chest, hosts monthly informal meetings called “Café Mortal” and “Death Café” in Greensboro for people to discuss issues related to death and end-of-life-concerns. The radio program is informative as well as entertaining and would be great to share with anyone who is reluctant to discuss end-of-life planning.

The **North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature** has established its legislative priorities for 2016. They are”

- Increase the Home and Community Care Block Grant by \$7 million in recurring funding.
- Adopt the Uniform Adult Guardianship Protective Proceedings Jurisdiction Act (JAGPPJA)
- Strengthen and make available \$5 million in the State budget to fund North Carolina’s Adult Protective Services Fund
- Make no changes to Optional Medicaid services
- Sustain and expand Project C.A.R.E. by restoring 500,000 in recurring funding for the program

The **Final Report on the 2015 White House Conference on Aging** has been released.- The **final report** summarizes key themes from the dialogues held throughout the country, as well as policies announced during and following the July 13 Conference.

Generations United has released **State of Grandfamilies: 2015 Report**. According to the report, almost 65% of children in grandfamilies, or kinship care, live in states with only half or less of the key laws and policies designed to support them. The report identifies key state laws and policies specifically designed to address barriers and to better support grandparents. Download the **Full Report**.

Theme and Logo Announced for 2016 Older Americans Month – On December 28, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) announced the theme and logo for this year’s Older Americans Month. The theme is Blaze a Trail. The month (May) is meant for the country to reflect on the contributions of older adults to the nation and will serve as the opportunity to raise awareness about the issues that older adults face. **Click here** to view the logo.

On January 12, AARP and Park Associates issued a **Caregiver Innovation Frontiers Study** which looked at the current and future needs of caregivers and those needing care and identified key business opportunities and in-demand solutions sought by caregivers and care recipients. Six areas of business opportunities identified in the study report were daily essential activities, health and safety awareness, care coordination, transition services, social well-being, and caregiver quality of life. The report can be downloaded at **<http://goo.gl/jaUyhH>**.

Did you know? This summer President Obama signed a bill, **The Notice of Observation Treatment and Implication for Care Eligibility Act**, into law that requires hospitals to notify Medicare patient when they are receiving observation care but have not been admitted. Although the bill does not give Medicare beneficiaries a formal recourse to change their status once they are informed they are at a hospital on an observational basis, it does help protect individuals from surprise hospital bills.

2016 Palliative Care Symposium, sponsored by the Carolinas Center and the Virginia Association for Hospice and Palliative Care will be held on April 7 at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill. To see the full Symposium program or to register, go to www.cchospice.org.

Bill Lamb is the new **Executive Director of Friends of Residents in Long Term Care**, an independent, nonprofit organization committed to advancing the quality of life for the individuals who receive long-term care in North Carolina. The organization focuses on the entire continuum of long-term care including nursing homes, adult care homes, continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs), and home health care. Contact information for Bill is (919) 782-1530 or bill@forltc.org. The website for Friends is www.forltc.org.

Joe Breen, Chief of the Planning, Budget, and System Support Section with the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services, will remain in his position at the Division. In December it had been announced that Joe would leave the position for a job in the private sector.

Calendar of Events:

March 7-8 - NC Association on Aging Annual Conference, Pinehurst

March 20-24 – ASA Aging in America Conference, Washington, D.C.

April 28-29 – NC PACE Association Annual Conference, Sheraton Imperial, Durham