



## COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

NC Coalition on Aging  
January Update – January 18, 2019

**Start to a New Year:** As 2019 begins, the partial federal shutdown shows no signs of waning; the election in our 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional district has still not been settled; our General Assembly has convened to get organized; and lawsuits concerning balance of power parameters continue. As aging consumers, providers, and advocates continue in our efforts to better serve and address the need of older North Carolinians, it promises to be an interesting and lively state of affairs for the foreseeable future as these issues and others, both known and unknown, play out in our state.

**Something Old and Something New in General Assembly:** The House and Senate returned to Raleigh for the opening of its two year session on January 9 for a one day ceremonial and organizational meeting. The Senate voted unanimously to elect Sen. Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, as Senate leader for a fifth term, and the House chose Rep. Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, as speaker for a third term. In acceptance speeches, Berger and Moore both noted that they hoped legislators can find common ground on issues such as education, hurricane relief and government efficiency. Democrats won enough seats in November to end the Republican's veto-proof majorities, giving them more leverage. Senator Ralph Hise, R-Mitchell was selected as the Senate's deputy leader and Rep. Sarah Stevens, R-Surry, was re-elected as speaker pro tempore, the number two elected position in the House.

The legislature will return to Raleigh on January 30 to get down to business. When they return, there will be some notable absences as well as some people in new roles. It was announced this week that Sen. Louis Pate, 82, R-Wayne, who had been sworn in for his fifth term in the Senate is retiring. He served four terms in the House before being elected to the Senate in 2010. Sen. Pate, who has been suffering with health problems, was a most gracious and approachable legislator and his knowledge, expertise, and leadership in health and human services issues will be greatly missed. Several legislators who lost their seats in the November elections will still have a presence in the halls of the legislature including former state Rep. Nelson Dollar, R-Wake, who had been chair of the House Appropriations Committee, before losing his re-election bid. He will be joining House Speaker Moore's staff as a senior policy advisor.

All of us in the aging arena in the state have a keen interest in the work of the General Assembly as the decisions our state lawmakers make have a critical impact on aging policy as well as the availability of resources to support important programs and services for older North Carolinians.

**New State Lawmakers:** Six freshmen Republicans and seven freshmen Democrats were sworn into the **Senate**, which now includes 10 African-Americans, 10 women, two Indian-Americans, and eight veterans. There are 10 attorneys, five in real estate, and three who are in insurance.

The **freshmen Republicans** are:

- Sen. Bob Steinburg – Chowan (previously served in the House)
- Sen. Jim Burgin – Harnett
- Sen. Carl Ford – Rowan (previously served in the House)
- Sen. Eddie Gallimore – Davidson
- Sen. Todd Johnson – Union
- Sen. Ted Alexander – Cleveland
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The **freshmen Democrats** are:

- Sen. Harper Peterson – New Hanover
- Sen. Wiley Nickel – Wake
- Sen. Sam Searcy – Wake
- Sen. Kirk deViere – Cumberland
- Sen. Michael Garrett – Guilford
- Sen. Mujtaba Mohammed – Mecklenburg
- Sen. Natasha Marcus – Mecklenburg

A full list of Senators can be found [here](#).

The freshman class in the **House** has nine Republicans and 17 Democrats. The House now includes 26 African-Americans, 34 women, one American-Indian, and 24 veterans.

The **freshmen Republicans** are:

- Rep. Lisa Stone Barnes – Nash
- Rep. Jerry Carter – Rockingham
- Rep. Ed Goodwin – Chowan
- Rep. Bobby Hanig – Currituck
- Rep. Chris Humphrey – Lenoir
- Rep. Steve Jarvis – Davidson
- Rep. Keith Kidwell – Beaufort
- Rep. Wayne Sasser – Cabarrus
- Rep. Carson Smith – Pender

The **freshmen Democrats** are:

- Rep. Ray Russell – Watauga
- Rep. Kandie Smith – Pitt
- Rep. Raymond Smith – Wayne
- Rep. Julie von Haefen – Wake
- Rep. Sydney Batch – Wake
- Rep. Christy Clark – Mecklenburg
- Rep. Ashton Clemmons – Guilford
- Rep. Allison Dahle – Wake
- Rep. Terence Everitt – Wake
- Rep. James Gailliard – Nash

- Rep. Wesley Harris – Mecklenburg
- Rep. Zack Hawkins – Durham
- Rep. Rachel Hunt – Mecklenburg
- Rep. Brandon Lofton – Mecklenburg
- Rep. Carolyn Logan – Mecklenburg
- Rep. Nasif Majeed – Mecklenburg
- Rep. Joe Sam Queen – Haywood (previously served in House and Senate)

A full list of House members can be found [here](#).

**Legislative Committees:** Not all legislative committee appointments for the 2019-2020 biennium have been made, but are expected soon. Click [here](#) to find information on House and Senate Committees.

**Senate Standing Committees**, for the most part, are in place. Several Senate Committees of particular relevance to the Coalition’s priorities include:

**Senate Appropriations/Base Budget Committee:**

- Chairs: Harry Brown, Kathy Harrington, Brent Jackson
- Members: Warren Daniel, Bill Rabon, Norman W. Sanderson, Andy Wells, Dan Bishop, Danny Earl Britt, Jr., Rick Gunn, Jerry W. Tillman, Rick Horner, Jim Davis, Joyce Krawiec, Deanna Ballard, Dan Blue, Erica D. Smith, Paul A. Lowe, Jr., Terry Van Duyn, Jay J. Chaudhuri, Mike Woodard

**Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services:**

- Chairs: Dan Bishop, Joyce Krawiec, Louis Pate (resigned)
- Members: Ralph Hise, Jim Burgin, Floyd B. McKissick, Jr., Gladys A. Robinson, Terry Van Duyn, Paul A. Lowe, Jr.

**Senate Health Care Committee:**

- Chairs: Dan Bishop, Joyce Krawiec, Louis Pate (resigned)
- Members: Jim Davis, Ralph Hise, Deanna Ballard, Vickie Sawyer, Carl Ford, Rick Horner, Jim Burgin, Don Davis, Valerie P. Foushee, Gladys A. Robinson, Terry Van Duyn

**House Standing Committees** have not been named, but the leadership of several key committees has been announced including the Appropriations Committee.

**House Appropriations Committee:**

- Senior Chairs – Rep. Jason Saine (R – Lincoln), Rep. Donny Lambeth (R – Forsyth), Rep. Linda Johnson (R – Cabarrus)

- Chairs – Rep. Dean Arp (R – Union), Rep. Josh Dobson (R – Avery), Rep. Chuck McGrady (R – Henderson), Rep. John Faircloth (R – Guilford), Rep. William Brisson (R – Bladen)

**Voter ID:** Senate Bill 824 (Implementation of Voter ID Constitutional Amendment) passed the General Assembly on December 6 and was vetoed by the Governor on December 14. Provisions of the legislation have been shared previously with Coalition members. The General Assembly overrode the Governor’s veto, first in the Senate on December 18 and then in the House on December 19 at which time the legislation became law (SL 2018-144 ). The state NAACP and six of its branches filed a federal lawsuit the day after the bill became law, and six voters represented by the Southern Coalition for Social Justice filed a lawsuit in state court minutes after the bill became law. The lawsuits have in common the contention that the law discriminates against minority voters. A new organization called Spread the Vote is beginning work in the state to help people get photo IDs. The organization works in five states and is expanding to seven more, including North Carolina, said spokesman Andrew Feldman. Spread the Vote works to get people the documents they need to obtain certain IDs. (Lynn Bonner, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 12/20/18). In the latest twist in developments related to the lawsuits, lawyers for Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger and House Speaker Tim Moore filed a motion in federal court on January 14 to intervene in the lawsuit challenging rules to implement the new requirement that voters present photo identification at the polls. (Matthew Burns, WRAL NEWS, 1/14/19)

**Coalition Establishes Legislative Agenda for 2019:** At the December 7 membership meeting of the Coalition, those present voted to approve five legislative priorities for the long legislative session. These priorities are:

- Substantially increase state funding for adult protective services (APS).
- Take steps to ensure that older adults and persons with disabilities have safe and affordable housing. Specifically, (1) increase state funding for the Housing Trust Fund which provides funding for rehabbing and providing modifications to homes and for developing affordable housing for seniors and person with disabilities and (2) increase the Homestead Property Tax Exemption which provides low-income persons 65 and older and those who are permanently and totally disabled property tax relief.
- Increase the recurring state funding for the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) by \$7 million.
- Close the health insurance coverage gap in the state.
- Conduct a comprehensive study about how the state can better support family caregivers, particularly caregivers who are in the workforce.

The Coalition is still putting the finishing touches of educational materials about the priority issues. These will be available by the Coalition meeting on January 25.

**Other Aging Advocacy Groups Identify Legislative Priorities:** As the long legislative session gets underway, other aging advocacy groups are also finalizing their legislative priorities for the year. Priorities of some of the key organizations include:

### **Governor's Advisory Council on Aging:**

- Make non-recurring funding in the amount of \$969,549 for the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) recurring and appropriate an additional \$21 million for the Block Grant to eliminate the official waiting list for serviced funded by the Block Grant.
- Increase funding for adult protective services (APS) by \$7 million. The Council further urges that such increased funding be new state funding rather than a reallocation of the federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) that would take money from other vital aging services programs.
- Expand medical cost-lowering programs such as PACE (Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly).

### **North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature:**

- Increase funding for the Home and Community Care Block Grant by \$7 million in recurring dollars.
- Maintain the current Senior Center General Purpose funding and increase the funding by a recurring \$350,000 to continue to meet the vital needs of North Carolina's growing population of older adults.
- Increase funding for Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty) in 2019-2020 by \$500,000 and in future years increase funding by ten percent annually for expected growth.
- Recognize and value vulnerable citizens by making available \$7 million in recurring funds in the State budget to meet the growing need for adult protective services in North Carolina and conduct a comprehensive evaluation/review of these services to ensure this protection is adequate.
- Enact legislation which establishes either a mandatory standardized HPPD (hours per patient daily) in nursing homes in the state or minimum staff-to-patient ratios for direct care, including enforcement standards and consequences to ensure quality care in nursing homes, regardless of whether they are for-profit or non-profit organizations.

### **AARP North Carolina:**

- Improve Access to Care in North Carolina
  - Empower family caregivers to provide better care to loved ones
    - Support legislation that will ensure that caregivers are specifically identified in medical records if desired by the patient and adequately informed and instructed about the care needed by oved ones during a transition.
  - Modernize law to allow full practice authority for advanced practice registered nurses
  - Prioritize long-term care services and supports
    - Eliminate waiting lists for Home and Community Care Block Grant services
    - Allocate recurring state funding to the United Way 2-1-1 community resource hotline

- Improve systems to prevent adult abuse and neglect
      - Update adult guardianship law and improve court data systems
      - Create 13 new Long Term Care Ombudsmen positions
      - Increase adult protective services support and training improvements in all 100 counties
      - Increase the Medicaid personal needs allowance
    - Develop comprehensive telehealth policies
- Improve Access to Care in North Carolina
  - Simplify saving in retirement
    - Implement payroll initiatives that allow employees to open emergency savings or retirement savings accounts through automatic payroll deductions
  - Improve fraud prevention efforts
    - Support legislation to make it tougher for criminals to breach government and private sector data systems

**Federal Shutdown and Impact on Older Adults:** Five of the of the 12 FY19 appropriations bills were enacted into law prior to the partial government shutdown. Those five bills provide 75% of federal government funding, and many aging services programs are included. FY19 funding is secure for Older Americans Act (OAA) and Elder Justice Act (EJA) programs, Senior Corps, the Medicare State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). However, several other programs have not been funded. These include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), low-income housing assistance, senior transportation programs, and elder justice and consumer protection initiatives administered by the Justice and Treasury Departments. To date, there have not been any reductions in these services for older adults, but if the shutdown continues, harmful effects will begin to emerge in February and March. Also caught up in the FY19 funding debate are continuing efforts to extend expired Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) programs that allow older adults to remain in their own homes longer. These include the Money Follows the Person (MFP) and Spousal Impoverishment protection programs. On Jan. 8, with leadership from new Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone (D-NJ), the House passed the Medicaid Extenders Act of 2019 (H.R. 259), which provides 3-month extensions for these programs. (Marci Phillips, NCOA, 1/15/19). (Late Breaking Update: On Jan. 17, 2019, the U.S. Senate passed the [Medicaid Extenders](#) package via unanimous consent. This bill now goes to the President's desk. The legislation extends the Medicaid Spousal Impoverishment protection policy until March 31, 2019 and allocates \$112 million for Money Follows the Person, the estimated cost of a three month extension. The costs are offset by a provision that imposes penalties on state Medicaid programs without an asset verification system in place by 2021).

**February Food Stamps Issued Early:** Because of the federal shutdown, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has instructed states to issue February's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits (food stamps) early. On Sunday, Jan. 20, 2019 households already receiving FNS benefits will receive their February FNS benefits that would normally be available between

February 3 and 21. Once issued there will not be additional benefits issued to those households in February. New applications will continue to be taken and processed. At this time, the USDA has not provided information about the availability of benefits beyond February while the shutdown is in place. The NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is working closely with county departments of social services and its federal partners to ensure participants have little to no interruption of FNS services due to the shutdown. (DHHS memo, 1/14/19)

**Federal Action Ahead for FY20:** Traditionally, the annual appropriations debate kicks off with the release of the President's budget request in early February. Due to the shutdown, this may be delayed and the Congressional debate will be postponed until all FY19 funding is enacted. An important element for FY20 will be the need for another 2-year deal to raise the caps on discretionary spending. Congress has done this in increments over the past few years, and this year they are facing a 9% cut (from \$597 to \$543 billion) in non-defense discretionary spending and an 11% cut (from \$647 to \$576 billion) for defense spending if the caps are not raised. Also due later this year are renewals of key statutes impacting older adults. The first is renewal of authority under the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) to provide targeted funding for SHIPs, Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), and the National Center for Benefits Outreach and Enrollment (NCBOE) to find and enroll eligible low-income older adults into benefits programs. The current authority expires Oct. 1. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is advocating to make this initiative permanent to eliminate the need for regular renewal. Also up for renewal is the Older Americans Act (OAA). Reauthorization provides an opportunity to update and modernize the OAA to better serve the rapidly growing older population and strengthen the ability of the aging services network to address their needs. (Marci Phillips, NCOA, 1/15/19)

**Nursing-Home Fines:** A [story](#) by Tommy Goldsmith with NC Health News begins by noting that an email from a state official delivered startling news during the first week of January: "The NC Division of Health Service Regulation reported a balance of \$28,952,697.63 in the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS fines/penalties fund for the quarter ending December 31, 2018." In plain language, that email referred to nearly \$29 million in a state-federal fund that is sitting mostly unused. The money -- including \$13 million during the past three fiscal years -- has accrued from fines as large as \$1.16 million levied by federal regulators against individual North Carolina nursing homes. The growing millions in the fund are supposed to be spent on programs to ensure better lives for the people who live in the state's 429 nursing homes. But during the past three years, only \$406,057 -- about 1.4 percent of the current stash -- was spent. The money went mostly to a handful of smaller-scale "culture change" projects designed to improve residents' lives at individual nursing homes. "Pls encourage grant proposals," read the subject line of the recent email from the section chief at the Division of Health Service Regulation, Nursing Home Licensure & Certification Section in the state's Department of Health and Human Services. More than \$25 million in the fund has gone unused at a time when the state's 60-plus generation is projected to outnumber those younger than 18 this year. Advocates have argued in vain to the General Assembly that people older than 60 require help -- such as transportation and Meals on Wheels -- that would add millions to the state's budget. Nursing homes or other parties can get grants from the money, known as "civil money penalty," or CMP funds, after approval from DHHS and the federal CMS. "Unfortunately, there are not enough applications for use of these CMP funds," Emery Milliken, deputy director of the Division of Health Service Regulation, said in an email to NC Health

News. "In 2017 and 2018, North Carolina received a total of 24 completed CMP grant applications, which were all approved and submitted to CMS. Ultimately, 22 were approved by CMS." A follow up story on this issue by NC Health News can be found [here](#).

**Settlement Agreement Status:** Time is winding down for North Carolina health officials to make substantial improvements in services for adults with mental illness, required under a 2012 settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice. The state has until July 1, 2021, to achieve quantifiable requirements under the settlement. According to Marti Knisley, the independent reviewer assigned to observe and report on the state's progress, the state has made dramatic progress in some areas, but not in others that will be essential to meeting its legal obligations. Knisley noted in her 2018 report released Oct. 31, her fourth annual report overall, that the state has agreed to take steps to "prevent inappropriate institutionalization" and provide needed support and services to individuals by using an "individualized person-centered planning approach" to assist people at risk of entering adult care homes or a state psychiatric hospital. The goal of this agreement is to help these at-risk individuals to "get services and housing in the most integrated setting appropriate to their need." A key requirement of the settlement is that the state create 3,000 housing slots for these individuals by July 1, 2021. Knisley's report predicts that the state will "fall just short" of meeting that requirement. However, with a slight monthly increase in the number of slots filled, and a reduction of the number of people who are leaving such housing, Knisley predicted the state still could potentially meet this requirement by the deadline. The challenge the state faces is that such improvements require substantial system changes. "The state has yet to make all the system improvements and changes necessary to comply with the Settlement Agreement," Knisley wrote in the report. The placement of substantial numbers of North Carolinians with mental illness in adult care homes, as well as the uneven quality of care at those facilities despite state and county oversight continued to be a concern. "(Adult care homes) continue to range from being well-maintained and inviting places to live to less-well-maintained homes that are not inviting," Knisley wrote. Asked about the state's reaction to the annual report, Kody Kinsley, the state Department of Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health & Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, issued a statement: "DHHS continues to be strongly committed to meeting requirements of the (U.S. Department of Justice) settlement agreement while building a system that assures the vision of a community-based system is in place for people with disabilities," Kinsley said. (Frank Taylor, CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS, 12/17/18)

**Disaster Recovery Fund for Seniors:** Donations continue to be accepted for the NC Disaster Recovery Fund for Older Adults and Agencies Serving Older Adults. Following Hurricanes Florence and Michael when many people in our state were left in great need of help, several aging organizations and groups including the NC Association on Aging, the NC Association of Area Agencies on Aging, AARP NC, and the Coalition on Aging partnered to establish this Fund. The purpose of this Fund is to help address the unmet needs and the long-term recovery of older North Carolinians and local aging agencies. The NC Association on Aging (NCAOA) is administering the fund. On-line donations can be made at [www.ncaoa.org](http://www.ncaoa.org) (designate for Disaster Recovery for Seniors) or checks can be made payable to and mailed to NCAOA at PO Box 10341, Raleigh, NC 27605. In the memo line note "Disaster Fund." Older adults in need of assistance should contact their local aging service provider to discuss their needs and to make

an application. Local service providers will work with the Area Agency on Aging for their region to apply for assistance.

**January Coalition Meeting:** As has been previously announced, the next Coalition meeting that will be held on Friday, Jan. 25, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the Brown Building on the Dix campus located at 801 Biggs Drive in Raleigh (usual site of our regular meeting). Tara Myers, who was named Deputy Secretary for Human Services in the NC Department of Health and Human Services in October 2018, will be the speaker. Ms. Myers had a long career in the vocational rehabilitation field before assuming this position. Among her many responsibilities as Deputy Secretary, Ms. Myers has assumed direct oversight of the Division of Aging and Adult Services.



Deputy Secretary Myers

## **Other News and Updates**

**Coalition Joins National Coalition of Consumer Organizations on Aging (NCCO):** Thanks to the assistance of Howard Bedlin, Vice-President for Public Policy and Advocacy with NCOA and keynote speaker at the Coalition’s 2018 annual meeting, the Coalition was invited to join NCCO which is a NCOA collaborative network of statewide and community-based senior-based consumer organizations. Since 1996, NCCO has worked to bring together and strengthen grassroots senior consumer organizations to serve low-income and disadvantaged older persons. A benefit of being in the Coalition is having monthly conference calls where Howard shares information on federal developments related to aging issues.

**NC MedAssist Report:** The non-profit free pharmacy, NC MedAssist, that provides access to lifesaving prescription medications, patient support, advocacy, and related services to vulnerable and uninsured North Carolina residents, has just released its 2018 annual report. They distributed \$68.5 million in prescription medications (181,831 prescriptions) to over 15,800 patients. Click [here](#) to review the report.

**CAP/DA Updated Waiver Application:** NC Medicaid has updated the Community Alternatives Program for Disabled Adults (CAP/DA) waiver application and has posted it for a 30 day comment period which ends Feb. 4. To review the draft waiver application and to learn

about informational webinars for stakeholders about the application that are going on right now, click [here](#).

**Respite Vouchers Available:** Lifespan Respite Vouchers are still available for the 2018/2019 funding cycle. Statewide, 57 caregivers have received a respite voucher this year and there is funding for about 130 more caregivers. Caregivers can receive a \$500 voucher once per year. Lifespan Respite Care Vouchers are available for eligible family caregivers taking care of a person of any age with special needs. The vouchers are made possible through federal funding awarded to the NC Division of Aging & Adult Services, the state's federal Lifespan Respite Grantee. The voucher process is managed by the High Country Area Agency on Aging, and the vouchers carry a one-time maximum annual value of \$500. Applications are available at: <https://www.highcountryaging.org/> under the Respite tab at the top of the home page.

**Review of Rules for Long Term Care Facilities:** The Division of Health Services Regulation is mounting two separate initiatives in 2019 to review NC rules applicable to licensed long term care facilities in North Carolina. This would apply to both licensed nursing homes and assisted living facilities. To find out more about this, check out the January [newsletter](#) for Friends of Residents in Long Term Care.

**Breakfast for Brainiacs Webinar Series:** Made available through The Carolinas Center, the award-winning Breakfast for Brainiacs® is a monthly audio conference with topics that are specific to clinical and non-clinical staff and include both local and nationally recognized presenters who are experts in their field. To find out more, [Click here](#) for details.

**Nominate a Trailblazer in Aging:** The Trailblazer in Aging Awards, presented by the National Council on Aging (NCOA) recognize the unique contributions and leadership of individuals and organizations working to empower every person to age well. The Awards honor those committed to ensuring that each of us is able to age with our best possible health and economic security and are open to top individuals and organizations across the country serving older adults. A distinguished panel of judges will be looking for standout nominees who deserve recognition and praise. Award recipients will be announced in April 2019 and honored during NCOA's [Age+Action Conference](#) on June 19, 2019 in Washington, DC. The entry deadline is Feb. 28, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. Award Categories are:

- **Innovator:** Recognizing an individual or organization that has created innovative solutions to improve the health and economic security of older adults in the community.
- **Change Agent:** Recognizing an individual or organization working to ensure that every person—regardless of race, income, or background—has the resources to age well.
- **Lifetime Achievement:** Recognizing an individual who has had a lifelong career of outstanding service to older adults.
- **NISC Founder:** Recognizing outstanding professional leadership in the senior center field, presented by NCOA's National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC).

Questions can be directed to [conference@ncoa.org](mailto:conference@ncoa.org). (NCOA Week, 1/8/19)

**National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems:** The Administration for Community Living (ACL) and CMS launched the National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS) in January. NCAPPS is administered by the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) and is intended to promote systems change that makes person-centered principles a reality in the lives of people who require services and supports across the lifespan. HSRI will rely on several partner organizations to ensure that the work is relevant and effective. States, Tribes, and Territories may apply for a variety of technical assistance from NCAPPS, including person-centered planning in No Wrong Door Systems, enhancement of HCBS for older adults and individuals with disabilities, and training modification. States, Tribes, and Territories who wish to apply for technical assistance should submit their completed application form by Feb. 12, 2019 to [NCAPPS@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:NCAPPS@acl.hhs.gov). Read more about NCAPPS [here](#). (NASUAD Friday Update, 1/11/19)

**Financial Well-being of Older Americans:** In 2015, the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection released a scale to measure a person's sense of financial well-being. This recently published report from the Bureau uses this scale to explore the factors that are associated with the financial well-being of older Americans. The report examines the association of financial well-being and: (1) age; (2) individual characteristics; (3) employment and retirement; (4) housing situation; (5) debt; (6) family and living arrangement; (7) health-related experience; and (8) financial knowledge, skill, and behavior. This report also explores differences in some of these associations between older and younger adults. The findings indicate that, in general, financial well-being increases with age into the late seventies, then declines. [Click here](#) to read the full report. (NASUAD Friday Update, 1/11/19)

**Consideration of Pain in the Disability Determination Process:** The Social Security Administration has issued an Advance Notice of Public Rulemaking to align consideration of pain in adult and child disability claims with current medicine and health care practices. SSA is now seeking comments and data related to the consideration of pain and documentation of pain in connection with claims for benefits. Comments will be used to help determine if and how revisions should be proposed to current policy regarding evaluation of pain. The deadline to submit comments is Feb. 15, 2019. [Click here](#) to learn more. (NASUAD Friday Update, 1/11/19)

**Innovations in Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS):** AARP has published a new blog sharing promising practices and emerging innovations in LTSS. In this post, AARP highlights five reports to help accelerate LTSS reforms. These reports were created using information from the Long-Term Services and Supports State Scorecard. This first set of reports covers the topics of: implementing person- and family-centered care in Aging and Disability Resource Centers; reducing the risk of long-term nursing home care; supporting community living for Veterans; sustaining family caregivers; and expanding self-direction and choice. More topics and solutions in this series will continue to be released in 2019 and beyond. [Click here](#) to read the blog post and access the reports. (NASUAD Friday Update, 1/11/19)

**Health and Aging Policy Fellowships:** The Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program has begun the recruitment process for its next round of fellowships, covering 2019 through 2020. This program offers a unique opportunity for professionals who serve as change agents in health

and aging policy to ultimately improve the health care of older adults. Additional information about the application process, financial support eligibility, and other program components as well as information about upcoming information sessions can be found on the [Health and Aging Policy Fellows website](#). (NASUAD Friday Update, 1/11/19)

**Push for House Select Committee on Aging:** The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) is encouraging Congress to reestablish the House Select Committee on Aging, which was disbanded 25 years ago. In December 2018, LCAO sent a [letter](#), signed by 43 groups, urging for the committee's creation to be included in the new Rules of the House of Representatives for the 116th Congress. (NCOA Week, 1/8/19)

**Call for Session Proposals for the 2019 Consumer Voice Conference:** National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care is looking for proposals for the [2019 Consumer Voice Conference](#). The 2019 conference will take place from November 3-6 in Arlington, VA. This year's theme is Stand for Quality! Consumer Voice is looking for proposals that include: concrete advocacy strategies; examples of advocacy and/or educational programs for individuals or systems advocacy; issues related to nursing homes, assisted living, and/or home and community-based services; opportunities for discussion, questions, and/or sharing of advocacy successes and challenges related to the topic; and information attendees can use in their daily life or work to improve the quality of long-term care. Session proposals are due by March 15, 2019. [Click here](#) to learn more about the call for sessions. (NASUAD Friday Update, 1/11/19)

**Webinar on Strategies for the Aging Network to Address Behavioral Health:** NCOA is hosting a webinar to educate the aging network on mental health issues that older adults may experience. This webinar will discuss strategies for talking to older adults about mental health. It will also cover the importance of screening individuals for anxiety and depression and discuss options for providing or referring individuals to treatment. The webinar will share best practices and lessons learned from two initiatives that focused on providing mental health services through senior centers. This webinar will take place Tuesday, Jan. 22 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. ET. [Click here](#) to learn more. (NCOA Week, 1/15/19)

**2019 Aging in America Conference:** The American Society on Aging's 2019 Aging in America Conference will be held in New Orleans from April 15-18, 2019. The conference is an opportunity to learn best practices and gain insights from leaders in the field about the current state of aging in America. This event is designed to provide knowledge, inspiration and networking with others who are also dedicated to improving the lives of older adults. The 2019 conference will have a strong focus on critical and emergent topics facing the field of aging, as well as cutting-edge and responsive programmatic, research, policy and advocacy efforts. Topics include: social isolation, emergency/disaster readiness, housing and transportation access, caregiving, substance use/opioid crisis, multiple aspects of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, technology and aging, intergenerational models, population health, and shifting policy and legislative issues affecting older adults. [Click here](#) to learn more. (NASUAD Friday Update, 1/11/19)

**Older Women and Poverty:** This special report from Justice in Aging examines the financial challenges older women face. It is organized in three parts, beginning with an examination of

the causes of poverty for older women. This section also explores the issue of intersectionality in light of disproportionate rates of poverty for both women of color and LGBTQ women. The second part of this report provides an overview of the various anti-poverty programs available for older women. Finally, the third section of this report concludes by offering specific policy recommendations for increasing women's economic security and access to supports as they get older. [Click here](#) to read the full report. (NASUAD Friday Update, 12/21/18)

**Dissemination Guide for the 2018-2023 Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map:** [The 2018-2023 Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map](#) outlines actions state and local public health agencies and their partners can take to stimulate changes in policies, systems and environments, with the goal of ensuring that initiatives to address Alzheimer's can be easily and efficiently incorporated into existing public health efforts. The CDC has recently published a dissemination guide for this resource. The guide is designed to aid in communication about this publication and includes a newsletter template, sample social media posts, and talking points of key facts. [Click here](#) to access the dissemination guide. (NASUAD Friday Update, 12/21/18)

**Webinar on Measuring Outcomes to Evaluate Dementia Programs and Interventions:** The National Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center is hosting a webinar on the strategies, challenges and benefits of measuring outcomes to evaluate dementia programs and interventions. The webinar will review multiple methods for collecting outcome data. It will also discuss important considerations when selecting outcome measures, including measurement burden as well as frequency and scheduling of data collection. Finally, the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving will provide a real-life example of how outcome measures can inform program implementation as they describe the expanded implementation of the "BRI Care Consultation" program. This webinar will take place Wednesday, January 30 at 2:00 p.m. [Click here](#) to learn more. (NASUAD Friday Update, 12/21/18)

**AIRS 2019 Conference: Call for Sessions Now Open:** The call for sessions is now open for the 2019 AIRS I&R Training and Education Conference. This conference will be held in Atlanta, Georgia from June 2-5, 2019. Tracks include: 2-1-1 Track, Aging and Disability Track, Disaster Track, I&R Management Track, I&R Service Delivery Track, Serving the Military Track, Resource Database Track, Technology Track, and For Everyone Track. There are many potential topics of interest to programs serving older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers. [Click here](#) to view the call for proposals with more details about the submission process. The deadline for proposal submissions is Feb. 22. (NASUAD Friday Update, 12/21/18)

**The 2019 Self-Direction Conference:** Applied Self-Direction is hosting the 2019 Self-Direction Conference on Monday, April 29 and Tuesday, April 30. This conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Baltimore, Maryland. This year's event will feature more states, managed care organizations, and self-directing participants than ever before. In addition to Financial Management Services (FMS) sessions, this conference will feature sessions for state programs, participants, families, direct support professionals, support brokers, and other stakeholders. These sessions will explore innovative practices and highlight exemplary programs from around the country. [Click here](#) to learn more. (NASUAD Friday Update, 12/21/18)

**Falls Free Contest Winner:** Congratulations to High Country Area Agency on Aging in Boone for being selected as a 2018 Falls Free Photo Contest winner. Sponsored by NCOA, the contest chose winning photos which depicted older adults participating in falls prevention programs around the country. The High Country program focuses on Tai Chi for arthritis as well as falls prevention. (NCOA Week, 1/18/19)



**Grandparents Providing Child Care:** The most recent data show that grandparents in the U.S. care for almost one out of four children under age five on a regular basis. Additional research shows today's grandparents provide time and money to their children and grandchildren to tune of \$253 billion each year. To learn more about grandparents' experiences as care providers, ZERO TO THREE, a national nonprofit focused on healthy child development, hosted a series of focus groups with grandparents who provide child care. They also developed three short videos that show the different ways real-life families are coming together, parents and grandparents, to care for the younger generation. Based on what they learned from families, they developed a series of resources to support grandparents providing regular child care to grandchildren. (Rebecca Parlakian, Senior Director of Programs for ZERO TO THREE, in NCOA Week, 1/18/19)

**Informational Bulletin on Nursing Home MDS & RUG Reimbursement:** On Dec. 6, 2018, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released an informational bulletin discussing upcoming changes to the Medicare nursing home payment system and its potential implication for state Medicaid programs. CMS collects information on patient characteristics through the nursing home Minimum Data Set (MDS) that is used to assign people into Resource Utilization Group (RUG) categories. In order to address potential flaws that may result in overutilization of therapies in order to increase payment rates, CMS is moving towards a new case-mix model of payment, known as the Patient Driven Payment Model (PDPM). This model is based more directly upon patient assessed characteristics. CMS will be removing several data elements from the MDS in order to streamline the process and to reduce burden on patients and providers. CMS has created an optional assessment so that Medicaid payment is not adversely impacted when PDPM is implemented on October 1, 2019. States may use this optional assessment for a year, until September 30, 2020. After this date, CMS will no longer support RUG-III or RUG-IV via the MDS. [Click here](#) to read the bulletin. (NASUAD Friday Update, 12/14/18)

**Addressing Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) via Medicaid Managed Care Contracts and Section 1115 Demonstrations:** This report was prepared by the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) for the Association for Community Affiliated Plans. It examines 40 Medicaid managed care contracts and 25 approved Section 1115 demonstrations in order to identify common themes across state approaches to incentivizing and requiring SDOH-related activities. The goal of this report is to encourage state Medicaid agencies to invest in SDOH. In addition to reviewing the current state of SDOH-related activities in state Medicaid agencies, CHCS provides several policy recommendations for bolstering SDOH investment. [Click here](#) to read the full report. (NASUAD Friday Update, 12/14/18)

**Every Ride Counts Campaign:** The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) has launched a new publicity campaign to promote the availability and accessibility of transportation options for older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers in communities around the country. NADTC has created materials that local transit systems and transportation providers of all sizes can use to create their own flyers, postcards, banners, and social media announcements. This includes sample versions of all the ads, posters, social media graphics, and postcards for each campaign message. It also includes sample social media posts and social media graphics. In order to access these materials, you must log in to NADTC's site by creating a free account. [Click here](#) to read an overview of the campaign and access the materials. [Click here](#) to watch a short video about the campaign. (NASUAD Friday Update, 12/14/18)

**Households with Seniors Rely on SNAP to Stave Off Hunger:** One in 10 households with seniors (age 60+) participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), on average each year between 2012–2016. This is according to U.S. Census Bureau data analyzed in interactive tools released by the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), in collaboration with the AARP Foundation. These first-of-their-kind interactive maps and accompanying tables show the share of all households with seniors that participated in SNAP nationally, in each [state](#), and among the nation's [3,142 counties](#). Seventeen percent of all counties have rates of senior household SNAP participation that are higher than the national average of 10.2 percent. (Food Research & Action Center News Release, Oct. 31, 2018)

**Rural Veterans Health Access Program Funding Opportunity:** It has recently been announced that applications are being accepted for funding under the Rural Veterans Health Access Program (RVHAP). The purpose of this cooperative agreement is to provide funding to states to work with providers and other partners to improve access to needed health care services and to improve the coordination of care for veterans living in rural areas. Award recipients can implement a variety of strategies to improve the capacity of critical access hospitals (CAHs) and other rural health care organizations to provide services that meet the needs of veterans living in rural areas. Award recipients can also assist providers in making connections to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) system to coordinate care for rural veterans using community health care providers as well as the VA system. The deadline to submit an application for this grant is Tuesday, Feb. 12. [Click here](#) to read more. (NASUAD Friday Update, 12/14/18)

**2017 Health Expenditure Report Released:** On Thursday, Dec. 6, the Office of the Actuary at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services released a report on the national health expenditures for 2017. The report found that overall health expenditures grew at an estimated

3.9 percent in 2017, which was approximately one percent lower than the 2016 growth rate. Of note, Medicaid spending grew at a 2.9 percent rate, which was lower than the 4.2 percent growth rate for both Medicare and private insurance. Overall Medicaid spending was \$581.9 billion in 2017, while Medicare expenditures exceeded \$700 billion. [Click here](#) for more information. (NASUAD Friday Update, 12/14/18)

**Aetna Medicare Positions Open:** Aetna Medicare Mid-South (NC, SC, TN) has two positions available – [Aetna Medicare Retention Specialist](#) and [Aetna Medicare Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan Program Manager](#). The primary work location for both positions is Cary, NC.

**Southern Gerontological Society (SGS) Meeting Location Changed:** Due to the damage sustained by Hurricane Michael the location of the SGS annual meeting that will be held on April 9-13 has been changed. The new location is the Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort located at 9300 Emerald Coast Pkwy., Miramar Beach, Florida. More information about the SGS annual meeting can be found at <https://southerngerontologicalsociety.org/meeting.html>.

**Direct Care Workers:** Presentations at a Direct Care Workforce Summit held at Durham Tech in November showed that both residential- and home-care companies need workers to provide hands-on care to people who are among society's most vulnerable, because of age or disability. There's a growing need for well-trained, caring people in these jobs, but current statistics show that pay in the field has declined even in a prosperous economy. Between 2006 and 2016, average hourly pay for all North Carolina direct care workers slipped from \$10.90 to \$10.32, said Kezia Scales, Durham-based director of policy research for PHI, a national advocacy organization for direct care workers. For home health aides, the fastest-growing segment of direct care workers, the decline was more dramatic, from \$10.59 to \$9.30 an hour from 2006 to 2016. "Legislators, congressmen, they really need to look at caregiving in the home," said Charles Thurston, chief operating officer of Wisdom Senior Care in Durham, an employer of home health aides. Agencies at which clients' care is reimbursed by Medicaid have to base their rates on what federal and state authorities vote to spend, while private-pay services are more market-driven. People at the meeting heard that North Carolina employs more than 123,000 direct care workers, but will need 34,000 more by 2024, or a little more than five years away. In addition, in counties outside North Carolina's urban regions, direct care jobs are often among a small number of positions open to people with high school degrees or less. (Thomas Goldsmith, NC HEALTH NEWS, 11/29/18)

**Fact Sheet on Rural Seniors' Oral Health:** Families USA and the National Rural Health Association have co-released a new factsheet, [For Rural Seniors, Improving Overall Health Requires Improving Oral Health Care](#). This product explains the barriers rural seniors face to achieving oral health and the solutions policy makers can take to address them. In rural areas, nearly one-fifth of residents are 65 and over. This population faces many obstacles that keep them from oral health care, including cost, lack of dental coverage, and limited access to providers. Without policy solutions to address these barriers, rural seniors' overall health is worse off, and our health care system is paying the price. This factsheet can be used to explain these issues to networks, policymakers, and the public. The factsheet can be downloaded here: <https://familiesusa.org/product/rural-seniors-improving-overall-health-requires-improving-oral-health-care>. (Families USA, 12/19/18)

**Medicaid Expansion:** House Speaker Tim Moore has indicated that the House will take up Medicaid expansion, something lawmakers strongly resisted under the era of the supermajorities. Moore said conversations have already started on moving the Carolina Cares legislation first proposed two years ago by Rep. Donny Lambeth, R-Forsyth. The rules around any work requirement proposed in the legislation is likely to be one area where consensus will be difficult. Democrats have strongly opposed the idea, but getting the bill through the House and Senate without a work requirement is doubtful. Moore said he believes the state should help working people who cannot afford health care. "What we don't want to do is expand a handout and be a discouragement for folks to get jobs or get employment," Moore said. (Kirk Ross, CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS, 1/14/19)

**Economic Tiers** (Resources: [New Tier Designations](#)): More than a quarter of North Carolina counties will get new "economic tier" ratings in 2019 that help determine jobs incentives and other economic development programs. A total of 28 counties have new ratings, the N.C. Department of Commerce announced recently, and 12 are moving into "Tier One" -- the rating for the state's poorest counties. Those are Beaufort, Cleveland, Cumberland, Duplin, Hoke, Nash, Rockingham, Rutherford, Sampson, Surry, Wayne and Wilson, which had previously been labeled "Tier Two." Another 12 counties will move out of Tier One to Tier Two: Alleghany, Ashe, Camden, Cherokee, Clay, Jackson, Macon, McDowell, Montgomery, Person, Yadkin and Yancey. Carteret and Granville counties will no longer be rated Tier Three among the state's wealthiest counties, while Currituck and Davie will move into Tier Three from Tier Two. The number of counties changing economic tier designations is higher this year because of a provision in the state budget bill that altered the formula used by the Department of Commerce. That provision eliminated an "adjustment factor" that required the state's least populous counties and small counties with a high poverty rate to automatically be labeled Tier One. The formula continues to use unemployment numbers, median household income, growth in population and assessed property value. Because Tier One counties qualify for more generous economic development assistance from the state, the policy change will boost bigger counties like Nash and Cumberland while removing small counties like Alleghany and Clay from the designation. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 12/04/18)

**9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Race:** A U.S. House member signaled on January 11 that Congress may ultimately resolve the nation's last undecided congressional race. The head of the House Administration Committee, Democratic Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren of California, asked North Carolina elections officials to preserve all original notes, recordings or documents used in investigating allegations of ballot fraud in the state's 9th District. The U.S. House may also investigate and ultimately determine the rightful winner of the disputed seat, Lofgren wrote to the state elections board's executive director. (Emery P. Dalesio, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 1/11/19)

**Jones Illness:** U.S. Rep. Walter Jones, who is battling an undisclosed illness, has not cast a vote in the new Congress, extending an absence that began in late September. Jones, who turns 76 in February, was sworn-in at his Farmville home on Jan. 4 -- one day after the newly elected Congress started work -- by fellow North Carolina Rep. G.K. Butterfield. (Brian Murphy, McCLATCHY DC, 1/10/19). Congressman Jones suffered a setback on Monday when he fell at his home in Farmville and broke a hip. He underwent successful surgery at Vidant Medical

Center in Greenville on Tuesday, according to his congressional office. (Brian Murphy, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 1/16/19)

**Twitter Blocking:** North Carolina politicians and public officials who block critics online, or delete critical comments on their social media pages, are likely violating the U.S. Constitution. A first-of-its-kind court ruling last week found that since people have a First Amendment right to address government officials in public -- and since social media now serves as a public space similar to a town hall meeting -- then it's unconstitutional for politicians to deny people the right to participate in that public debate. (Will Doran, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 1/11/19)

**New General Assembly Website:** The North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) rolled out a new website on Jan. 3. The site -- which can be accessed from both [ncleg.net](http://ncleg.net) and [ncleg.gov](http://ncleg.gov) -- has been formatted to respond to the size of a user's screen, making it more mobile friendly. With the design update comes changes to committee webpages, which now contain photos of the committee members. Audio for committee rooms, the House and Senate chambers, and the press conference room can now be streamed from a single page. A change for those who frequent the NCGA's cafeteria though, is that the online menu -- which used to be under the "About the Legislature" page -- has moved to the "Visitor Info" page. But the NCGA does now tweet out the daily menu from its official Twitter account, @NCLeg. (Lauren Horsch, THE INSIDER, 1/03/19)

**Press Room:** For 56 years, ever since the NC Legislative Building opened, media organizations have had workspace across the hall from where news conferences are held and downstairs from the House and Senate chambers. But that's about to change, and legislative leaders don't want to talk about why. Legislative Services Officer Paul Coble has decided to move the press to a smaller space in the basement in the farthest corner of the building. "[It's] as distant from the action as you could possibly be, which will make it harder for reporters to keep tabs on what's going on in the building," said Colin Campbell, editor of the Insider. "We'll be farther from the floor when there's a meeting called with very little notice, and there'll be a reduction in space, which will mean fewer reporters have dedicated space." The new space for reporters is 25 percent smaller than their current office, which already is often overflowing with journalists -- not to mention the politicians and members of the public who drop in constantly to meet and talk to reporters from across the state. The new press room will be far from the public's eye, across a darkened parking garage and down a featureless hallway. (Laura Leslie, WRAL NEWS, 1/09/19)

**Gerrymandering Lawsuit:** The United States Supreme Court will hear arguments in March over whether the districts used to elect North Carolina's members of the U.S. House of Representatives are unconstitutional. The court announced on January 4 that "the case will be set for argument in the March argument session," along with a similar Maryland case. If the state wins, the 2020 elections will likely be held using the same districts as during the 2018 elections, when Republicans won or led for 10 of North Carolina's 13 seats in the U.S. House -- although one of those seats might have a second election ordered, due to allegations of fraud. But if the challengers win, the state could be forced to redraw the districts in a way that could give Democrats better chances of flipping some seats in 2020. This case is one of two lawsuits claiming that after losing previous lawsuits on racial gerrymandering, the North Carolina General Assembly's Republican-led majority then engaged in partisan gerrymandering meant to

make it harder for Democrats to elect their preferred candidates. The other court case, which is proceeding in state court rather than in federal court, is challenging the lines used to elect members of the General Assembly. The challengers in the federal case won once before when a panel of lower-court judges ruled the districts unconstitutional last summer. In that ruling, the judges wrote that "the Constitution does not allow elected officials to enact laws that distort the marketplace of political ideas so as to intentionally favor certain political beliefs, parties, or candidates and disfavor others." But that ruling came close enough to the 2018 elections that the judges decided to allow the elections to go on using the disputed lines. (Will Doran, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 1/04/19)

**Legislative Reporting Service** run by the UNC School of Government has dropped its subscription fees and is now free. The service includes a daily digest of bills and legislative actions, as well as bill summaries written by School of Government staffers. While the legislature's nonpartisan staff also provides bill summaries, the School of Government's summaries are available for bills as they're filed, rather than only being prepared when a bill gets a committee hearing. The LRS digests also explain what changes are made to bills during committee meetings. Users can create an account and bookmark individual bills. Until the switch to a free service, users paid \$1,300 per legislative biennium to use the service. The service is found online at [lrs.sog.unc.edu](https://lrs.sog.unc.edu). (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 1/04/19)

**Contribution Limit:** Donors can now give a larger amount to political campaigns. Starting Jan. 1, the maximum campaign contribution for candidate committees and others that are subject to legal limits is \$5,400, up from the previous limit of \$5,200. The State Board of Elections announced the change this week, noting that state law ties the amount to inflation based on the Consumer Price Index. "This change is based on the 4.7 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index (all items – U.S. city average) from July 1, 2016 to July 1, 2018. (THE INSIDER, 1/09/19)

**Congressional Seat:** North Carolina's population is no longer growing at the rate it did in recent decades, but it's still enough that the state will likely receive another seat in Congress after the 2020 census. North Carolina added an estimated 112,820 residents in the year ending last July 1, bringing the state's population to 10,383,620, according to estimates released by the U.S. Census Bureau. The state remains the ninth largest in the country, after Georgia and ahead of Michigan. North Carolina's population increased 1.1 percent in the past year, outpacing the national growth rate of 0.6 percent. The Census Bureau estimates that nearly 327.2 million people lived in the U.S. on July 1. Though it may not feel like it in the Triangle or Charlotte, population growth in North Carolina has eased up this decade. The state is on pace to grow about 11 percent between 2010 and 2020, the slowest rate of growth since the 1860s. The state's population grew an average of 15.6 percent per decade in the 20th century and swelled to 18.5 percent in the first decade of the 21st. Still, the state remains on pace to pick up a 14th congressional seat after the decennial census in 2020, according to Election Data Services, a Virginia-based consulting firm. (Richard Stradling and David Raynor, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 12/19/18)

**Sir Walter Building:** Downtown Raleigh's historic Sir Walter building has been sold for \$16.8 million to Capital Realty Group. Used as an apartment building now for senior citizens, the once grand hotel located at 400 Fayetteville St. was the "hangout" of legislators and political wheelers

and dealers for decades. According to a press release, the 200,000-square-foot, 10-story building currently contains 140 units for senior, low-income residents. The Sir Walter building was built in 1924 and is known as the oldest surviving hotel building in Raleigh. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is considered a local landmark. The press release on the sale stated that "renovations and the re-tenant process for commercial spaces will begin in the next few months." John Hibbits, a broker with NAI Carolantic Realty, handled the transaction and said it was a deal several years in the making. Hibbits added that, while the new owner will be spending money to renovate the building, the buyer will create 18 new units for affordable housing. (Jessica Patrick, WRAL NEWS, 1/02/19)

**Affordable Care Act Sign Up:** During Affordable Care Act open enrollment, 502,464 North Carolinians signed up for health insurance, down only about 3 percent from last year's tally, and in line with enrollment trends across the nation. While the number of enrollments is strong, it's down 18 percent from a high enrollment mark of 613,487 in 2016. (Rose Hoban, NC HEALTH NEWS, 12/21/18)

**National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems:** The [Administration for Community Living](#) and the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#) have announced the launch of the National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS). The goal of NCAPPS is to promote systems change that makes person-centered principles not just an aspiration, but a reality in the lives of people who require services and supports across the lifespan. To learn more, contact [NCAPPS@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:NCAPPS@acl.hhs.gov).

**Blue Cross Rates:** Some Blue Cross and Blue Shield customers are seeing their health insurance rates spike this year despite the company's first rate cut since it entered North Carolina's individual insurance market more than 25 years ago. The Blue Cross reduction for 2019 averaged 4.1 percent statewide for individual health insurance, which are mostly plans sold through the Affordable Care Act marketplace. The rate cut was much more significant in some parts of the state: down 21 percent in the Triangle, and down 16.5 percent in the Charlotte market. But it didn't necessarily work out that way for all the insurer's customers. That's because the rate cut triggered a corresponding reduction in federal ACA subsidies for low-income and middle-income customers. And some customers didn't understand the implication until it was too late. "It is complicated -- for most people, it's incomprehensible," said Timothy Jost, a Washington & Lee University law professor specializing in health care, in a phone interview. "You have variables that are constantly changing and it's easy to catch people by surprise." Blue Cross won't know exactly how many customers have been affected until next month when it finalizes its enrollment data, said Blue Cross spokesman Austin Vevurka. (John Murawski, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 1/09/19)

**Attracting Physicians:** Blue Cross and Blue Shield of N.C. has announced that it is providing \$750,000 toward funding a leadership program to address the state's shortage of primary care doctors. The insurer said its goals are to increase access to primary care, lower costs and improve health outcomes. The program is run by N.C. Academy of Family Physicians Foundation, which will offer training and educational opportunities to medical students interested in primary care. Family medicine is a growing focus area for students in the state, with more than 15 percent of graduating medical students choosing family medicine as their specialty in 2018, compared with a national average of 9.4 percent. However, estimates show

North Carolina will require another 1,500 family physicians in the next decade to meet the health needs of its growing population. The academy said it will use Blue Cross NC's funding to support opportunities that will include: shadowing and mentoring experiences; health and policy leadership development; and educational sessions and scholarly activities. (WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 1/08/19)

**Blue Cross Partnership:** Offering independent primary care physicians and clinics an infrastructure lifeline is the goal of a partnership between Blue Cross Blue Shield of N.C. and a healthcare provider with accountable care organization expertise. The insurer and Aledade, founded in 2014, are collaborating to assist physicians with technology and data analytics tools as part of being associated with an accountable care organization (ACO). An ACO is defined by HealthAdministrationDegrees.com as a system meant to tie quality healthcare with level of payment reimbursement for providers. "Right now, it's hard for independent primary care practices to enter into value-based arrangements (as opposed to fee-for-service) because they simply lack the size and resources they need to coordinate care," Blue Cross spokesman Austin Vevurka said. Primary care practices under a specialty of internal medicine, family medicine or general practice for adult care will be eligible to join the ACO model in 2019. "After joining these ACOs, practices gain a more comprehensive view of their patients' total cost of care, gaps in quality of care, and experiences throughout the entire health care system," the groups said in a joint statement. (Richard Craver, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 1/01/19)

**Value-Based System Initiative:** Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC announced on Jan. 15 that it and five not-for-profit healthcare systems in the state -- Cone Health, Duke University Health, UNC Hospitals, Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and WakeMed -- are following the path of state Medicaid reform in their quests to lower costs for their groups and patients. It has begun the shift from a fee-for-service payment format to a value-based system in which providers receive incentives for better patient outcomes. The Blue Premier initiative, which launched earlier this month, ties payments to doctors and hospitals over time "to the value of services that improve patient health." Total payments under Blue Premier will be based on the systems' ability to manage the total cost of care and their overall performance, measured by industry quality standards. Where the Medicaid reform comparison comes into play is the systems and their providers have accepted a "shared risk" financial model in which they share in cost savings if they meet patient care goals, as well as in the losses if they fall short. (Richard Craver, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 1/15/19)

**Flu Deaths:** State health officials report that 22 people have died from the flu in North Carolina this flu season. More half of these were over the age of 65. The flu season officially began Oct. 1 and typically runs through March 31. (News and Observer, 1/17/19)

**Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) Deadline:** Households in North Carolina can apply for LIEAP assistance until March 29 or until funds are exhausted. Contact local county departments of social service for more information.

**Mental Health Parity Grade:** North Carolina received an F (scoring a 49 out of 100) on a report card issued in October on how well our laws support federal laws passed more than a decade ago calling for mental health to be treated on par with physical health. "Our F rating, we

believe, underscores the barriers to care and challenges that many people in North Carolina who are living with mental illness continue to face in our state," said Michelle Laws, a policy expert from the National Alliance on Mental Illness – North Carolina (a Coalition member). "Even though the report card really looked at state statutes [...] there are other issues that we still have to work on. It was disheartening to see but it's just a reminder that there's still quite a bit of work to do." The parity law, the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, was passed in October 2008 to ensure that mental health care patients receive the same benefits as patients who have had a heart attack, for instance. The website Parity Track gives each state a report on their statutes about parity. It also lists all state legislation and regulations related to parity. North Carolina was not alone in receiving an "F". Thirty-two other states did too. (Yen Duong, NC HEALTH NEWS, 1/15/19)

**NC Relocation:** North Carolina proved to be a less attractive destination for migration during 2018 even as the nation's ninth-largest state continued to grow, according to annual reports from two national moving companies. U-Haul reported North Carolina dropped from seventh in 2017 to 24th in 2018 regarding net migration. It had been ranked first as recently in 2015. Meanwhile, United Van Lines ranked North Carolina eighth for the third consecutive year, compared with fifth in 2015 and third in 2014 and 2013. Allied Van Lines listed North Carolina fifth for overall in-migration. North Carolina ranked fourth in the Southeast in the U-Haul report behind No. 2 Florida, No. 3 South Carolina and No. 8 Tennessee. Texas remained as the most popular migration state for the third consecutive year. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated North Carolina had 10.4 million residents as of July 1, a 1.1 percent growth over 2017 estimates. The state ranked fifth in sheer numeric growth, a measurement that favors large states with strong population growth. (Richard Craver, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 1/07/19)

**Duke Energy Rates:** Duke Energy, which supplies power to 3.4 million people in North Carolina, is considering a rate change after expenses climbed to an unprecedented rate following Hurricanes Florence and Michael. According to a petition filed by Duke Energy with the North Carolina Utilities Commission, the total cost of the storms is not yet known, but North Carolina expenses amounted to nearly \$400 million. The N.C. Utilities Commission is a state agency created by the N.C. General Assembly to regulate investor-owned utility and power companies like Duke Energy. It is also in charge of providing "just and reasonable rates" for utility and power services, according to their website. (Kelsey Stiglitz, THE (Jacksonville) DAILY NEWS, 12/31/18)

**Minimum Wage:** Workers in 11 blue, five purple and five red states received a raise on Jan. 1 by virtue of a state or voter-mandated increase in their respective minimum hourly wages. For the 10th consecutive year, North Carolina minimum-wage workers did not join them. They remain at the federally mandated \$7.25 an hour set in 2009, along with workers in 16 other states. Workers in the remaining states did not see an increase, but were already above the federal minimum wage. Meanwhile, the minimum wage for all full-time N.C. government employees jumped to \$15 an hour July 1 as approved by the Republican-controlled General Assembly. About 8,000 employees, or 12 percent of the state government workforce, got a raise, according to the office of Senate leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham. The increase is projected to cost about \$15.3 million to implement. It did not affect state-funded local employees. The 38,000 federal minimum wage workers in North Carolina are among 700,000 nationwide,

according to 2017 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. A full-time N.C. minimum-wage worker earns \$15,080 per year -- \$1,000 less than the federal poverty level for 2016 for a family of one adult and one child. An additional 52,000 North Carolinians make less than \$7.25 because they work in the restaurant sector, where their compensation is often based more on customer tips. (Richard Craver, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 1/01/19)

**UNC Health Wages:** UNC Health Care has announced that it will increase its minimum wage to \$15 an hour in the Triangle, a move that will ultimately boost the pay of some 9,000 employees, nearly a third of its total workforce. The organization owns or operates 13 hospitals and employs about 30,000 people. The raises are currently limited to the Triangle, where UNC Health Care employs 21,500 people. The health care system's statement said the Triangle's "higher cost of living, strong job market and competition for talented co-workers are key factors in the decision to make a living wage adjustment now. Discussions about living wages at other UNC Health Care entities outside the Triangle are currently underway." (John Murawski, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 12/11/18)

**Cone Wages:** About 1,600 workers at Cone Health are getting a raise of \$1 per hour next month. The Greensboro-based health care system has announced that effective Feb. 3, it is boosting the system-wide minimum wage from the current \$12 to \$13. Cone Health executive Mandy Eaton said in a news release that the increase is part of a phased-in plan to raise the minimum, hourly wage to \$15 over the next 2 to 3 years. (Taft Wireback, GREENSBORO NEWS & RECORD, 1/03/19)

## **People in the News**

**Sherry Thomas, 63, Senior Executive Vice President for the Association for Home and Hospice Care of North Carolina**, died on Nov. 17, 2018. She had a 40 year career in home and health care and worked for the Association for Home and Hospice care since 1993. She was dedicated and committed to her work, and she leaves a big footprint on the home health and hospice field in our state.

**Greg Tanner** was named the **Division Director for Services for Adults with the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services** effective Jan. 7. In this role, he is responsible for the oversight of all adult programming including guardianship, adult protective services, senior citizen nutrition services, non-emergency medical transportation, and Just 1 Call. He worked previously with AARP Georgia, AARP North Carolina, and with the Lumber River Area Agency on Aging in Lumberton as a Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman.

**Gov. Roy Cooper** is the next co-chair of the **Appalachian Regional Commission**, a partnership between the federal government and 13 states designed to help the region's economy. The commission is an economic development agency that focuses on over 400 counties from Mississippi to New York, of which almost 30 are in North Carolina. Cooper's leadership position means the commission will hold its annual summit in Asheville in September. (THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 1/09/19)

Effective Feb. 1, **Susan Osborne** will assume the role of **Assistant Secretary for County Operations for Human Services for the NC Department of Health and Human Services** (DHHS). In this role, she will provide direct oversight to Child Support Services, Child Welfare Services, Economic Services, Fiscal Operations, and a future Business Information Office that will play a key role in linking business and technology to improve the work of social service, and in managing data reporting and analysis functions. She will also lead the Department's work to improve and align services and communications to counties across the DHHS divisions. She has more than 34 years of human service experience and has worked for Alamance County Department of Social Services for the past 28 years, the last 18 as the agency's Director. (DHHS Update, 12/17/18)

**Michael Becketts** shifts his work in DHHS to focus on leading the development, modification and implementation of laws, rules, and policies that align with best practices in social service delivery. In addition, he will create and lead a centralized training team and provide strategic leadership to help the Department continue to address special issues and populations, including homelessness, human trafficking, agency level disaster preparedness and response work. His new title is **Chief Advisor for Policy and Training**. (DHHS Update, 12/17/18)

Congratulations to Coalition member **Dr. Althea Taylor-Jones** of Kernersville who has been named as the recipient of **AARP North Carolina's 2018 Andrus Award**, the most prestigious AARP Award for community service. She has been an active volunteer with AARP for over 20 years. Among many other things, she has served on the AARP North Carolina Executive Council and has been a leader with AARP in the Triad area. She is the former Speaker Pro Tempore of the NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature and is a retired faculty member and professor of Gerontology at Winston-Salem State University.

**Tim Rogers**, President and CEO of the Association for Home and Hospice Care of North Carolina, and **Chad Walker**, Director of Community and Government Affairs for Transitions LifeCare, have been appointed to the **National Hospice and Palliative Care Organizations Legislative Affairs Committee**.

**Marianne Hedrick Weant** has joined the **North Carolina Alliance for Health** as Grassroots Coordinator.

**John W. "Bill" Hurley**, 85, a former Fayetteville mayor and former state lawmaker, died November 26. He was elected to the Fayetteville City Council in 1977 and was the mayor from 1981 through 1987. He followed that with 12 years in the state House of Representatives. He retired from the legislature in 2002. (Paul Woolverton, THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER, 11/26/18)

The new **N.C. Office of Recovery and Resiliency** has named key leaders and is working to streamline the process for administering federal block grants for Hurricane Matthew recovery and planning for additional federal funding for residents affected by Hurricane Florence, the agency announced in a news release. The new office within the Department of Public Safety will work alongside North Carolina Emergency Management on recovery and rebuilding from past and future disasters. The office will administer U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development (HUD) funded Community Development Block Grants for Disaster Recovery (CBDG-DR) for Hurricanes Matthew and Florence. **Laura Hogshead** has been named as chief operating officer. Hogshead has served as chief operating officer and deputy chief of staff for budget and policy at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. She most recently served on the executive staff at the Center for Community Self-Help in Durham and has also worked on Capitol Hill as a congressional staffer for HUD related appropriations committees. **Jim Klingler** has been named as finance chief. He has served in senior finance positions at UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State University, and as a fiscal analyst at the N.C. General Assembly. **John Ebbighausen** has been named as director of recovery operations. Ebbighausen has been leading the Resiliency section at NC Emergency Management since early 2018. He retired from the N.C. National Guard as a lieutenant colonel serving as deputy director for strategic plans and policy. **Ryan Flynn** has been named as acting chief of staff. Flynn has served in the Governor's Recovery Office since the start of the Cooper administration. **Norma Houston** will serve the Office of Recovery and Resiliency in an advisory capacity while continuing her work as a faculty member at the UNC School of Government. Her expertise in local government procurement and FEMA programs will assist the office and local communities in recovery operations. **Mike Sprayberry** continues to serve as director of N.C. Emergency Management and the N.C. Office of Recovery and Resiliency. The office is currently in the process of hiring the remainder of its workforce of 45 employees. (NEWS RELEASE, 1/03/19)

**Gov. Roy Cooper has announced two staff changes.** North Carolina native **Sarah Bolton** joined his administration in the role of Policy Director. Bolton, a Raleigh native and graduate of Appalachian State University, was previously the Education Policy Director for the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the Senior Policy and Budget Advisor for the U.S. Senate Budget Committee. Most recently, Bolton was selected as a Fulbright Ian Axford Fellow in Public Policy for which she spent time researching and developing public policy recommendations for New Zealand's Ministry of Education to improve educational outcomes for at-risk students. Bolton replaces **Jenni Owen**, who has taken a new role within Cooper's administration -- Director of Strategic Partnerships. As director of Strategic Partnerships, Owen will focus on opportunities for progress on key policy issues. Owen previously worked at the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University and in Gov. Jim Hunt's administration. In her new role, Owen will identify and launch strategic partnerships with people and organizations representing multiple sectors, including philanthropy, non-profit, higher education and research that can collaborate and increase support to North Carolina with research, funding and in-kind commitments. (NEWS RELEASE, 11/20/18)

Two key behind-the-scenes figures for N.C. Senate Republicans are launching a new strategic consulting firm. **Jim Blaine**, the former chief of staff for Senate leader Phil Berger, and **Ray Martin**, the longtime executive director of the Senate Republican Caucus, have announced that they're starting a firm called **Martin & Blaine, The Differentiators**. A news release from the firm says it will offer "non-lobbying services and products, including original message development, unique policy solutions, outside-the-box political strategies, insightful research and persuasive advertising." (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 1/03/19)

Gov. Cooper has appointed the following individuals to the **North Carolina Veterans Affairs Commission**: **Larry Pendry** of North Wilkesboro as a representative of the fifth congressional

district and **John Scherer** of Wilmington as a representative of the seventh congressional district.

Gov. Cooper has appointed the following individual to the **North Carolina State Board of Examiners for Nursing Home Administrators**: **Lynn Haynes** of Raleigh as a public member.

**East Carolina University has appointed its interim vice chancellor of health sciences** to take on the job permanently effective Jan. 1. **Dr. Mark Stacy** also is the dean of the Brody School of Medicine, a job that he will keep along with his work as senior associate vice chancellor for medical affairs, a news release said. As vice chancellor over the Division of Health Sciences, Stacy will oversee administration of the Medical School, the School of Dental Medicine, the College of Nursing, the College of Allied Health Sciences, the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute, the East Carolina Diabetes and Obesity Institute and Laupus Health Sciences Library. (THE (Greenville) DAILY REFLECTOR, 12/20/18)

**Tom Stark**, the **general counsel for the N.C. Republican Party** and a Durham attorney, died December 17 from an apparent heart attack. Stark, a Durham attorney, ran unsuccessfully for the N.C. Senate in 2018 and was a key figure in the NCGOP's post-election complaints in 2016. He was married to **Roxanne Bragg (Cash)** a former President of the NC Coalition on Aging and leader of aging programs in Franklin County.

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

**January 25, 2019 - The Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA) & Frontotemporal Degeneration (FTD): What? Who? And What to Do? Seminar – Sponsored by Dementia Alliance of North Carolina at the Archie K. Davis Center, Research Triangle Park.**

February 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 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 – Social Work Advocacy Day at the Legislature (NASW-NC)**

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

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

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

**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 – New Orleans, Louisiana.

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

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

**May 2019 – Older Americans Month – 2019 Theme: Connect, Create, Contribute. Visit [oam.acl.gov](http://oam.acl.gov) in early 2019 for more information.**

**May 6-9, 2019 – 2019 LeadingAge North Carolina 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference & Trade Show – Marriott Resort at Grande Dunes, Myrtle Beach, SC.**

**May 15, 2019 – NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse Annual Conference at Wake Technical Community College on Hwy. 401 South – Raleigh, NC**

**May 18, 2019 – Dementia Alliance of North Carolina Rock Around the Clock Gala at 6:00 p.m. – Briar Creek Country Club, Raleigh**

**May 21-22, 2019 – Bringing It Home Conference on Ending Homelessness in North Carolina.**

**June 2-5, 2019 – 2019 AIRS I&R Training and Education Conference – Atlanta, Georgia.**

June 17-20, 2019 – National Council on Aging Age+Action Conference (national conference focused on ensuring every person's right to age with their best possible health and economic security) – Renaissance Downtown Hotel, Washington, DC. Proposals due by November 30, 2018.

**August 26-26, 2019 – National Home and Community Based Services Conference – Baltimore Marriott Waterfront, Baltimore, MD**

**September 9-11, 2019 – The Carolinas Center's 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Hospice & Palliative Care Conference – Hyatt Regency , Greenville, SC. Presentation proposal deadline: March 15, 2019 ([www.cchospice.org](http://www.cchospice.org))**

October 8-10, 2019 – Annual Conference of the NC Assisted Living Association

**November 3-6, 2019 – 2019 National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care Conference – Arlington, VA.**

**March 13-15, 2020 - NC Association on Aging Annual Conference – at Baliste Hotel in Wilmington.**

## **Legislative Meetings:**

January 29, 2019 : Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee, 1:00 p.m. in room 544 of the Legislative Office Building

**Check out the [Calendar](#) on the Coalition’s Website for additional activities and events. Most committee will gear up after the General Assembly convenes on January 30.**

## **Resources/Articles**

- Health Affairs: [Prescription Drug Policy: The Year in Review, and The Year Ahead](#)
- [Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group Stage Two Report](#) (UNC School of Government)
- [National Adult Mistreatment and Reporting System](#) (NAMRS) Information
- New York Times: [‘I’m Petitioning ...for the Return of My Life’](#) (guardianship article)
- American Dental Association: [A Caregiver’s Guide to Dental Health](#)
- USA Today: [Aging, Alone, Overlooked and in Danger](#)
- WUNC: [Medical Foster Homes Can Be An Option For Elderly Veterans, But The VA Won't Pay For Them](#)
- ProPublica and PolitiFact: [The VA’s Private Program Gave Companies Billions and Vets Longer Waits](#)
- Associated Press: [Elderly, Conservatives Shared More Facebook Fakery in 2016](#)
- News and Observer: [How a Raleigh startup is helping senior-living communities step into the digital age](#)
- New York Times: [Veterans' Groups Compete with Each Other, and Struggle With The VA](#)

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

- [BCBSNC, major hospitals say they’re coordinating to provide more “value-based” care](#)
- [Federal Shutdown Starting to Leave Mark in NC](#)
- [North Carolina gets a ‘F’ on how equally it treats mental and physical health issues](#)
- [Friendship Trays fills a niche in Charlotte’s support system](#)
- [NC Health Policy and Trends to Watch For in 2019 – Part 2](#)
- [What stories grabbed you in 2018? NC Health News most-read stories of the year.](#)
- [Insurance Signups Surprisingly Strong, Yet Number of Uninsured Creeps Up](#)

- [End of Year Opioid-related Statistics Offer Some Hope](#)
- [ACA Ruling Rankles Supporters but Doesn't Change their Plans](#)
- [Many Uses Exist for Money Intended to Aid NC Nursing Home Residents, Advocates Say](#)
- [Millions in Fund, Earmarked to Improve Nursing Home Care, Sits Mostly Unused](#)
- [NC Health Policy and Trends to Watch for in 2019 – Part 1](#)
- [Got Someone in Your Family Who's a Caregiver? Give Them a Real Gift This Holiday](#)
- [Foresight, Empathy, Adaptability: A Recipe for Happy Holidays for People with Dementia](#)
- [Demand for NC Direct Care Workers Mounts, but Wages Decline](#)
- [Medicaid Changes Coming Into Focus](#)
- [Navigating the Holidays While in Recovery from Addiction](#)
- [New Opioid Legislation Possible Next Year](#)
- [NC Counties Putting New Federal Funding to Use in Battling Opioid Epidemic](#)
- [New Push to Help Mental Health Patients Determine Their Treatment in Emergencies](#)
- [Mental Health Concerns as Florence Ruins Farms, Crops, Harvests](#)
- [A Veteran and His Dog: A Story of Mental Health Recovery](#)

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

- **Daily Movement — Even Household Chores — May Boost Brain Health In Elderly**
- **Clinics Struggle To Resolve Fears Over Medicaid Sign-Ups And Green Cards**
- **Democrats' Health Care Ambitions Meet The Reality Of Divided Government**
- **Alzheimer's Disease May Develop Differently In African-Americans, Study Suggests**
- **Is It A Nasty Cold Or The Flu?**
- **Safely Evacuating The Elderly In Any Emergency Takes Planning And Practice**
- **If You Feel Thankful, Write It Down. It's Good For Your Health**
- **Japan's Population Is In Rapid Decline**
- **5 Ways Nixing The Affordable Care Act Could Upend U.S. Health System**
- **Scramble For Shingles Vaccine: How To Cope With Shingrix Shortage**
- **Exercise Wins: Fit Seniors Can Have Hearts That Look 30 Years Younger**
- **UnitedHealthcare Customers Are Unhappy About Cuts To SilverSneakers Fitness Program**
- **How Much Protein Do You Really Need?**
- **Medicare To Cut Payments To Nursing Homes Whose Patients End Up Back In The Hospital**
- **Obamacare Sign-Ups Lag As Trump Slashes Funds For Enrollment Help**

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

**January 25** (Brown Building)

**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; site to be determined)

**October 25** (Brown Building)

**December 6** (Brown Building). All meetings will be at 10:00 a.m. with the exception of the May 17 meeting which will begin at 9:30 a.m. and the September 27 annual meeting which will be a lunch meeting beginning at 12:00 noon.

**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). For those who can not attend in person but can call in, the call in number is [1-866-215-3402](tel:1-866-215-3402) and the passcode is 5080266#.

**Membership Registration and Renewal:** Coalition on Aging membership registration/renewal can be done in one of two ways:

Option 1: Go to <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/membership.aspx>. and print off a membership registration/renewal form which can be completed and returned along with dues payment (payable to the NC Coalition on Aging) to the address noted on the form.

Option 2: Complete the registration and payment process (PayPal) on-line. Contributions in addition to dues can also be paid in this way.

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/>.