



COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

**NC Coalition on Aging
July Update – July 26, 2018**

Coalition Seeking Nominations for Board of Directors: Nominations are currently being accepted by the Coalition on Aging for its first Board of Directors. As a part of the process for pursuing becoming a 501(c)3 organization, the Coalition adopted new by-laws at its membership meeting on June 22. Establishing a Board of Directors is a provision in the by-laws. Information about the duties of Board members, other details pertaining to the Board, and a Board member nomination form can be found in an attachment to the e-mail transmitting this *Update*. **The deadline for nominations is August 10.** Completed nomination forms should be sent to Bill Lamb, Past President of the Coalition and Chair of the Nominating Committee, at william.e.lamb@gmail.com.

Registration Opens for Annual Meeting and Luncheon: The 2018 annual meeting and luncheon of the NC Coalition on Aging will take place on Friday, September 28, at the NC State University Club located at 4200 Hillsborough St. in Raleigh, the location of our last several annual meetings. The program will begin at 12:00 noon (registration opens at 11:30 a.m.).

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



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

Sponsorships, at four different levels, are still available for the annual meeting/luncheon. If interested in being a sponsor or if you know others who might be interested, contact Mary Bethel at mmbethel72@gmail.com. Outside of membership dues, sponsorships of our annual meeting and luncheon are the largest source of financial support for the Coalition.

Call for Nominations for Pioneer Award: In 2016, the Coalition established a new award called the Pioneer Award to recognize individuals who have made long-time outstanding contributions to the field of aging in North Carolina. Nominations are now being accepted for this Award. Information about the Award and a nomination application can be found [here](#). **The deadline for submission of nominations is August 10.** The recipient(s) of the Award will be recognized and honored at the annual meeting and luncheon. Last year we had the opportunity to recognize three long time passionate aging advocates and leaders of the Coalition – Dick Hatch, Dee Hatch, and Polly Williams – with the Award. Their work over the years has helped to guide the development of the Coalition and to ensure that addressing the needs of our state’s older citizens remains the focus of all the Coalition does.

Good News on the Alzheimer’s Front: On Wednesday, July 25, attendees at the national Alzheimer’s Association annual meeting in Chicago received two pieces of good news. Drug company Eisai and its U.S. Partner Biogen reported that an experimental drug called BAN2401 that is being tested to see if it can treat Alzheimer’s disease helped slow the inevitable loss of clear thinking and memory that comes with the condition. Although everyone who took the drug in the clinical trials continued to get worse, those who received the highest dose of the drug got worse more slowly. A 47% reduction in decline at 18 months was noted. Also at the meeting, researchers reported that lowering the systolic blood pressure (top number) to the recommended level of 120 or lower reduced the rate of mild cognitive behavior, a precursor of dementia, by 20%. For more on these two announcements, go to this [report](#) from NBC News.

General Assembly Holds Surprise Special Session: On July 24, the state legislature held a quickly called one day extra session to pass two election-related bills. One bill passed will likely mean the six proposed constitutional amendments on the ballot in the fall election will not have titles. Republican noted the bill was necessary because there was fear that the Constitutional Amendments Publication Commission (composed of two Democrats and one Republican) which was established in 2016 to write the titles of Constitutional Amendments was under pressure to politicize the titles. The second bill passed would remove the party affiliation from any candidate who switched parties less than 90 days before filing for office. The 90 day deadline was removed by legislators last year when they cancelled judicial primaries this year. The bill was prompted by the fact a former Democrat filed as a Republican for the State Supreme Court race. The presence of two Republicans on the ballot was seen as a potential threat to the re-

election of Republican Justice Barbara Jackson. Read more about this at [NCCapitol](#) and at the [News and Observer](#).

Recap of 2018 Short Legislative Session: The 2018 North Carolina General Assembly short session saw heated debates over hog farms, almond milk, school segregation, voting rights, and the powers of a governor who handed down a record-breaking number of vetoes. Lawmakers ended their session after less than seven weeks by putting six constitutional amendments on the fall ballot, the most in decades. Republicans have a supermajority in both chambers of the General Assembly that allowed them to pass legislation over Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's vetoes. That included Cooper's veto of the 2018-19 state budget. The spending plan gives state employees at least a 2% raise and some will get more, including correctional officers in prisons at about 4%, the average teacher at 6.5%, principals at nearly 7% and Highway Patrol troopers at 8%. Cooper criticized the spending plan for not doing enough to fund public education and for an unusual process that didn't allow for amendments after the budget emerged from negotiations among top Republicans. Democrats are trying to flip enough seats this November to allow Cooper's vetoes to stand. The potential that they could succeed, in what looks like a favorable election year for Democrats, helped shape the legislative session. In the past 20 years, there have been just seven constitutional amendments. This year, there will be six on a single ballot. The last time a legislature proposed this many amendments was in the 1980s, and then the number was split between the primary and general election. The amendments would cap the state income tax at 7%, require photo ID to vote in person, expand crime victims' rights, add legal protections related to hunting and fishing, give lawmakers power to choose elections board members and other appointees and give them a major role in appointing judges to vacant seats. (Charlotte Harris and Rashaan Ayesh, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 6/29/18). To see a list of bills passed in the short legislative session, click [here](#). (Scroll down past the bill enacted in 2017).

New Guidelines for Medicare Advantage Plans Released: The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has released new guidance for Medicare Advantage plans' annual application process. The new guidance shares that "primarily health related" supplemental benefits will be expanded to include many services offered by community-based organizations in the aging network. In the past, supplemental benefits were required to be "primarily health related" and only included items or services to prevent, cure, or diminish an illness or injury. In the 2019 Medicare Advantage Call Letter, CMS announced that they will change the scope of "primarily health related" supplemental benefits to include the following items and services beginning with 2019 applications:

- Services or items that are used for diagnosis;
- Services or items used to compensate for physical impairments;
- Services or items that improve the functional or psychological impact of injuries or health conditions;
- Services or items that reduce avoidable emergency and health care utilization.

Examples of newly allowable benefits that meet this definition include:

- Adult day care services
- Home-based palliative care
- In-home support services
- Support for caregivers of enrollees
- Medically-approved non-opioid pain management
- Stand-alone memory fitness benefit
- Home and bathroom safety devices and modifications
- Transportation
- Over the counter drug benefits

On April 27, CMS provided additional details on newly allowable benefits. This guidance will be incorporated into the Medicare Managed Care manual. The Call Letter also reinterprets benefit uniformity rules. Beginning with 2019 applications, Medicare Advantage plans may tailor benefits for beneficiaries who are “similarly situated” and meet a set of clinical criteria. Starting with 2020 applications, CMS may offer waivers of benefit uniformity for benefits tailored to “chronically ill beneficiaries.” This new policy provides greater opportunities to integrate evidence-based programs and other key community-based services and supports into Medicare Advantage Plans. To find out more for what this mean for the aging network, click [here](#). (The National Council on Aging – NCOA Week 7/25/18)

Medicaid Work Requirements – What Data Analysis Shows: In June the Kaiser Family Foundation released an [issue brief](#) entitled Implications of Work Requirements in Medicaid: What Does the Data Say? In January 2018, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued new guidance for state Medicaid waiver proposals that would impose work requirements in Medicaid as a condition of eligibility. As of June 2018, [four states](#) have approved waivers to implement Medicaid work requirements, [seven states](#) have waiver requests pending with CMS, and other states are considering or developing work requirement programs. These states are all imposing or seeking to impose work requirements on populations already covered (both expansion and non-expansion populations). This brief builds on previous analyses to provide data on Medicaid enrollees and some of the policy implications of work requirements. Key findings include:

- Most Medicaid enrollees who can work are already working but could face barriers in complying with reporting requirements.
- Paid work can help provide family resources, but low-wage and part-time work may not be sufficient to overcome poverty. Most working Medicaid enrollees are working full-time for the full year,
- Many Medicaid enrollees who are not working could be exempt from work requirements but would still need to navigate an exemption process.

- A small share (6%) of adult Medicaid enrollees are not already working and unlikely to meet an exemption and thus are the stated target of work requirements.

Majority Minority Counties: By 2025, projections show North Carolina will have 23 counties in which non-Hispanic whites are not the majority race, sometimes referred to as a majority-minority population. Already, the state has 19 such counties, up from 16 in 2010. And in all but 11 counties, the minority population is outpacing the white population in terms of growth, according to Census Bureau figures. In North Carolina, the change has come largely through natural increase, according to Rebecca Tippett, founding Director of Carolina Demography at the Carolina Population Center at UNC-Chapel Hill which started in 2013. That means simply that the population as a whole has more births than deaths. Data bear this out. Non-Hispanic whites outnumber minorities by wider margins in older age groupings than in younger groupings. For example, there are twice as many whites age 18 and above than minorities of the same age group. But there are nearly as many minorities as whites when looking only at those under the age of 18. Not surprisingly, counties with older populations tend to be less diverse. Similar trends are happening around the nation. A recent study published by Applied Population Lab found that in 2016, for the first time in history, more non-Hispanic whites in the United States died than were born. This was true for a growing number of states as well. In 2016, the study found more non-Hispanic white deaths than births in 26 states, including North Carolina. In 2004, there were just four states for which that was true. Furthermore, the study authors expect the trend to continue. (Jason deBruyn, WUNC RADIO, 7/02/18)

Other News and Updates

The **NC General Assembly is scheduled to reconvene on November 27 at noon** for a lame-duck session. The resolution adjourning the short legislative session included no restrictions on what legislation can be considered, but the agenda is expected to include enabling legislation to accompany any of the six proposed constitutional amendments that pass in the election.

The **Lobbying Compliance Division**, formerly part of the Secretary of State's Office, has **moved to the State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement**. Lobbyists, lobbyist principals, liaisons and solicitors will now do business with the State Board office. The phone number there is 919-814-0700.

North Carolina Session Law 2018-49 directs the Department of Health and Human Services to issue a request for proposal (RFP) for Medicaid Managed Care Prepaid Health Plans (PHPs) by August 21, 2018. Therefore, **DHHS is in a silent period from now through the award of the PHP contracts.**

The NC Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), has created a **REAL ID tool kit** (<https://connect.ncdot.gov/real-id/>) that contains fact sheets, required documents, videos, flyers and sample social media posts that can be used to share information about the importance of REAL ID. As has been reported in previous *Updates*, the REAL ID requirement is in response to the tragedy of 9/11 and the recommendations from the 9/11 Commission that

the federal government establish minimum security standards for state-issued driver licenses and identification cards. Federal agencies are required to enforce tougher security standards at federal facilities including TSA security checkpoints, military bases and other federal installations. The enforcement of REAL ID begins October 1, 2020. The North Carolina DMV estimates more than 4 million of the 8 million cardholders in North Carolina will need REAL ID before the deadline. DMV is encouraging citizens to get their REAL ID now as the demand at DMV is projected to escalate rapidly. To find out more, go to www.NCREALID.gov (the REAL ID homepage).

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina has announced that it will provide **rebates to many of their customers if they use cheaper doctors and hospitals**. Customers will be offered between \$25 and \$500 per medical procedure for more than 100 procedures. This SmartShopper program will be offered only to companies that pay for their employees' health insurance and health care. To read more about this click [here](#).

Medicare contributes \$19.5 million to North Carolina's economy, equivalent to 21% of state and local government spending in the state, according to a new [report](#) from AARP. Medicare covers 1,788,687 beneficiaries in the state.

Gov. Roy Cooper has announced that the **population of homeless veterans dropped 14%** last year. After the Obama administration set a goal of ending veteran homelessness and boosted federal funding for that effort, North Carolina began a coordinated campaign that now includes the Department of Veterans Affairs, state and local officials, and non-profit groups. That triggered several steady years of decline in veteran homelessness. The number ticked upward slightly in the January 2017 count, but all told the number has fallen 31% since 2011. (Jay Price, WUNC RADIO, 6/29/18)

Morrow Valley Farmstead, a program being developed by non-profit provider GHA Autism Supports in Albemarle, was selected to receive funding in the form of a \$38,000 grant through Cardinal Innovations Healthcare's Community Reinvestment Initiative. Through the Morrow Valley Farmstead program, GHA will create **specialized long-term medical care for aging individuals with autism spectrum disorder** and other developmental disabilities who require 24-hour medical care in a program designed to specifically meet their needs. Forty programs will receive funding as part of Cardinal's Community Reinvestment Initiative. (BJ Drye, THE STANLY NEWS & PRESS, 7/23/18)

Ahead of a potential sale to HCA Healthcare, **Mission Health's board of directors has launched its nonprofit, private nonoperating foundation that would spawn from the proceeds of the deal**. Mission said the foundation, Dogwood Health Trust, would be a "region-wide resource" enabled to make "significant investments" and develop partnerships in the region. The creation of the foundation has been billed by hospital leaders as a major benefit of the sale of not-for-profit Mission to HCA, a Nashville-based for-profit company. Through new partnerships, the organization hopes to "analyze, understand and address core social determinants of health and well-being" in Western North Carolina, according to a hospital news release. (Dillon Davis, ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES, 7/16/18)

The North Carolina Community Action Association has launched the **Healthy Homes Initiative** with the help of a \$2 million investment by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. The Initiative will work over the next two years to make repairs and home safety updates to help protect the health of eligible residents.

The **Public Protection Section of the NC Attorney General's Office has speakers available** to speak on a wide range of topics including cybersecurity and data breaches, domestic violence and sexual assault, human trafficking, Internet safety, opioid prevention and treatment, reentry from incarceration, and scams and frauds. To request a speaker click [here](#).

Three hospitals in Wake County – Triangle Springs, Holly Hill Hospital, and Strategic Behavioral Health – have added a combined 124 **adult inpatient psychiatric beds** this year. This is an almost 50% increase in just one year.

Public transportation systems around the state will see funding cuts largely due to lower motor fuels tax revenue. The North Carolina Department of Transportation sent notice to 24 public transit systems letting them know how much they would each lose. In total, NCDOT reduced funding in eight areas by \$44 million. Half of those areas will suffer an \$8.5 million reduction each, including a recurring reduction in the State Maintenance Assistance Program, or SMAP. That cut amounts to more than a quarter of the state funding in that program which helps local public transit systems with maintenance of their fleets. (Jason deBruyn, WUNC RADIO, 7/05/18)

A law that took effect this month, **House Bill 403**, modified the state's Medicaid Transformation law to allow the state's seven mental health managed care organizations to operate comprehensive plans that officials say should provide better health care at less expense for taxpayers. The law creates a pathway for some people who suffer from serious and chronic mental health-related issues to work through a single agency to manage state-funded services for both mental and physical health..

Carolinas HealthCare Foundation has received a \$1.1 million grant award from The Duke Endowment to improve cardiac care at Atrium Health. The grant will fund the **Perfect Care: Personalized Cardiac Care and Collaborative**, an initiative that Atrium Health's Sanger Heart & Vascular Institute and will pilot in six hospitals within its network. The initiative aims to improve patient access and education, as well as eliminate disparities in follow-up cardiac care after surgery, and will focus on engaging patients and their families through remote monitoring.

Officials at the **Charles George VA Medical Center in Asheville have acknowledged the center's nursing home fared poorly in recent internal ratings** detailed as part of a USA Today/Boston Globe newspaper investigation. But leaders at the Community Living Center, a 73-bed, two-story nursing home on the main hospital's campus, stress their population is different from private nursing homes, which the internal report compared them to. They are taking the findings seriously, officials said, making improvements in areas including pain recognition and treatment, which the ratings pinpointed as being troubled. (John Boyle, ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES, 7/07/18)

The **N.C. Green Party held a nominating convention** the last week of June after qualifying for ballot access under a law passed last year that makes it easier for third parties to get recognition. Robert Corriher of Winston-Salem will run in the 13th Congressional District, which is currently held by Republican U.S. Rep. Ted Budd. That race is considered one of the most competitive congressional races in the state for Democrats, and a Green Party candidate could draw some liberal voters. For the state legislature, the Green Party has nominated Justin Miller of New London for House District 66. He will face incumbent Rep. Ken Goodman (D-Richmond), and Republican Clyde Cupples. The Party is also fielding candidates for Mecklenburg County Soil and Water Conservation District supervisor and Forsyth County commissioner.

Charlotte has been chosen as the host city for the **2020 Republican National Convention** which will be held that summer. The **2020 Democratic National Convention** will be held July 13-16. Three cities are vying for the Convention – Houston, Miami Beach, and Milwaukee.

It has been announced that the National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs will help Nova Dia Group which provides the **equipment to farmers and markets for processing Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) payments** to stay open through August. Nova Dia is being replaced by a new contractor to provide the processing system but that transition to a new provider has not been put in place and there was the potential for a gap in services and the loss of millions of dollars in sales.

The Trump administration announced on July 10 that it is **cutting funding for Affordable Care Act (ACA) navigators**, trained instructors who help explain health benefits and help people enroll in health plans, by 72% from \$36 million to \$10 million. North Carolina's budget will be cut from \$3.4 million to \$500,000 - 85% reduction. Our state has had some of the nation's highest enrollment in the ACA thanks in part to the work of a well-coordinated navigator system. In a related development, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina has announced that it expects to cover all 100 counties for the 2019 federal ACA individual health-insurance exchange.

The Trump Administration has also announced policies that could further undermine ACA coverage. **Payments to ACA Insurers that cover high-cost patients with pre-existing and chronic conditions were suspended** for an indefinite length of time. The risk adjustment program requires insurers with relatively healthier enrollees to transfer funds to insurers with less healthy enrollees, such as those aged 55-64. This could discourage enrollment of higher cost individuals. With the repeal of the individual mandate in the tax bill, there are concerns that younger, healthier people will not sign up for coverage, which could lead to higher premiums for other ACA enrollees. (National Council on Aging, NCOA Week, 7/18/18)

The Durham VA Medical Center has a program called COACH (Caring for Older Adults and Caregivers at Home). The goals of the program are to help veterans remain in their homes for as long as possible; to reduce the caregiver burden; and to assist in dementia care by offering support, education, and referrals. Enrollment in the program requires that the patient be 65 or older; the patient has cognitive impairment; the patient has a caregiver at home; the caregiver has not taken steps to institutionalize (place in a nursing home); the patient lives within a 50 mile radius of the Durham VA Medical Center, the Greenville VA Health Care Center, or the

Morehead City Community Based VA Outpatient Clinic; and the patient is not receiving services from another home-based program.

The Veterans Administration (VA) has a Caregiver Support Program which provides support to caregivers of veterans. The program offers a menu of services including on-line courses, face to face classes, telephone support, and in-person and peer support. Caregivers of eligible veterans who were seriously injured in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001 may be eligible for additional support and services, including financial assistance. Every VA Medical Center has a Caregiver Support Coordinator (CSC) who is the key to caregivers for accessing services.

The **Older Veteran Behavioral Health Resource Inventory** provides an overview of resources for health and social service professionals interested in enhancing their **outreach and support for older veterans** who have or are at risk for behavioral health conditions. The inventory, as well as other useful resources for professionals working with veterans, are available through the **VA Community Provider Toolkit**.

The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) is **seeking input from state and local stakeholders to inform the future of transportation coordination**. Feedback will help to shape the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) federal interagency work group plan and focus areas by identifying promising practices, barriers, and challenges around coordinated transportation. **Complete the National Transportation Coordination Survey**.

CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is fielding the fourth wave of the **National Study of Long-Term Care Providers (NSLTCP)**. NSLTCP is an ongoing federally funded data collection effort to gather and report information about the characteristics of Adult Day Services Centers (ADSCs), Residential Care Communities (RCCs), and other paid, regulated long-term care services providers, and the people they serve. The 2018 study collects data from randomly selected samples of adult day services centers and residential care communities throughout the United States. In 2018, NSLTCP is for the first time collecting demographics, health and functional status, and service utilization for two randomly selected individual services users in each of the sampled adult day services centers and residential care communities. For more information about the 2018 NSLTCP, visit the **NSLTCP website**

The U.S. Senate unanimously approved legislation to **delay until 2020 the requirement of electronic visit verification (EVV)** to document when personal care services are provided. An identical bill passed the House of Representatives, sending the legislation to President Trump to sign into law. The 21st Century Cures Act mandated EVV to begin in January 2019 to crack down on fraudulent Medicaid billing. The new legislation allows states to obtain an additional extension until 2021 if the 2020 deadline cannot be met. Further, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is required to hold at least one hearing by the end of 2019 to solicit comments on the program from stakeholders. (*Home Care Magazine 07/19/18*)

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

The National Institute on Aging reports that **volunteers are needed to be a part of the fight against Alzheimer's** and shares these links: learn more about [participating in Alzheimer's research](#), [search for clinical trials](#), and sign up for a [registry or matching service](#).

The **40th Annual AIRS I&R Training and Education Conference** was held June 3 to 6, 2018, in Dallas, Texas. The Symposium included a pre-conference National I&R/A Summit for aging and disability professionals, a full complement of conference workshops, and an Aging and Disability Luncheon. Conference workshops featured national, state, and local professionals from across the country discussing initiatives and innovations in aging and disability I&R/A programs. [Click here](#) to view workshop descriptions and access conference materials, including slide presentations and handouts.

Americans are more often spending their final days at home or in other community-based settings instead of the hospital, a new study has found. Overall, the proportion of **deaths that occur in acute-care hospitals has fallen** to below 20%, according to a retrospective cohort study published last month in JAMA. That's a steep drop compared to 2000, when nearly one-third of deaths occurred in hospitals. While hospital deaths are decreasing, the number of deaths in homes and community-based setting, including assisted living facilities, is sharply rising. About four out of every 10 deaths occur in home or community-based settings, the study, which looked at 15 years of data from 2000 to 2015, found. (Home Health Care News 07/09/2018)

The **U.S. House of Representatives will be on recess** the month of August through September 3. The U.S. Senate is only scheduled to be on recess August 4-12 and September 1-3. This is a good time to contact your Representative and our Senators about aging issues while they are more likely to be in their home districts. Also be on the lookout for forums or public events they may be holding.

On July 26, 1990 the **Americans with Disabilities Act** was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush.

U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar has requested that FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb establish a **working group to examine how to safely import prescription drugs from other countries** in the event of a dramatic price increase for a drug produced by one manufacturer and not protected by patents or exclusivities. Click [here](#) for more information.

AARP is in the process of publishing a six book series of **strategies and solutions to make communities livable and for people of all ages**. The series is called the AARP Roadmap to Livability and focuses on ways a community can be enjoyable for everyone. AARP has just released their fifth book in the series, the Health Services and Community Supports Workbook. This publication describes strategies for engaging a community in the process of planning to become a better place for people of all ages to live, work and play. It is intended to be used as a framework to help people who are actively working to improve health services plan, evaluate

and implement appropriate efforts in their communities. [Click here](#) to access this workbook. [Click here](#) to learn more about this series from AARP.

The Eldercare Locator has published a series of fact sheets called Critical Conversations. These fact sheets focus on various topics which affect the well-being of older adults.

[Click here](#) to view the medication safety fact sheet.

[Click here](#) to view the elder abuse fact sheet.

[Click here](#) to view the disaster preparedness fact sheet.

The **Limited Income Newly Eligible Transition (LI NET) Program** provides immediate medication access for Medicare beneficiaries with Extra Help not yet enrolled in a Part D plan or a Medicare Advantage (Part C) plan with prescription drug coverage. This program was created by CMS to fill a critical gap and provide immediate, temporary medication access for low-income Medicare beneficiaries without prescription drug coverage. [Click here](#) to view a fact sheet from NCOA on the LI NET Program.

Older people are at a significant increased risk of experiencing heat stroke, heat edema, heat syncope, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion. The National Institute of Health has published an article with tips to reduce the risk of hyperthermia for older adults. [Click here](#) to read more about how to mitigate heat-related health dangers for older adults.

Six out of every 10 falls happen at home. The National Institute on Aging provides information on [changes you can make to your home](#) that will help you avoid falls and increase your safety.

High blood pressure is very common in older people and a major health problem. If left untreated, it can lead to stroke, heart disease, eye problems, kidney failure and more. [Facts about high blood pressure](#) and its treatment are:

- High blood pressure may not make you feel sick, but it is serious. See a doctor to treat it.
- You can lower your blood pressure by changing your day-to-day habits and by taking medicine, if needed.
- If you take high blood pressure medicine, making some lifestyle changes may help lower the dose you need.
- If you take blood pressure medicine and your blood pressure goes down, it means medicine and lifestyle changes are working. If another doctor asks if you have high blood pressure, the answer is, "Yes, but it is being treated."
- Tell your doctor about all the drugs you take. Don't forget to mention over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and dietary supplements. They may affect your blood pressure. They also can change how well your blood pressure medicine works.
- Blood pressure pills should be taken at the same time each day. For example, take your medicine in the morning with breakfast or in the evening after brushing your teeth. If you miss a dose, do not double the dose the next day.

- Get up slowly from a seated or lying position and stand for a bit before walking. This lets your blood pressure adjust before walking to prevent dizziness, fainting, or a fall.

Learn more about [high blood pressure and older adults](#).

People in the News

Julie Wiggins, Area Agency on Aging Director at High County Area Agency on Aging in Boone, has been named Executive Director of High County Council of Governments effective August 1.

Calvin Vaughn, long time director of the Roy B. Culler Jr. Senior Center in High Point, retired on June 29. He was a leader in the NC Senior Center Alliance, a Coalition member.

Gina Upchurch and staff at Senior PharmAssist, a Coalition member, had two manuscripts published by the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society (JAGS), the largest peer-review journal focused on older adults, in January. The articles are “The Health of Older Americans: A Primer on Medicare and a Local Perspective” and “Medication Access in America and Medicare Part D: Prescription Shopping Saves but May Be Costly.” A third article to JAGS is in the works by Gina and staff.

Vickie Sawyer from Mooresville has been selected to fill out the term of former Sen. David Curtis (R-Lincoln) who resigned his District 34 seat on June 30. The District covers Lincoln County and parts of Gaston and Iredell Counties. Sawyer, is also the Republican nominee for the District in the November general election.

Rep. Bob Muller (R-Pender) who was appointed in September to fill the term of former Rep. Chris Millis (R-Pender) announced that his decision to retire at the age of 86 after less than a year as Pender County's representative in the N.C. House was an easy one due to the fact he would be 88 if he ran again and was elected.

The office of Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger is seeing some changes. **Jim Blaine** who has been chief of staff for Sen. Berger since he became President Pro Tem in 2011 (and before that Senate GOP's caucus director for several election cycles) is leaving this month to do consulting work for Berger's campaign and Senate Republicans ahead of the November general elections. **Steve Ogden** who has worked as a research assistant and paralegal in Berge's office is also leaving to attend seminary in August.

Senate Sergeant-at-arms Phil King will be retiring at the end of the year after serving in the role since 2011.

State Auditor Beth Wood has been elected president of the National State Auditors Association for 2018-19.

Sen. Thom Tillis has received the 2018 Champion of Medicare Access Award from the Alliance for Patient Access, a national network of physicians dedicated to ensuring patient access to approved therapies and appropriate clinical care.

Gov. Roy Cooper has announced the following appointments to the **State Board of Examiners for Nursing Home Administrators**: Jon Renegar of Asheville as a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator of a non-profit facility, Amy Huntley of Garner as a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator, Vanessa Burton of Lumberton as a Public Member, Ruth Little of Ayden as a Public Member, and Curtis Grogan of Cary as a Public Member.

Two icons of North Carolina politics, both 97 years old, died this month within days of each other. **Bert L. Bennett Jr.**, a Winston-Salem businessman, was North Carolina's most important Democratic Party power broker for over 40 years. He helped shape the state's reputation for moderation and used his extensive statewide network to elevate Democrats Terry Sanford and Jim Hunt to the governor's office. He died on July 16 in Pfafftown. **Tom Ellis**, a Raleigh attorney, was a key figure in Sen. Jesse Helms' campaigns. He died on July 12 in Raleigh. In 1973, he formed the National Congressional Club (NCC), originally the Congressional Club of North Carolina and later renamed the Conservative Club, to help Helms with fundraising and advertising efforts.

Wilson City Manager Grant Goings has been elected president of the North Carolina City and County Management Association.

North Carolinian **Robert Wilkie** was confirmed on July 23 to be Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the second-largest agency in the U.S. government.

T. Diane Surgeon, a Lumberton attorney, received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine in March. She owns and operates the Elder Law Center-Surgeon Law Firm, and has served as a guardian ad litem attorney in Lumberton since 2006, where she provides representation for abused, neglected and dependent children in the juvenile court system. (Joey Pitchford, GOLDSBORO NEWS-ARGUS, 7/15/18)

Upcoming Meetings/Events Through September and Meetings/Events New to the Calendar

July 29, 2018 – Deadline for submitting comments to the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services for the 2019-2023 State Aging Services Plan

August 2, 2018 - Resources for Integrated Care Webinar: Promising Practices for Meeting the Behavioral Health Needs of Dually Eligible Older Adults – at 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. [Register for the event](#)

August 2-3, 2018 - The NC Conference of District Attorneys conference on Physical and Sexual Abuse of Disabled and Elder Victims at NC Justice Center. Information and registration [here](#).

August 7, 2018 - Caregiver Summit - at The William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education (100 Friday Center Dr.) in Chapel Hill from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. - Info. & Registration [Click Here](#).

August 7, 2018 – National Alzheimer’s and Dementia Resource Center Webinar: First Responder Training and Programs to Support People with Dementia – at 2:00 p.m. [Register for the webinar](#)

August 9, 2018 - Jewish Federation of North America’s Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care Webinar: Trauma, Hoarding, and Home Safety: Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Interventions for Older Adults – 1:00 to 2:15 p.m. [Register for the webinar](#)

August 23, 2018 – NC Justice Center program on Workplace Equity for Women. Presenter Deesha Dyer, former social secretary to the Obama Administration. Congresswoman Alma Adams will be presented with Lifetime Champion Award – at Charlotte City Club in Charlotte from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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

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

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

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

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

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

September 17-19, 2018 – NC Senior Living Association 2018 Convention and Trade Show – at Four Seasons Sheraton/Koury Convention Center in Greensboro

September 18, 2018 - Dementia Care: Opioid Use & Impact for Persons Living with Dementia Call from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. During this call, gain insight on opioid use in the post-acute and long-term care setting. Also, learn about the impact of opioid use on persons living with

dementia. Additionally, CMS will share updates on the progress of the [National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Homes](#). [Register](#) for Medicare Learning Network events.

September 21, 2018 - High Country Care Transitions Summit at Grandfather Golf and Country Club, Linville, NC. To register click [here](#).

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

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

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

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

Articles/News Stories/Resources

- Washington Post: [Seniors Enjoy College Students Who Moonlight as ‘Grandkids’ for Hire](#)
- McClatchy DC Bureau: [SNAP Work Rules Could Cause Spike in Deep Poverty](#)
- New York Times: [Nursing Homes Routinely Mask Low Staff Levels](#)
- New York Times: [To Counter Loneliness, Find Ways to Connect](#)
- NBC News: [Trump administration 'exacerbating' LGBTQ health care discrimination, report says](#)
- New York Times: [The Disability Trap](#)
- Kaiser Health News: [Parsing Policy: Medicaid Sets Up Huge Hurdles For Disabled And Sick People Trying To Care For Their Families](#)
- Kaiser Health News: [Parsing Policy: Cost-Saving Innovations Already Hurting Medicaid Recipients](#)
- The Hill: [Congress: Support access to palliative care for aging Americans](#)
- NPR: [Federal Judge Blocks Medicaid Work Requirements In Kentucky](#)
- The Hill: [Congress should build upon the ABLE Act, giving more Americans with disabilities access to financial tools](#)
- CNN: [Government shuts down website for doctors searching for treatment guidelines](#)

North Carolina Related

- News and Observer: [Meals-on-Wheels Program for Pets Assists Seniors on Fixed Incomes](#)
- News and Observer: [Nursing Home Wants Safe Disposal of Unused Pain Meds](#)

- News and Observer (op ed): [Voter ID on the NC Ballot is About Suppression](#)
- News and Observer: [NC Legislators Bring Budget Pork Home to Give Towns and Cities a Lift](#)
- News and Observer: [NC Democrat Says Pence Expanded Medicaid in Indiana](#)
- News and Observer: [Influential Nonprofit \(Self Help Credit Union\) Started with Bake Sale](#)
- NC Policy Watch: [Bad for North Carolina's Bottom Line](#) (On Constitutional Amendment to cap state's income tax rate. By Richard H. Moore, State Treasurer from 2001-2009).
- NC Medical Journal: [Team-Based Care in North Carolina](#) (July/August 2018)
- WRAL.com: [What Happens to N.C. Adults Excluded from Health Insurance, A Case Study](#) (By Catherine Clabby)
- WRAL: [Feds threaten to boot Triangle nursing homes accused of patient abuse out of Medicare](#)
- WRAL: [Tarboro assisted living facility where resident was strangled has license revoked](#)
- WECT: [North Carolinians don't get enough exercise, CDC report says](#)
- Charlotte Observer: Editorial: [We need to protect NC's growing senior population](#)

NC Health News Stories:

- [Rising NC Heat Blasts Everyone, but Hits Those Over 65 Harder](#)
- [Will the New Foster Care Law Give Grandparents a Hand?](#)
- [Focus on Postoperative Decline Could Help NC Patients, Hospitals](#)
- [N.C. Pain Clinics Change Hands as Part of a Recent Series of Health Care Fraud Cases](#)
- [SNAP Expected to be Harder to Use at Some Farmers Markets \(UPDATED\)](#)
- [Commentary: Why Rural Hospitals Are Closing](#)
- [Putting 'People First' Into Law](#)
- [Intern Brings Unique Perspective to NCGA](#)
- [Pending Mission Sale to HCA Raising Questions and Concerns in Western NC](#)

NPR Aging Series:

- [How Soon Is Soon Enough To Learn You Have Alzheimer's?](#)
- [Family Caregivers Exchange Tips, Share Stories To Ease Alzheimer's Losses](#)
- [A 63-Year-Old Lifeguard](#)
- [Experimental Drugs Boost Elderly Immune Systems, Raising Hopes For Anti-Aging Effects](#)
- [Worried About Dementia? You Might Want to Check Your Blood Pressure](#)
- [Hormone Levels Likely Influence A Woman's Risk Of Alzheimer's, But How?](#)

Dates for 2018 Coalition Meetings: Mark your calendar for all the Coalition's meetings for the rest of the year. The schedule is as follows:

August 24
September 28 (annual meeting at NC State University Club)
October 26
December 7

Meetings are held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in room 104 of the Brown Building on the Dix Campus (801 Biggs Drive) unless notified otherwise. For those who can not attend in person but can call in, the call in number is [1-866-215-3402](tel:1-866-215-3402) and the passcode is 5080266#.

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

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

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

The Coalition has a hardship provision for those who wish to join the Coalition but are unable to pay the full dues amount. To apply for this hardship provision, please contact Mary Bethel, Coalition President, at mmbethel72@gmail.com.

Submitting Information for Updates: If you have news or information on activities and events you would like to have included in an *Update* to Coalition members, please send details to Mary Bethel, Coalition President, at mmbethel72@gmail.com. The Coalition also posts a master calendar of aging related events and activities on its website.

Have questions about the Coalition on Aging or need more information, including information about joining the Coalition or renewing membership, please contact us at mmbethel72@gmail.com or check out our website at <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/>.