



COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

NC Coalition on Aging First of the Month Update – March 3, 2016

Medicaid Reform Plan Overview Presented – Officials with the state department of Health and Human Services on Tuesday, March 1, presented an outline for reforming Medicaid in North Carolina from a fee-for-service system to a capitated system in which insurers will be paid a flat fee per person they cover. The presentation of the plan to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid and NC Health Choice met the legislative imposed deadline of March 1 for a draft proposal. The following articles provide a good overview of the draft plan and background on Medicaid reform:

- From NC Health News: <http://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2016/03/02/dhhs-officials-deliver-medicaid-reform-outline/>
- From @NCCapitol: <http://www.wral.com/nc-medicaid-remake-hits-benchmark/15456506/>
- From News and Observer: <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article63427802.html>

The next step in the reform process calls for 12 listening session across the State to hear from the public about the proposed plan. Listening sessions will be held in Asheville, Boone, Charlotte (2 sessions), Elizabeth City, Greensboro, Greenville, Lumberton, Raleigh, Sylva, Wilmington, and Winston-Salem. Comments can also be submitted to the Medicaid reform website (www.ncdhhs.gov/nc-medicaid-reform). A draft plan will be submitted to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which must approve the plan, by June 1.

Alzheimer’s State Plan to be Unveiled – The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services will hear a presentation on the recently completed strategic Alzheimer’s State Plan, which includes recommendations for action, on Tuesday, March 8, at 1:00 p.m. in Room 643 of the Legislative Office Building. The Plan was developed in response to state legislation passed in 2014. The NC Institute of Medicine convened a task force that met throughout 2015 to develop the Plan. A copy of the Plan will be posted on the Institute of Medicine’s website (<http://www.nciom.org/task-forces-and-projects/?task-force-on-alzheimers-disease-and-related-dementia>) on Tuesday.

Coalition on Aging’s Day at the Legislature – Don’t forget to mark your calendar for the Coalition’s Day at the Legislature on May 10. In addition to having the opportunity to meet with Senators and Representatives about our priority issues, the 1300 quadrant of the Legislative

Building has been reserved for the day by the Coalition. Tentative plans call for members of the Coalition to be present throughout the day at tables in the quadrant to answer questions and provide information about aging related issues to legislators, legislative staff, and visitors. Tentative focus areas for the tables are family caregiving, home and community based services, financial issues, health and wellness, residential care and nursing homes, rights and protection, and retirement benefits and services. More information about this event will be shared at the March Coalition meeting and in future Updates.

Early Voting Begins in North Carolina – Early voting for the State’s March 15 primary election begins today (March 3) and runs through March 12. People who have not registered to vote can vote during the early voting period using same-day registration. Although a 2013 State law eliminated same-day registration, it is still legal during early voting pending an on-going court case. People can vote at any open polling place in their county during early voting. To find information about polling places, go to <http://bit.ly/1MD8x3u> or contact your county board of elections.

Adult Protective Services Statistics - The NC Division of Aging and Adult Services reports that the majority of persons receiving adult protective services in North Carolina are older adults. Specifically, in Fiscal Year 2012-2013, 70% were 60 years of age or older, 62% were women, and 85% lived alone or with family members. Adult protective services reports have significantly increased over the past five years. In State Fiscal Year 2009, 17,043 reports were received, of which 9,252 were evaluated. In State Fiscal Year 2014-2015, 24,545 reports were received of which 12,121 were evaluated. Based on this data, the number of reports received over the past six years have increased 44%.

Federal Poverty Guidelines for 2016 – On January 26, the updated **federal poverty guidelines for 2016** were published in the Federal Register and made available online at the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation within the US Department of Health and Human Services. The chart below, provided by the National Council on Aging, summarizes these guidelines as they relate to income thresholds for core benefits for seniors administered at the federal level.

2016 Poverty Levels				
	100% FPL Individual/ Couple	120% FPL Individual/ Couple	135% FPL Individual/ Couple	150% FPL Individual/ Couple
48 States + DC	\$11,880/\$16,020	\$14,256/\$19,224	\$16,038/\$21,627	\$17,820/\$24,030
Alaska	\$14,840/\$20,020	\$17,808/\$24,024	\$20,034/\$27,027	\$22,260/\$30,030
Hawaii	\$13,670/\$18,430	\$16,404/\$22,116	\$18,455/\$24,881	\$20,505/\$27,645
Monthly Income Limits by Poverty Level + \$20 Income Disregard				
48 States + DC	\$1,010/\$1,355	\$1,208/\$1,622	\$1,357/\$1,823	\$1,505/\$2,023
Alaska	\$1,257/\$1,689	\$1,504/\$2,022	\$1,690/\$2,273	\$1,875/\$2,523
Hawaii	\$1,160/\$1,556	\$1,387/\$1,863	\$1,558/\$2,094	\$1,729/\$2,324

Note that annual income amounts do not include the \$20 monthly income disregard. Income amounts have been rounded up to the nearest whole dollar.

Rethinking Guardianship – This past year a statewide workgroup representing a range of guardianship stakeholders came together to look at long-term changes in North Carolina’s adult guardianship system. This “Rethinking Guardianship: Building a Case for Less Restrictive Alternatives” initiative is funded by the NC Council for Developmental Disabilities and administered by the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services with assistance from the Jordan Institute for Families at the UNC School of Social Work. The first year report from the initiative which summarizes the efforts of the workgroup and the research conducted by the Jordan Institute about current practices surrounding adult guardianship across the state. The report documents eye-opening findings and underlines the critical need to make needed changes to the guardianship system and to promote the use of less restrictive alternatives. Copies of the report can be obtained by e-mailing Libby Phillips at ephilli@email.unc.edu.

Coalition Signs on to Letter to Director of Consumer Financial Protection Bureau – The Coalition on Aging has joined over 135 North Carolina organizations and groups in asking the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to issue a strong final rule to curb payday lending abuses. To see a copy of the letter that is being sent to Richard Cordray, Director of the Bureau, go to <http://1drv.ms/1Prxmk>. The Coalition has long been concerned that older adults represent a high percentage of those who fall victim to abusive lending practices.

Department of Insurance’s Speakers Bureau - The North Carolina Department of Insurance performs many duties beyond regulating the insurance industry. For example, it handles insurance-related complaints, provides specialized counseling to people eligible for Medicare and houses the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Those who work with older adults in North Carolina are probably most familiar with SHIP, the Department’s Seniors’ Health Insurance Information Program, which assists people who have questions about Medicare.

Because the Department believes that it is important that people know about the broad range of services and assistance the Department provides, it has established a Speaker’s Bureau of trained experts from within the Department who can answer questions and provide up-to-date information about insurance issues. If you belong to an organization, club or agency that would like a representative from the Department of Insurance to talk with your group, contact Rhonda Narron at 919-807-6788 to schedule a speaker. For questions about insurance, call the North Carolina Department of Insurance toll free at 855-408-1212.

Creating an Adult Network of Support Through Collective Impact – The NC Division of Aging and Adult Services (in partnership with UNC CARES) reports that after publication of a Request for Information by the UNC School of Social Work, two pilots have been selected as the initial sites for the development of the Adult Network of Support. Catawba County Department

of Social Services will pilot “rethinking guardianship” to engage the local community to examine alternatives to guardianship and the use of supported decision making as best practices to individuals who may need a guardian. A collaborative of western North Carolina organizations and agencies will pilot a dementia friendly community concept in several counties to examine ways to better support individuals and families with Alzheimer’s and related dementias. These two pilots will form the beginning of the network of support. Chosen communities will receive:

- Technical assistance on ways to design a Collective Impact Initiative within their community,
- Logistical support to help organize and launch their community process,
- Meeting facilitation, as needed, by neutral facilitators who are familiar with collective impact, and
- Assistance in design and implementation of an evaluation approach.

Representative of the communities will also be invited to participate on the state Steering Committee, and thereby have the potential to influence statewide direction of the Adult Network of Support. There are no direct funds available for partnerships at this time, but UNC CARES provides the selected organizations free facilitation and evaluation services.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Position Posted – The NC Division of Aging and Adult Services has posted a job opening for the State Long Term Care Ombudsman position. The closing date for applying for the job is March 7. To find out more about the position go to <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/northcarolina/jobs/1357845/state-long-term-ombudsman>.

#Disrupt Aging – To learn more about this new undertaking from AARP and to register to join the effort, check out the information below from AARP:

AARP believes that no one's possibilities should ever be limited by their age. Every day, we fight to remove barriers that stand between people and Real Possibilities.

#DisruptAging is a new movement to challenge outdated beliefs about aging and spark new solutions so more people can choose how they live and age. And it all starts with a conversation.

Join others who are fighting to change the way the world thinks.

- Follow us on [social media](#) for lively conversations about age-defying people and ideas.
- Sign up for our monthly newsletter with news, insights, and inspiration to disrupt aging.

Join us

Older Adults and Debt – The National Council on Aging (NCOA) has released an issue brief entitled “Older Adults and Debt: Trends, Trade-offs, and Tools to Help.” In 2015, NCOA surveyed aging network professionals on their clients’ debt and how it impacts their clients’ economic security. The results of this survey, combined with data from several national surveys of consumer finance and debt, form the basis of the issue brief. To read the report which shows that senior household borrowing has increased significantly in the past decade, go to https://www.ncoa.org/economic-security/money-management/debt/senior-debt-facts/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_content=debt_facts&utm_campaign=NCOAWeek&utm_term=2016_02_23.

Public Radio Market Place Report had an interesting story which aired on February 17, 2016, on “Why Seniors Are Flocking to Medicare Advantage”. Check it out at <http://www.marketplace.org/2016/02/16/world/why-seniors-are-flocking-medicare-advantage>.

NC PACE Association Conference is right around the corner – April 28-29, 2016 at the Sheraton Imperial in Durham. Highlights of the Conference include presentations by Secretary of the NC Department of Health and Human Services Rick Brajer and Shawn Bloom, Executive Director of the National PACE Association. To learn more about the conference and to register for this go to <http://ncpace.org/conference/2016-sessions>.

Senior Tar Heel Legislature to Meet – The next meeting for the Senior Legislature (<http://www.ncsthl.org/>) will be March 17-18, 2016, at the Sheraton in Chapel Hill.

National Council on Aging (NCOA) Turns 65 – If you will be in attendance at the American Society on Aging Conference in Washington, DC on March 20-24, join NCOA on Tuesday, March 22, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the Thurgood Marshall South Room for a champagne toast and cupcake to celebrate 65 years of working together to improve the lives of older adults. It’s free.

If you have seen **Carla Obiol, Senior Deputy Commission of the NC Department of Insurance** and long-time friend to the aging network this week, you probably noticed that she is “flying a little high.” Carla and her family received notification on Monday that her daughter Alex is the recipient of a prestigious four year Park Scholarship to NC State University. The Scholarship is awarded on the basis of outstanding accomplishments and potential in scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Congratulations to Alex and the entire Obiol family.

Upcoming Coalition on Aging Meeting – The next Coalition meeting will be held on Friday, March 18, in the first floor conference room at the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services located in Taylor Hall on the Dorothea Dix campus in Raleigh (693 Palmer Drive). Speakers will be Rose Hoban, founder/editor/lead reporter for *NC Health News*, and Sarah Doughty, Project Manager for Healthy Ideas – NC.

Coalition on Aging Membership – Membership dues for 2016 are due at this time. To renew your membership or to sign up for the first time, go to <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/membership.aspx>. Membership is open to agencies, organization, and groups as well as individuals interested in aging. We hope you will choose to be part of the Coalition and join your colleagues from around the state in coming together to advocate for older North Carolinians.

Have questions about the Coalition on Aging or need more information, check out our website at <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/>.