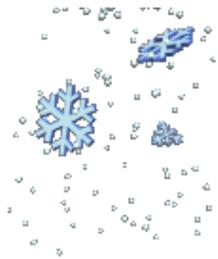




## COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

NC Coalition on Aging  
March Update – March 21, 2018



Perhaps we are in sprinter (spring and winter) time?  
**How is that for coining a new word?**

**March Coalition Meeting:** The Coalition on Aging will return to its regular meeting location in the Brown Building (room 104) on the Dix Campus in Raleigh (801 Biggs Drive) for its March meeting this Friday, March 23. The meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. An outside entrance to the room is on the left side of the building. Free parking is available in the lot across the street from the building.

We are pleased that Samuel Gunter, Policy Director for the NC Housing Coalition, will be presenting about the state of housing in North Carolina and the housing challenges of older adults.



Samuel Gunter, Policy Director  
NC Housing Coalition

As a special bonus, Linda Shaw, Executive Director of the NC PACE Association, will also talk about the NC PACE program and the recently completed report to the NC General Assembly about PACE. For those who cannot be at the meeting but can call in, the call in number is 1-866-215-3402 and the passcode is 5080266#.

**Continuation of Aging Subcommittee Meets with Approval:** The Joint Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services met on March 13. After brief remarks from Dr. Mandy Cohen, the Secretary of the NC Department of Health and Human Services, the Committee heard a report about mental health issues in jails and received an update on child welfare. The Committee then received subcommittee reports including the report from the Aging Subcommittee that contained one recommendation which was to recommend that the Cochairs of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services allow the Subcommittee on Aging to continue its study of the State's delivery of services to older adults during the interim period following the 2018 Regular Session of the 2017 North Carolina General Assembly. The recommendation was met with approval.

**State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement Named:** On March 16, Gov. Roy Cooper made eight of the nine appointments to the new State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement. This followed the decision by the state Supreme Court earlier in the week to refuse the Governor's request to throw out the entire law creating a combined elections and ethics board. In making the appointments he acquiesced to the legislative requirement for a bipartisan board while his administration continues to fight that Republican-backed change in North Carolina law in court. The new State Board will hold its first meeting today, March 22, and the first agenda item is choosing two nominees for a ninth board member who isn't a registered Democrat or Republican. The elections board traditionally had five members, with the majority belonging to the governor's party. The new board has nine members, four from each party and one from neither party, a set-up the Republican majority tacked into a broader House Bill 90 during the last legislative session after a long-running lawsuit from the governor voided the legislature's previous board plans. In making the appointments, Cooper noted that with elections approaching, a full board was needed now because it names county boards that deal with the logistics of elections.

**Medicaid Waiver Approval Pending:** Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary of the NC Department of Health and Human Services, told legislators last week at a Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid and NC Health Choice meeting that the state could learn within weeks whether it will gain approval from the Trump administration for its extensive Medicaid waiver reform request. In her remarks to the Committee, Cohen noted that the application "is moving in the right direction" with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Cohen said she and Gov. Roy Cooper have met with recently appointed federal health Secretary Alex Azar about the waiver, and state health officials have been in weekly contact with CMS since September. A January 11 ruling from CMS affected the federal Medicaid waiver request submitted by the McCrory administration in June 2016 and amended by the Cooper administration on November 20. The ruling allows 10 states, including North Carolina, to institute a work requirement for some Medicaid recipients to maintain their eligibility.

**Congressial Action Needed This Week to Keep Federal Government Open:** As reported in the February *Update*, Congress has until March 23 to craft an omnibus package to enact all 12 FY 18 appropriations bills to keep the federal government open. Congress is expected to act this week on appropriation legislation that would fund the government for the remainder of the fiscal year (through the end of September). It has been reported that a House vote on an omnibus could take place as early as March 22. An additional continuing resolution is also possible if lawmakers cannot work out an agreement on remaining issues before the end of the week. Read more about these developments [here](#). National aging advocacy groups are continuing to work to make sure that the omnibus removes threats posed to some key aging service programs. The House had proposed eliminating the Medicare State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), cutting \$100 million from the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), cutting \$3 million from Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME), and reducing the Elder Justice Initiative by \$2 million.

**Older Drivers:** North Carolina ranks fifth-highest in the U.S. for the percentage of fatal traffic accidents involving older drivers, according to a report by TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit transportation research group that evaluates economic and technical data on surface transportation. According to the report, the number of older drivers who are involved or killed in traffic crashes is rising even faster than the number of people who are 65 or older. North Carolina ranks ninth nationally for the number of licensed drivers -- nearly 1.4 million -- who are 65 and older, but the state ranked fifth for the number of traffic fatalities that involved at least one older driver (285) in 2016.

The 46 million Americans 65 or older comprise 15% of the population, TRIP says, but by 2060, their proportion of the population is expected to reach 24%. According to the group, nearly 80% live in car-dependent places such as suburbs and rural areas. The report attributes the rising number of fatalities involving older drivers, in part, to physical frailties that make them less likely to survive a crash. While older drivers tend to be more cautious than most on the road, they're also likely to have poorer eyesight, reaction time, cognitive ability and physical dexterity, it says. In response to the report, Gary Salamido, vice president of Government Affairs for the North Carolina Chamber, said in a statement. "An additional two million people are expected to call North Carolina home by 2030, with nearly one-third of these individuals aged 65 years or older. TRIP's report highlights the need for increased safety measures on all of North Carolina's roadways, which should be a top priority for the North Carolina Department of Transportation."

**Alzheimer's 2018 Facts and Figures:** The Alzheimer's Association released its [2018 Facts and Figures](#) on March 20. According the information released, 5.7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's, and by 2050, this number is projected to rise to nearly 14 million. In North Carolina, 170,000 people 65 and older are estimated to have Alzheimer's. In 2018, Alzheimer's and other dementias will cost the nation \$277 billion. By 2050, these costs could rise as high as \$1.1 trillion. An estimated 16.1 million Americans provide unpaid care for persons with Alzheimer's or other dementias. These caregivers provided an estimated 18.4 billion hours of care valued at over \$232 billion. There are 466,000 caregivers in North Carolina providing unpaid care for persons with Alzheimer's or other dementias. These caregivers provide 531 million hours of unpaid care valued at \$6,707,000,000. The estimated lifetime cost of caring for someone with dementia is \$341,840. The report notes that Medicaid costs for caring for people

with Alzheimer's in North Carolina is an estimated \$1.188 billion. The per capita Medicare spending on people with dementia in 2017 was \$21,477.

**Legislative District Ratings:** The N.C. FreeEnterprise Foundation released ratings in early March that show how competitive each of the new state legislative districts will be based on past election results. The group reviewed statewide election results in the past five election cycles to create a metric it calls Conventional Voting Behavior which is a large factor used in the determination of each district's Partisan District Rating. This is akin to the Partisan Voting Index (PVI) developed, and made popular, by Charlie Cook of the Cook Political Report for congressional districts. For the 2018 elections, based on that metric and not on the strength of the individual candidates, the FreeEnterprise Foundation rated 37 House districts as "strong Democratic," five as "lean Democratic," 14 as "competitive," eight as "lean Republican," and 56 as "strong Republican." In the Senate, 15 districts are "strong Democratic," one is "lean Democratic," seven are "competitive," eight are "lean Republican," and 19 are "strong Republican." To learn more about the ratings, including which incumbents face a competitive district, click [here](#).

**Elon University Poll on Politician Identification:** A recent Elon University poll had interesting results. The poll found that more North Carolinians can identify the state's "elevator queen" than the legislators setting the agenda on statewide issues. According to the poll results, 49% of registered voters could match Cherie Berry -- whose face is posted in elevators across the state because of her role in regulating them -- with her role as North Carolina commissioner of labor. In the poll more than 80% could identify Roy Cooper as governor and Mike Pence as vice president. Fewer respondents could identify U.S. Sens. Richard Burr (62%) and Thom Tillis (56%). In comparison, 77% of voters were able to correctly identify Cam Newton as quarterback for the Carolina Panthers. Just 11% of voters could identify Phil Berger as the North Carolina Senate leader, and 8% could identify Tim Moore as speaker of the House. Though both Berger and Moore are Republicans, Democrats were more likely to identify them in their respective roles. Sixteen percent of Democrats and 5 percent of Republicans could identify Berger's role, while 11 percent of Democrats and 6 percent of Republicans could identify Moore's. Most voters are unable to distinguish their own representatives in the legislature -- 17% of voters identified their state senator, and 22% identified their state representative. The poll also measured knowledge of the redistricting process. Close to half said the redistricting process is "not fair at all," but just 15 percent were able to correctly identify both that the North Carolina General Assembly oversees the drawing of congressional districts and that it does so every 10 years based on the U.S. Census.

## **Other News and Updates**

For the first time ever (perhaps), **all but one state legislative races in North Carolina will feature both a Republican and Democratic candidate.** When candidate filing ended on February 28, the only uncontested race for state House or state Senate was in an Eastern North Carolina state House race, currently held by Rep. Jean Farmer-Butterfield, D-Wilson. This

follows a heavy recruiting push from both the NC Democratic Party and the NC Republican Party. According to an analysis of **candidate filings** by the [N.C. FreeEnterprise Foundation](#), a total of 474 candidates have filed to run **for the state legislature** this year. Although statistics are not readily available on elections throughout North Carolina's history, this is thought to be among the highest -- if not the highest -- totals of candidates to have ever run for seats in the North Carolina General Assembly. Of the total, 217 are Republicans, 220 are Democrats, 36 are Libertarians and one is unaffiliated. Eighteen incumbent legislators declined to file for another term, including 14 Republicans and four Democrats.

In **congressional races**, NC FreeEnterprise Foundation's analysis found a total of 59 **candidates filing** for North Carolina's 13 seats, with all incumbents seeking another term. All but U.S. Rep. G.K. Butterfield will face a primary challenge, and all but U.S. Rep. Walter Jones have a challenger in the general election. U.S. Rep. Patrick McHenry has the most primary challengers with five Republicans trying to unseat him.

At the end of January, the **Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee** released a list of **districts across the country that it will target** in an effort to flip the U.S. House of Representatives to a Democratic majority in November. On that list are three North Carolina Congressional Districts, including the 13th, which represents all of Davie and Davidson counties, most of Iredell County and portions of Rowan and Guilford counties. First-term Republican Rep. Ted Budd has served since January 2017 and is making his first bid for re-election. Dr. J. Michael Bitzer, provost and professor of political science at Catawba College, said that midterm elections are typically referendums on the president and that the president's party generally loses seats. Bitzer also noted that in the 2016 election, President Donald Trump received 53 percent of the vote in the district, which according to the political scientist, is a sign of a competitive district.

More incumbent Republican state legislators will be facing **contested primaries** this May than in the 2016 primaries, while the number of incumbent Democrats facing primary challengers is similar to the previous cycle. Nine Senate Republicans and 19 House Republicans will have to win a primary in order to advance to their contested November election. Three Senate Democrats and eight House Democrats will face contested primaries.

There is some speculation that when legislators return in May for the short legislative session talks with resurface about **constitutional amendments**. Amendments that have previously been discussed pertain to a cap on income tax rates, a voter ID requirement and an amendment protecting hunting and fishing.

A trial over the legality of a North Carolina **law canceling primary elections this year for state appellate court judgeships** is scheduled for late spring. During a hearing in late February, U.S. Magistrate Judge Joi Peake set a June 7 trial date and other filing and evidence deadlines. Federal judges have allowed the General Assembly's law approved last fall to be enforced for now. A federal appeals court already scheduled arguments for March on whether that was appropriate.

A High Point University poll published on February 27 reports only a third of people say they are **paying lower taxes** under a new tax bill signed into law by President Trump. Fourteen percent say they're paying more in federal taxes, while a quarter say they've seen no change in their checks. Another quarter are not sure what to make of the new law.

According to data recently released by the UNC Carolina Population Center, **43% of people living in North Carolina were not born in the state** and the percentage of the state's total population not born in the state continues to rise with the rate up by 1% from the previous five-year estimate. In eighteen counties, more than half of residents are non-native. Leading the pack is Currituck County where three-fourths of its population was born outside of the state's borders.

The **Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)** in the NC Department of Insurance reports that in 2017, through paid staff and volunteer counselors, SHIIP:

- assisted over 102,000 Medicare recipients in making informed choices about their health care;
- saved more than \$60 million for Medicare recipients in their health care costs;
- saved consumers in North Carolina more than the total amount Congress awards to SHIPs nationwide;
- served almost 17,000 Medicare beneficiaries with disabilities; and
- counseled more than 28,000 beneficiaries with incomes below 150% of federal poverty level

As noted earlier in this *Update*, funding for the SHIIP program is at risk of being eliminated by Congress as it finalizes the FY 18 appropriations bills. Aging advocates have worked hard to communicate with our Congressional delegation about the value of the SHIIP program in North Carolina. To read more on this, click [here](#).

As of the end of January, there were 10,935 persons **waiting for services under the Home and Community Care Block Grant** administered by the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services. Of this number, 3,696 seniors were waiting for home delivered meals and 3,099 were waiting for personal care in-home services.

The **Forsyth County** Board of Commissioners voted 6-1 last week to approve preparing a strategy to **consolidate the county's social services and health boards**.

Last week the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation released its **2018 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps report** for all 100 North Carolina Counties. The New Jersey-based foundation, a philanthropy dedicated to health, scored Robeson County's overall health last out of all North Carolina counties for the third straight year. The report also noted that the more money you make, the better your health outcomes. Census figures show Wake County residents have the highest median income in the state and according to the report, it ranks as the No. 1 county by health outcomes. On the other end of the spectrum, residents of Scotland County have the lowest median income and rank No. 99 in health outcomes.

State health officials report that thru the week of March 10 there have been **305 flu related deaths** this year making this North Carolina's deadliest flu season in at least 10 years. The death rate has steadily declined in the last several weeks and several of the largest hospital systems in

North Carolina are ending child visitor restrictions put in place to try to reduce the number of flu cases.

Beginning March 1, **death certificates will reflect a change intended to accommodate members of the LGBT community**. On that date, North Carolina Vital Records will require funeral directors to file a new form of the certificate. The old form had boxes designated for the father's name and mother's name for the deceased person. The new form changes those designations to "Father/Parent Name" and "Mother/Parent Name." The state will no longer accept the old form beginning March 1, according to a document from N.C. Vital Records, a division of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Legislative Services Office has announced that all state legislators and staff members at the General Assembly will take a **mandatory workplace harassment training** course in April. House and Senate members will have a separate 90 minute online training provided by the National Conference of State Legislatures. Other staff members, including permanent and temporary employees, will have to take a 90-minute training session at the General Assembly during one of four days in April. Interns are not included in that process but will receive separate training. The training will be provided by Capital Associated Industries Inc.

A study published by the North Carolina Organization for Nurse Leaders in 2017 showed that while the state has a healthy balance of **nurses per 10,000 residents**, there are still high numbers of vacancies and staff turnover found in more rural areas.

**ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) accounts** allows people with disabilities to save up to \$100,000 in an account without having to worry about losing Supplemental Security Income. They can save up to \$450,000 in the accounts without losing Medicaid benefits. These tax-free investments -- similar to a 529 account that parents use to save for college -- allow people with disabilities and their families to save money for future housing, transportation, medical, and other expenses. People can also use the accounts to pay for eligible ongoing expenses, withdrawing money as they would from a checking account. ABLE accounts are open to people with intellectual or physical disabilities that occurred before age 26. They can open their own accounts, or parents and guardians can open accounts on their behalf, where they can save up to \$15,000 a year. Friends and family can contribute. People who receive Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits are automatically eligible.

North Carolina's hospital emergency departments experienced a nearly 40 percent increase, to 5,745, in **opioid overdose cases** from 2016 to 2017. The state Department of Health and Human Services said on March 20 that the majority of cases involved individuals who were white (85 percent), male (62 percent) and between the ages of 25 and 34 (39 percent).

**Cardinal Innovations** which oversees providers of services for mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse for more than 850,000 Medicaid enrollees in 20 counties has hired a former federal prosecutor **to review** how its former board maneuvered to pay at least \$6.1 million in **severance to former executives**. A bipartisan group of legislators, as well as

advocacy groups, have put pressure on the newly structured Cardinal board and N.C. Department of Health and Human Services to claw back the severance.

**Blue Cross and Blue Shield, the state's largest health insurer, reported its first profit ever on the Affordable Care Act**, netting about \$600 million last year on customers the company covers under the federal health care law. Blue Cross reported its ACA profit helped drive a company-wide net income of \$734 million last year. In addition to the half-million people Blue Cross covers under the ACA, the company provides insurance through large and small employers and also administers North Carolina's State Health Plan, for a customer total of 3.8 million people. Despite three years of consecutive losses on ACA plans, Blue Cross is now in the black by \$118 million because of the profit generated. Blue Cross is the only insurer who offers ACA plans in all 100 counties. To read more on this, click [here](#).

Blue Cross Blue Shields has also announced its **windfall from the new federal tax cut** will hold down rate increases in the future, but this year it will use it to give charities \$40 million for health initiatives and pay about 4,700 employees a \$1,000 bonus. The company said premiums are expected to keep rising, but by less than they would have after-tax savings are applied to most policies in 2019.

For more than a decade, the state has paid about \$33 daily per client for **adult day care** and about \$40 for adult day health care at a center that employs a registered nurse. The NC Adult Day Services Association recently made a pitch to state lawmakers to change the rule on reimbursement methods, a cumbersome process that can take a year to 18 months. The number of centers has dropped from about 125 to 85 since the rate was last capped in 2007. To learn more about this, click [here](#).

According to a 2014 University of North Carolina study, 63 percent of **state residents aged 16 to 64 with a disability were not employed**, compared to 22 percent of people without a disability. "Depending on the type and severity of the disability, individuals with a disability may face significant barriers to full labor market participation. As a consequence, North Carolinians with a disability are less likely to be employed and more likely to fall below the poverty line and rely on assistance programs than individuals without a disability," the study said.

Key legislators on the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Unemployment Insurance have indicated they are not interested in beefing up jobless benefits. A report last month found that unemployed people in North Carolina receive some of the lowest **unemployment benefit payments** in the country and receive benefits a shorter time than in nearly every other state. The state had a \$2 billion deficit in its unemployment insurance fund during the latest recession, but that fund has recovered and had \$3.17 billion in the bank as of December. State officials estimate the fund could hit \$4 billion by 2020.

The NC Utilities Commission approved an overall **rate increase** on February 23 **for Duke Energy Progress**, which serves eastern and central North Carolina. Overall, the commission cut Duke's original request of a rate increase — an average of 15 percent based on \$477 million in annual revenues — by half. How that increase is spread among Duke Energy Progress's industrial, commercial and residential customers is still to be determined. With this decision,

Duke Progress customers will pay about \$6 per month more for their electricity and about \$3 per month more for a monthly service charge.

On March 7, AARP North Carolina delivered about 1,400 **petitions to the North Carolina Utilities Commission** from residential ratepayers concerned about the steep rate hike request by Duke Carolinas which serves 2 million customers in parts of the Piedmont and Western North Carolina. It is asking to raise their rates by more than 11%.

A **temporary VA clinic**, which is expected to be open two years, re-opened in Jacksonville on March 5. The clinic will increase the capacity for patients and serve veterans 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Jacksonville area has one of the highest veteran growth rates in all of the VA.

May is **Older Americans Month**. Visit [oam.acl.gov](http://oam.acl.gov) for materials, activity ideas, and resources to help you promote and celebrate this year's theme, *Engage at Every Age*.

State Budget Director Charlie Perusse has reported that individuals paid \$165 million more in **estimated tax payments** during December and January than previously projected. His office believes the increase occurred largely because people overpaid estimated state taxes around the new year to deduct more on 2017 federal income tax returns before the federal tax overhaul law begins with 2018 returns. Perusse says stock market performance also contributed to the uptick. He expects the payment surge to mean lower payments and higher refunds in April. That could eat away revenue growth. Through December, state tax collections were basically even with projections.

**Atrium Health**, formerly known as Carolinas HealthCare System, announced on March 2 that it has **ended discussions with UNC Health Care to form a joint operating company**, citing an inability to reach an agreement to form a mega-system. The announcement comes after months of negotiations became snagged on who would control the combined company that would have had some 60 hospitals and 90,000 employees.

A recent Mason Dixon poll indicates an overwhelming majority of North Carolina voters believe that everyone should have **access to affordable health care** and would support **creation of a North Carolina health insurance product** for those working people who are in the health insurance coverage gap. According to the poll, 84% of those asked responded that everyone in the state should have access to affordable health care and 71% of those asked would support the creating a North Carolina health insurance product for the working poor.

**Rural areas face health care challenges.** That was the message from Mark Holmes who heads the Sheps Center for Health Services Research at UNC-Chapel Hill. In a recent presentation to the Legislative Committee on Access to Rural Healthcare in North Carolina he noted that rates of diabetes, opioid use and overdose deaths, heart disease, and other problems are higher in rural areas. He also noted that rural people in North Carolina die younger than people in urban areas and for the past three years, life expectancy in rural areas has actually decreased. He added that 20 counties have relatively few primary care doctors, and three have none.

A recent poll conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that people are split as to the reason **why work requirements are included in Medicaid programs** across the country. About half of those surveyed express the intent is to help save Medicaid program dollars and the other half think it helps enable people to lift themselves out of poverty.

The NC Institute of Medicine released an Issue Brief in January on the **potential impact of the individual mandate penalty repeal on insurance coverage**, the costs of health care, and population health in North Carolina. The report indicates the repeal of the mandate may result in 13 million fewer Americans with insurance and approximately 450,000 fewer North Carolinians with insurance coverage by 2027. The report notes that healthy, younger people will likely choose to forego insurance, which will ultimately result in those not eligible for subsidies (over 400% FPL) bearing the costs of the health insurance on the health exchange. The report can be found [here](#).

The NC Division of Health Service Regulation developed new rules last year for the licensure of **overnight respite care which can be provided by adult day care or adult day health care centers**. To date, two adult day programs – Southeastern Wake Adult Day Health Center in Raleigh and the Life Enrichment Center in Cleveland County – have been licensed to provide this service. Overnight respite care provided by adult day health care centers is also now a covered service under the Medicaid Community Alternatives Program for Disabled Adults (CAP/DA), and the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services is currently developing service standards and monitoring tools so that overnight respite can be an allowable service under the Home and Community Care Block Grant.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's **High Obesity Program** has given \$8.2 million to counties in 11 states where the obesity rate in the adult population is 40% or higher. Four North Carolina counties received grant money: Lee, Edgecombe, Halifax and Northampton. Obesity is a growing problem in the country and in North Carolina. One in three Americans are obese, which can contribute to Type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease and other health problems.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services on March 2 released a **request for proposal for independent enrollment broker services** that will help beneficiaries enroll in the North Carolina Medicaid and NC Health Choice managed care programs, scheduled to launch July 1, 2019. The selected independent enrollment broker will help beneficiaries and their families understand Medicaid managed care, including choosing a health plan and primary care physician that is best for their personal situation. Enrollment broker services will be available to new beneficiaries and current beneficiaries who are transitioning from the current fee-for-service structure into managed care.

North Carolina Supreme Court has decided a **lawsuit filed by medical offices that treat state Medicaid patients** over a new billing system they say failed to pay them can't go to trial. The medical practices say they weren't getting reimbursed for work when the "NCTracks" system began in mid-2013 so they filed a class action lawsuit against the state health agency and system vendor. The Court ruled that the providers had not exhausted administrative appeals within state government to get what they believe is due them.

NC Rural Center president and CEO Patrick Woodie and John Coggin, NC Rural Center director of advocacy, are nearing the end of an **80-county tour of the state to discuss the rural issue**. Information gathered at these county meetings is meant to shape the way the center works with counties and lobbies legislators over the next year. Primary issues identified in every county include aging infrastructure; lack of quality, affordable housing; access to health care; and broadband Internet access.

United Way of North Carolina and RTI International recently launched an interactive tool called "**Our Money Needs Calculator**" to help North Carolina families determine how much money they need to make ends meet. The calculator takes into account family size and location, and also provides users with links to financial resources.

The National Center for Assisted Living has released **four educational issue briefs to support provider and state efforts to ensure assisted living is considered an appropriate HCBS setting**. Topics include:

- Resolving Differences Between State Assisted Living Licensure Requirements and HCBS Settings Rule
- An Effective Person-Centered Planning Process Is Key for Memory Care Units
- Ensuring Individual Choice and Privacy
- Community Integration Options and Resident Choice Are Key in Assessment of Co-Located Assisted Living Communities and Inpatient Facilities

[Click here](#) to access the issue briefs.

The United States Senate Special Committee on Aging has released a **report about fighting fraud and scams that target our nation's older adults**. The Committee maintains a toll-free Fraud Hotline: [1-855-303-9470](tel:1-855-303-9470). In recent years, the Committee has held hearings examining telephone scams, tax-related schemes, Social Security fraud, and the implications of payday loans and pension advances for older adults, among other issues. This Fraud Book features the top ten scams reported to the Hotline last year. In addition, it includes resources for consumers who wish to report scams to state and federal agencies. [Click here](#) to access the report.

The Administration for Community Living's Administration on Aging announces the release of a **new funding opportunity for our Alzheimer's Disease Initiative – Specialized Supportive Services (ADI-SSS) program**. The program is designed to expand existing dementia capability in home and community-based service provision organizations. Successful applicants will include activities identified by the National Alzheimer's Project Act Advisory Committee that address specific dementia service gaps in support of people living with or at risk of developing Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia (ADRD) and their caregivers. For more information, click [here](#).

The Alzheimer's Association's **2018 Dementia Care Practice Recommendations** have been released. These recommendations are meant to better define quality care across all care settings throughout the disease course. The recommendations address quality care practices in several areas, including the areas of detection and diagnosis, assessment and care planning, medical management, information-education/support, ongoing care, staffing, therapeutic environment and safety, and transitions and coordination of services. [Click here](#) to read more

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is requesting **public input about Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans** through April 12. To learn more, click [here](#).

### **Recent Legislative Committee Meetings:**

- Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services – February 28, 2018 Meeting: [Agenda](#) and [Handouts](#)
- Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services – March 13, 2018 Meeting: [Agenda](#) and [Handouts](#)
- Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid and NC Health Choice – February 28, 2018 Meeting: [Agenda and Handouts](#)
- Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid and NC Health Choice – March 13, 2018 Meeting: [Agenda and Handouts](#)
- Legislative Research Committee on Access to Healthcare in Rural North Carolina – March 15, 2018: [Agenda and Handouts](#)

## **People in the News**

**Dot Crawford**, long-time aging advocate and the recipient of the Coalition’s first Pioneer Award, will turn 100 years old in April. She is still going strong as demonstrated by the fact she attended the Senior Tar Heel Legislature meeting in Chapel Hill this month. If you would like to send Dot a birthday greeting, it can be sent to her attention at PO Box 149, Franklin, NC 27844.



**Sen. Angela Bryant** (D-Nash) has resigned her Senate seat effective March 18. She has been named by Gov. Roy Cooper to the state’s Post-Release Supervision and Parole Commission. She served in the legislature for six terms – first in House District 7 and then in Senate District 4. She had announced that she would not seek re-election after redistricting made her district which includes parts of Halifax, Nash, Vance, Wilson, and Warren counties more favorable to Republicans. Democratic Party leaders will vote on who will replace her for the remainder of her term. Judge Milton “Toby” Fitch, a former House member and newly retired Superior Court judge, is running for the seat in November and says he intends to seek appointment to the seat.

**Van Braxton**, Director of the Seniors’ Health Insurance Information Program and Deputy Commissioner of the NC Department of Insurance has announced his retirement the end of April.

**David Litman**, Hard of Hearing Services Coordinator for the NC Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Division's liaison to the Coalition on Aging, has left the Division effective March 12.

**Ray Riordan** has been named as the new Vice President for NC Operations for The Carolinas Center effective April 2. He comes to The Carolinas Center from the American Cancer Society (ACS) Cancer Action Network where he served as the NC Director of Grassroots Lobbying and Advocacy for the past four years. Prior to joining ACS, he served in the North Carolina Office of the Governor where he worked with non-profits, and faith-based and local government organizations across the state to coordinate and implement community service programs to meet unmet community needs.

**Cole Hughes** has been hired as the new political director for the North Carolina Chamber. He will direct the Chamber's political program, coordinate with the government affairs team to advance the Chamber's legislative agenda, and lead efforts to recruit and elect pro-business candidates statewide. He comes to the NC Chamber from the political database and grassroots consulting firm i360. He previously served as the deputy political director for North Carolina Republican Party House Caucus.

## **Upcoming Meetings/Events**

March is March for Meals (on Wheels) Month and Community Champions (for Meals) Week is March 19-23. For information go to [www.marchformeals.com](http://www.marchformeals.com)

March is National Social Work Month

March is National Nutrition Month

March 21, 2018 – NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse Meeting at Triangle J Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging – 4307 Emperor Blvd. #10, Durham, NC from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

March 24, 2018 - Friends of Residents in Long Term Care - Conversation with Friends - at Hope Presbyterian Church, Winston-Salem, NC

March 26, 2018 – Care4Carolina Meeting – at NC Healthcare Association (formerly NC Hospital Association) located at 2400 Weston Parkway, Cary, NC from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

March 26-29, 2018 - American Society on Aging's '[Aging in America Conference](#)' in San Francisco, CA.

March 27, 2018 - Governor's Advisory Council on Aging - meeting at the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services, 693 Palmer Drive (Taylor Hall on Dix campus) in Raleigh

March 27, 2018 – NC State University College of Education and Department of Social Work 2018 Spring Summit “Strengthening Families, Communities and the Schools That Serve Them” at NC State University Club, 4200 Hillsborough St., Raleigh, NC from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Keynote by NC Attorney General Josh Stein)

March 29, 2018 - Mental Illness in Older Adults: [Psychosocial Impacts on Patients and Caregivers](#) at The Education Center at Eastern AHEC, Greenville, NC

April 4, 2018 – Care4Carolina Advocacy Training – at McConnell-Raab Hope Lodge, 930 Wellness Drive, A, Greenville, NC from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

April 10-14, 2018 - Southern Gerontological Society Meeting at Lake Lanier in Buford, Georgia

APRIL 12, 2018 - CMS’ Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office (MMCO) webinar: Providing Culturally Competent Care: Meeting the LTSS Needs of Dually Eligible Beneficiaries from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. Click [here](#) to register and to get more information.

April 13, 2018 – Care4Carolina Advocacy Training – a American Cancer Society, 1901 Brunswick Ave., Suite 100, Charlotte, NC from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

April 12-13, 2018 - NC PACE Association 5th Annual Conference - Setting the PACE 2018: A Decade of Progress, A Future of Promise - at Sheraton Imperial in Durham. For more information go to [www.ncpace.org](http://www.ncpace.org)

April 14 – May 19, 2018 – Powerful Tools for Caregivers Educational Programs – Carillon Assisted Living at 3218 Heritage Trade Drive, Wake Forest, NC from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Register at (919) 554-4111

April 18, 2018 – Advanced Illness Management Summit: “Innovative Care Delivery and Community Partnerships at Queens University of Charlotte, 1900 Selwyn Avenue, Charlotte, NC; [CLICK HERE](#) for information

April 19, 2018 – 2018 National Institute of Senior Centers Programs of Excellence Webinar from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. – Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

April 28, 2018 -NC Baptist Aging Ministry (NC BAM) Rampin' Up 2018 - (building wheel chair ramps across state)

April 30 – May 1, 2018 – NC Conference on Homelessness, “Bringing It Home: Ending Homelessness in North Carolina” at McMimmon Center in Raleigh, NC

Additional Future Item Not Previously Added to Calendar:

September 21, 2018 - High Country Care Transitions Summit at Grandfather Golf and Country Club, Linville, NC

For a complete list of meetings and events, click [here](#).

## **Articles/News Stories/Resources**

[Implementing Evidence Based Programs to Address Chronic Pain](#) – NCOA Issue Brief

[Long-Term Support and Services](#) – AARP Public Policy Institute Fact Sheet

[State Studies Find Home and Community-Based Services to be Cost-Effective](#) – AARP Public Policy Institute Spotlight

[6 Tips for Making Mealtime Easier for People with Alzheimer’s](#)

[Managing Money Problems in Alzheimer’s Disease](#)

[A Bipartisan Blueprint for Improving Our Nation's Health System Performance](#)

[\*\*The Health 202: Hey Republicans, Medicaid is a key way to tackle opioid abuse\*\*](#)

[\*\*Debate stirs over ‘America’s Harvest Box,’ food benefit plan\*\*](#)

[\*\*On Medicaid? Amazon offers recipients a Prime discount\*\*](#)

[\*\*Cigna Agrees to Buy Express Scripts in Major Health Care Deal\*\*](#)

[\*\*The Medicaid Freeloader Fallacy\*\*](#)

[\*\*White House wants user-friendly electronic health records\*\*](#)

[\*\*UnitedHealthcare to pass drug rebates on to some customers\*\*](#)

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[\*\*Can ride-hailing companies cure medical transportation woes?\*\*](#)

[\*\*DOJ will share Rx painkiller data for opioid lawsuit talks\*\*](#)

[\*\*Uber starts offering rides to the doctor\*\*](#)

[\*\*The Health 202: Many don't buy Trump administration's anti-poverty Medicaid argument\*\*](#)

[\*\*A Big Divergence Is Coming in Health Care Among States\*\*](#)

[\*\*FDA already working on vaccines for next flu season amid this year's nightmare\*\*](#)

[\*\*FDA to expand medication-assisted therapy for opioid addicts\*\*](#)

[Evaluations Of Medicaid Experiments By States, CMS Are Weak, GAO Says](#)  
[Drug overdoses contribute to record number of organ donors](#)

[GOP, Dem governors push national health care compromise](#)

[US panel recommends new adult vaccine against hepatitis B](#)

[Short-term health plans skirting ACA-required benefits and protections to be expanded](#)

[The Health 202: Trump administration pulls back from key Medicare goals](#)

[Ensuring Beneficiary Health and Safety in Group Homes Through State Implementation of Comprehensive Compliance Oversight](#)

## **North Carolina Related:**

[Running the Numbers: Aging and Cost of Health Care in North Carolina](#) - NC Medical Journal, January/February 2018

[Addressing the Root Cause: Rising Health Care Costs and Social Determinants of Health](#) – NC Medical Journal, January/February 2018

[Can Consumers Be Smarter Health Care Shoppers in the Quest for Cost Containment](#) - NC Medical Journal, January/February 2018

[Costs at the End of Life: Perspectives for North Carolina](#) - NC Medical Journal, January/February 2018

[Rural Health Care Costs: Are They Higher and Why Might They Differ from Urban Health Care Costs?](#) - NC Medical Journal, January/February 2018

[Kroger and Harris Teeter Pharmacies Join DHHS in Fight Against Prescription Drug Misuse](#)

[Opportunities Available for Assistance During Tax Season](#)

[Rural North Carolina Faces Political, Economic Struggle](#)

[Assisted-living employee charged for second time with exploiting an elderly person](#)

[Cooper's cabinet secretaries see 10% pay raise after one year on job](#)

[Millions still available to help low-income families pay heating bills](#)

## North Carolina's DHHS Secretary Talks Healthcare in NC

N&O panel will focus on bridging N.C.'s urban-rural divide – Panel on March 28 at 7:00 p.m. at NC Museum of History in Raleigh

### ***NC Health News Stories:***

- [SHIP, Seniors' Source for Medicare Advice, Faces Budget Axe](#)
- [Opioid-related Crime Takes Toll on Seniors Across NC](#)
- [Blue Cross Blue Shield Records Profits on ACA Plans](#)
- [Beware Scammers As New Medicare Card Arrive](#)
- [Trump's Historic Medicaid Shift Goes Beyond Work Requirements](#)
- [UNC Clarifies Comments on Health Care Cost Control](#)
- [Much-needed Social Services Reforms Underway\]](#)
- [State Employees to See Some Changes with State Health Plan](#)
- [Behavioral Health Plan Still Needs Refining](#)
- [Adult Day Care Promotes Seniors' Health and Sense of Community, But Faces Challenges](#)
- [By the Numbers: Incarcerating Mental Illness and Addiction](#)
- [Mapping Local Air Pollution](#)
- [UNC Health Care Starts Making Its Mark on Eden Hospital](#)
- [Choices for End-of-Life Require Conversation, Paperwork](#)
- [Health Care Providers Battling Cyber Attackers](#)

### **NPR Aging Series:**

- Shingles Is Nasty, And The New Vaccine Works Well. Why Do Adults Avoid Shots?
- Guys, We Have A Problem: How American Masculinity Creates Lonely Men

- Are There Risks From Secondhand Marijuana Smoke? Early Science Says Yes
- More Than A Job: Home Care For A Mom With Alzheimer's Disease
- Lifting Medicare's Annual Limits On Physical Therapy Helps Ease Patients' Pain
- Hearts Get 'Younger,' Even At Middle Age, With Exercise
- Questions And Answers About Opioids And Chronic Pain
- The Opioid Crisis Is Surging In Black, Urban Communities
- Too Late To Operate? Surgery Near End Of Life Is Common, Costly
- Your 2018 Health Plan Must Comply With ACA Rules Or You Risk Tax Penalties
- When Wildfire Smoke Invades, Who Should Pay To Clean Indoor Air?
- Montana Wildfires Provide A Wealth Of Data On Health Effects Of Smoke Exposure
- Anthem Says Eye Surgeons Should Monitor Cataract Anesthesia Themselves

**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:

### **2018 Meeting Dates**

**March 23**  
**April 20**  
**May 18**  
**June 22**  
**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. Go to:

<http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/membership.aspx>.

You can 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. A second option is to 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](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 President, at [mmbethel72@gmail.com](mailto:mmbethel72@gmail.com). The Coalition also posts a master calendar of aging related events and activities on the Coalition's 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/>.