



## COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

**NC Coalition on Aging  
March Update – March 22, 2019**

**Coalition Steps Up Advocacy for Priority Issues:** In the last month, the Coalition has been actively engaged in numerous efforts to advocate for our priority issues for this legislative session. Personal visits have been conducted with numerous legislators to share information on our priorities and to seek their support for legislation pertaining to our issues. Several bills have been or will be introduced relative to these priorities.

On February 26, Coalition members gathered for our annual Day at the Legislature (Click [here](#) to see an article by Tommy Goldsmith with NC Health News about this). Members had the opportunity to visit each legislator's office to talk about priorities. Copies of our fact sheet and information on the demographics of aging in North Carolina were shared. In preparation for this special Day, Coalition member Ray Riordan with The Carolinas Center provided training on February 22 to interested Coalition members on how to be an effective advocate.



Ana Pardo with the NC Justice Center shares information with a legislative assistant about the Coalition's legislative priorities at our Day at the Legislature.



Alan Winstead with Meals on Wheels of Wake County, and his student intern, Laura Hagman from Meredith College, debrief following the completion of visits with legislators on their list.

On March 5, Coalition Executive Director Mary Bethel made a presentation to the House Aging Committee about the Coalition's priorities. Bills related to aging are frequently heard by this committee which is chaired by Rep. Pat Hurley (R-Randolph). This meeting

was attended by many Coalition members who took the opportunity to talk one-on-one with legislators before and after the meeting.



Mary Bethel (center) addresses the House Aging Committee as Rep. Pat Hurley (left) and former Representative Nelson Dollar (bottom right), now an advisor to Speaker Tim Moore, look on.



Bill Lamb (left), Past President of the Coalition, and Ben Popkin (back to camera), lobbyist for Friends of Residents in Long-Term Care, confer with Rep. Greg Murphy, Committee member and Senior Chair of the Appropriations Sub-Committee on Health and Human Services after the Committee meeting.

Mary Bethel and Coalition member Roger Manus, chair of the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging, met with NC Department of Health and Humans Services Secretary Mandy Cohen on March 11 to talk about the Coalition's priorities and efforts to move the needle on aging issues in the state. They were joined at this meeting by Tara Myers, Deputy Secretary for Human Services in the Department, and Joyce Massey-Smith, Director of the state Division of Aging and Adult Services.

On March 15, the importance of advocacy for aging issues was the focus of the closing session at the annual meeting of the NC Association on Aging held in Asheville. Coalition member Randolph Cloud who is the lobbyist for the Association, Joyce-Massey Smith, and Mary Bethel participated in a question and answer session moderated by Dennis Streets, former director of the Division of Aging and Adult Services and current director of the Chatham County Office on Aging, about aging issues, how the legislative process works, and how to be effective advocates. Randolph and Mary shared advocacy strategies emphasizing the importance of developing relationships with elected officials and putting a face on aging issues in the community. Conference participants were encouraged to invite members of the legislature to see first-hand how their programs operate and who they serve. Particular attention was directed to spotlighting programs and services funded by the Home and Community Care Block Grant.

Many Coalition agency and organization members are being very pro-active in their efforts to take their message to legislators and community leaders about the importance of aging services and the need for state support for these. As an example, the Meals on Wheels Association of North Carolina has been engaged in the March for Meals observance this week, March 18-22. As a part of this effort, Meals on Wheels programs across the state are inviting local/state/federal officials, local celebrates, and other prominent community figures to deliver meals to raise awareness about this service which is critical to enabling many home-bound older adults to stay in their homes.



As a part of the March for Meals observance, Sen. Sam Searcy (D-Wake) met with Meals on Wheels volunteers and congregate nutrition site participants at the Pine Acres Community Center in Fuquay-Varina on March 19. He is pictured here with Coalition member Teresa Troup and her husband Garman, who are Fuquay-Varina residents, and Campbell University Social Work students Wiata Bond and Jarrah Belen who had just completed delivering meals to homebound seniors in the area.

**Bill Introduced to Reduce Wait List for Home and Community Based Services:** Rep. Donna White (R-Johnston) took the lead to introduce legislation, [H.B. 335](#), to appropriate \$7 million in recurring funding for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 fiscal years to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Aging and Adult Services, to reduce the waiting list for Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) services statewide. In addition to Rep. White, other sponsors of the legislation are Rep. Josh Dobson (R-Avery, McDowell, Mitchell) and Rep. Larry Potts (R-Davidson). All three sponsors are Appropriation Committee leaders in the House. There are 21 co-sponsors of the bill. Rep. White knows first hand about the need for funding for the Block Grant as she previously worked at the Division of Aging and Adult Services. In January of this year, there were 10,600 seniors on the waiting list for Block Grant services. The largest waiting lists were for home delivered meals and in-home aide services.

**Rep. Josh Dobson Slated for Today's March Coalition Meeting:** Rep. Josh Dobson (R-Avery, McDowell, Mitchell) who has been a supporter of numerous Coalition priorities over the years, including being a sponsor of H.B. 335 this year, will be the guest speaker at the Coalition's meeting today.



Rep. Dobson

Rep. Dobson is a chair of the House Appropriations Committee, a Vice-Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, a Chair of the House Health Committee, and a Vice-Chair of the House Pensions and Retirement Committee. He also serves on the House Committees on Aging, Alcohol Beverage Control, and State and Local Government. In addition, he is co-chair of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and is a member of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid and NC Health Choice.

The meeting will be from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in Room 104 of the Brown Building that is located at 801 Biggs Drive (Dix campus) in Raleigh. The call in number for those who cannot attend in person is 1-866-215-3402 and the passcode is 5080266#.

**Budget Developments:** Republican leaders have announced their proposed budget numbers for the 2019-2020 state budget and it appears they want to spend hundreds of millions of dollars less next year than Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper proposed in his state government budget which was released on March 6. On Tuesday, House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate leader Phil Berger announced that top leaders have agreed that expenditures for the year starting July 1 will be a little over \$24 billion. That bottom-line figure doesn't include expected debt service. With the debt left aside, the amount would represent a roughly 3.5 percent increase over this year's budget, with debt also removed. The Governor's budget plan would spend \$25.2 billion next year, but take out debt service and that figure falls to \$24.5 billion. Legislators ultimately will approve a final spending plan and send it to Cooper's desk. Appropriation Committees meetings are currently in full swing in preparation for crafting Committee budgets. Aging advocates were disappointed that the Governor's budget was lean on funding for aging programs and services. The budgets only new proposal called for adding general fund revenues in the amount of \$969,549 to be used to continue non-recurring funding to the Home and Community Care Block Grant. See an [article](#) by Tommy Goldsmith with NC Health News for more on this. (THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 3/19/19)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>House Aging Committee Meeting</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tuesday, March 26, 2019</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2:00 p.m. – 1228/1327 Legislative Building</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Topics:</b></p> <p><b>Personal Needs Allowance for Long Term Care Residents</b></p> <p><b>Ombudsman Program</b></p> <p><b>Medicaid Personal Needs Allowance</b></p>
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**Bills of Interest Filed:** The following is a list of some of the bills that have been filed that may be of particular interest to aging advocates. To find out information about a bill, click [here](#), and scroll down to the bill number.

- H.B. 5/S.B. 3 – Chose the Medicaid Coverage Gap
- H.B. 43/S.B. 43 – Establish Standards for Surgical Technology
- H.B. 46 – Economics Security Act of 2019

H.B. 69 – Nonpartisan Redistricting Commission  
H.B. 70 – Delay NC HealthConnex for Certain Providers  
H.B. 130/S.B. 66 – Allow Game Nights  
H.B. 140 – The Fair Act  
H.B. 169 – 2019 Appropriations Act  
H.B. 178/S.B. 143 – The SAVE Act  
H.B. 180 – State Benefits/Pension Revisions –AB  
H.B. 184 – Study State Health Plan Design  
H.B. 188 – Retirement Administrative Changes 2019 – AB  
H.B. 195 – Board of Nursing Technical Changes - AB  
HB 203 – Amend Social Work Practice Act – AB  
H.B. 213 – Equal Tax Treatment of Gov’t Retirees  
H.B. 214 – Retirement Technical Corrections Act of 2019 – AB  
H.B. 223/S.B. 162 – Loan Origination/Late Payment Charge Changes  
H.B. 228/S.B. 178 – Modernize Laws Pertaining to NC Medical Board - AB  
H.B. 269/S.B. 161 – Enact North Carolina Caregiver Act  
H.B. 291 – Continue Social Services Regional Supervision Work Group  
H.B. 292 – Assess NC FAST Dashboard Upgrade  
H.B. 320/S.B. 212 – Suspend Child Welfare/Aging Components/NC FAST  
H.B. 325/S.B. 302 – Update Service and Care Plan Requirements/Adult Care Home Residents  
H.B. 238 – Reinstate Earned Income Tax Credit  
H.B. 250 – Department of Health and Human Services Revisions – AB  
H.B. 293 – Amend Funeral Procession Law  
H.B. 294 – Partisan Elections Act  
H.B. 318 - Opioid Prescription & Treatment Opt Out Act  
H.B. 335 – Reduce Waitlist for HCCBG Services/Funds  
H.B. 397 – Revise Approval of Student/Employee ID/Voting  
HB 403 – Inter-Generational Community Center Funds  
H.B. 410 – Require Generators/Nursing and Adult Care Homes  
H.B. 422/S.B. 234 – Healthy Families & Workplaces/Paid Sick Days  
H.B. 423/S.B. 223 – Caregiver Relief Act  
S.B. 50 – Reinstate Earned Income Tax Credit  
S.B. 61 – Guardian/Parent Authorized Plate  
S.B. 86 – Small Business Healthcare Act  
S.B. 103 – 2019 Appropriations Act  
S.B. 109 – 2019 Appropriations Act  
S.B. 113 – DMV/Emergency Contact Information  
S.B. 128 – 2019 Appropriations Act  
S.B. 130 – State Employees/Paid Parental Leave  
S.B. 137 – Economic Security Act  
S.B. 213 – Handicapped Parking Decal  
S.B. 223 – Caregiver Relief Act  
S.B. 232 – Tracking Outcomes of Veterans Programs  
S.B. 243 – Give Retirees 5% COLA/Funds  
S.B. 252 – Dental Bill of Rights  
S.B. 261 – Nonprofit Charitable Activity Auth. Act

S.B. 291 – Living Wage for NC Workers  
S.B. 303 – State Emps./No Payroll Dues Deduction  
S.B. 304 – Modify Physical Therapy Definition  
S.B. 312 – Transfer on Death Deeds  
S.B. 313 – Perf. Guar. To Streamline Afford. Housing  
S.B. 316 – Affordable Housing  
S.B. 317 – Senior Citizen Class Audit Changes

**Personal Needs Allowances:** An [article](#) by Tommy Goldsmith with *NC Health News* and an [article](#) by Lynn Bonner with the *News and Observer* highlight the advocacy efforts by Friends of Residents in Long Term Care to push for an increase in the personal needs allowance for residents of nursing homes and adult care home who are on Medicaid or State-County Special Assistance. The articles noted that people on these public assistance programs who live in adult care homes get \$66 a month to pay for prescription drugs, their telephones, deodorant, clothes, and other personal items. That \$66 does not go far, so many people end up relying on charities, family members, or the adult care homes themselves to provide some essentials. Often, they go without some of the basics. The personal needs allowance for people in nursing homes sits at the federal minimum of \$30 a month. North Carolina is one of the few states that has not added to the minimum set in the late 1980s. For people in North Carolina nursing homes, Friends of Residents want a \$40 increase, to \$70 a month. Friends of Residents wants the legislature to include the funding in the state budget to increase the allowance for people living in these facilities. Coalition member Margaret Toman had a nice letter to editor of the *News and Observer* on March 13 in support of the increase in the allowance.

**Retiree State Health Plan Ruling:** An appeals court ruled on March 5 that a former North Carolina Supreme Court chief justice and other retired state government workers and teachers aren't exempted from paying health insurance premiums because they had a deal with the state to keep their benefits unchanged. The state Court of Appeals said retirees don't have a contract preventing them from being forced to pay part of their health insurance costs under a law passed in 2011. A three-judge panel ruled unanimously that there is no contractual obligation limiting the State Health Plan covering more than 700,000 employees, retirees and their dependents. "Retired state employees are promised nothing more than equal access to health care benefits on an equal basis with active state employees," Judge John Tyson wrote in the ruling for himself and Judges Wanda Bryant and Robert Hunter. Retirees, including former Chief Justice I. Beverly Lake, sued in 2012 after the legislature directed the state employee health insurance plan to mandate that they make monthly contributions to receive what had been standard insurance coverage. The retirees claimed the state had agreed to a non-amendable contract that entitled them to premium-free health benefits for the rest of their lives under a health care plan in which the former workers paid 20 percent of their co-insurance. Retirees still have access to premium-free options in a 70/30 plan and, if qualified, to a Medicare Advantage plan. Active state employees have no premium-free health care options, the judges said. The appeals court reversed a 2017 decision by Gaston County Superior Court Judge Edwin Wilson that retirees had a contractual right to receive the standard coverage without a premium. State Treasurer Dale Folwell, whose office includes the State Health Plan, estimated in 2017 that with more than 220,000 people covered by the lawsuit, Wilson's decision could cost state taxpayers more than \$100 million, plus much more to cover the higher cost for retiree coverage in the future. (Emery P. Dalesio, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 3/05/19)

**Awards Presented by State Aging Agency:** The NC Division of Aging and Adult Services has presented recognition awards for more than 25 years to affirm the contributions that mark significant achievements in North Carolina’s efforts to improve services to older adults. “This year’s winners have continued our commitment to improving the lives of older adults and adults with disabilities,” said DAAS Director Joyce Massey-Smith. “These awards highlight some of the individuals and organizations who’ve created opportunities for older adults and improved the lives of those who are most vulnerable.”

The **George L. Maddox Award**, presented each year to individuals, organizations or communities that have excelled in meeting the needs of older citizens in the state, was presented to Nimish G. Bhatt, founder and executive director of the Universal Institute for Successful Aging of the Carolinas. Bhatt was cited for his work at the Charlotte-based nonprofit that focused on the health and wellness of Asian seniors and for providing access to health care, nutrition, transportation and affordable housing. Bhatt also works with local medical practices to integrate holistic measures that improve the health and wellness of seniors in the community.

The Chatham County Council on Aging, a nonprofit that has served seniors and their families since 1974, received the 2018 **Ernest B. Messer Award**. The award recognizes individual communities for services provided to their aging populations. The council developed partnerships with local organizations, county offices and community groups to create the Chatham County Collaborative for At-Risk Adults and the Chatham Health Alliance, both of which are new resources for Chatham high-risk cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation of at-risk adults. The alliance focuses on health, mental health access and obesity, and it has developed partnerships with universities and community colleges in the area.

The Rethinking Guardianship Statewide Stakeholders Group received the 2018 **Dorothy R. Crawford Award**, which recognizes an individual or organization that has developed innovative strategies related to, or having a significant impact on, the lives of older adults through Adult Protective Services or guardianship. The group was cited for its work to ensure that the rights of individuals with disabilities are equal under the law to those without disabilities. The group operates with a standard of core concepts and principles that includes autonomy, liberty, dignity, presumption of competence and right to lifetime decision making support for individuals under guardianship or less restrictive alternatives. (NC DHHS Press Release, 3/8/19)

**NC Association on Aging Awards:** The closing session of the NC Association on Aging’s Annual Conference in Asheville on March 15 provided the setting for the presentation of the Association’s annual awards for excellence in the field of aging. Awards were presented to the following:

- The **Shining Star Award** was presented to Ron Bellini, Nutrition Programs Assistant Manager with Davidson County Senior Services in Lexington.
- The **Guiding Star Award** went to Annette Eubanks, Director of the Mid-East Commission Area Agency on Aging in Washington.
- The **Rising Star Award** recipient was Amanda Swanger, Aging Transitions Manager at the Rufty-Holmes Senior Center in Salisbury.
- The **Rock Star Award** was won by Dr. Louise Gooche, Past Chair of the North Carolina Senior Games, Inc. Board of Directors, from Durham.

- The **Reaching for the Stars – Innovative Program Award** was awarded to the Connections Program at Senior Services, Inc. in Winston-Salem.

**Pension Change:** *CNN Business* [reported](#) on Wednesday that with no fanfare in early March, the Treasury Department [issued a notice](#) that allows employers to buy out current retirees from their pensions with a one-time lump sum payment. The decision reverses [Obama-era guidance](#), issued in 2015, that had effectively banned the practice after officials determined that lump-sum payments often shortchanged seniors. Advocates for the older adults worry that millions of people receiving monthly pension checks could be at risk. "Permitting plans — for their own financial benefit — to replace joint and survivor or other annuities with lump-sum payments will reduce the retirement security of both workers and their spouses," AARP Legislative Counsel David Certner said.

Pensions, which are insured by the federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation in case employers go bankrupt, [still cover](#) 26.2 million people across 23,400 single-employer plans. But that number has been shrinking faster than it would naturally as companies close their plans to new hires. The reason for this is that pensions are big liabilities for companies, which Wall Street ratings agencies don't like. Federal law gives employers an out. Companies can offload their pension obligations to the private sector by purchasing an annuity plan for each retiree from an insurance company. Or, for an even cheaper option, they can offer their employees a lump sum up front according to a formula that approximates how much a retiree would receive if they lived an average number of years. Pension rights advocates note that those taking a lump sum cannot replicate the annuity they get from a pension plan as they get 20% to 30% less than the pension could buy and it's basically impossible to try to regain that in the stock market.

In 2015, after experts and advocates [raised these concerns](#), the Treasury Department announced that it planned to write additional rules around lump-sum buyouts that would be retroactive to the date of the notice. That effectively put an end to the practice of offering lump sums to people who have already retired (offering them at the outset of retirement remained allowed). That is, until March 6, when the Trump administration's Treasury said it didn't plan to issue the rules after all. That move could unleash a torrent of new lump-sum offers.

**President's Budget Request Cuts Programs for Seniors :** The President's budget request was released March 11, and it proposes significant cuts to senior programs. Similar to last year, the FY20 budget request proposes eliminating Falls Prevention and CDSME funding at the Administration for Community Living. It also eliminates the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), and the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). Funding for the Medicare State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) would not be eliminated, but would be cut by \$13 million—27%. Additionally, over 10 years, Medicare would be cut by an estimated \$818 billion, Medicaid by over \$1.5 trillion, and SNAP by \$220 billion. Members of Congress have declared the proposal "dead on arrival," and aging advocacy groups will strongly oppose these major cuts to programs which older adults rely on. [See a comparison of funding levels](#) for FY18, FY19, and FY20 (proposed). (NCOA Week, 3/12/19)

**Affordable Housing Shortage:** This month the National Low Income Housing Coalition released its annual report, [The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes 2019](#). The report reveals a national

housing shortage of nearly a million affordable and available rental homes for our nation's extremely low-income (ELI) renter households, one-quarter of all renters in the U.S. This severe shortage forces 71% of our poorest families – seniors, people with disabilities, and low-wage families – to be severely housing cost-burdened, spending more than half of their incomes on their rent and utilities and leaving them insufficient resources for food, medicines, and other basic necessities. In North Carolina there are 347,105 ELI households but only 150,874 affordable rental homes available to them. That is a gap of 196,231 units in the North Carolina that are available and affordable. Put another way, there is a deficit of 43 affordable and available rental homes for every 100 ELI households. Nearly 70% of all of North Carolina's ELI households are severely cost-burdened, meaning they pay more than half of their income on housing. The result is housing instability, evictions, and in the worst cases homelessness. The gap in North Carolina cities: Charlotte, NC has 68,681 ELI households, and a gap of 46,484 available and affordable units; and Raleigh, NC has 31,218 ELI households, and a gap of 23,065 available and affordable units. The Coalition has identified addressing housing needs as one of our priority issues and this report further points out the challenge we face in our state in this area. (NC Housing Coalition, 3/14/18)

## **Other News and Updates**

**April Food and Nutrition Benefits to Be Issued Early for Some; Normal Schedule Resumes in May:** Because of the federal government shutdown at the beginning of the year, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services continues to adjust distribution schedules for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits. For the month of April, families and individuals who normally receive FNS benefits from the first through the 11th of the month will receive benefits on their normal cycle. Those scheduled to receive benefits from the 12th of the month through the 21st will receive them on April 12. To assure all enrolled families and individuals could continue to access food during the shutdown, early distributions were made in February. The schedule was adjusted in March and April to minimize the impact of the early distributions. All families will resume their normal FNS distribution schedule in May. There is no change in the amount of benefits available to beneficiaries due to the schedule changes.

**Medicaid Advocacy:** The group NC Fund for a Conservative Future, which is led by longtime Republican Consultant Dee Stewart, is advocating for Medicaid expansion. Stewart, who has worked for U.S. Rep. Patrick McHenry and House Rules Chairman David Lewis, R-Harnett, has issued a news release to tout a poll conducted by another well-known Republican consultant, Paul Shumaker. The poll found that 72 percent of voters support Medicaid expansion, which the initial question described as a measure "so that more people can qualify for this coverage." About 90 percent of Democrats supported expansion, as well as 67 percent of unaffiliated voters and 52 percent of Republicans. The results are similar to other recent polls on Medicaid expansion, but the Shumaker poll also tested various talking points supporting and opposing expansion. "What we found was overall support remained above 70 percent after voters heard both sides of the argument," Stewart said in a news release. One of the opposing arguments that altered responses in the poll was "while the federal government is paying for 90 percent of the program, the US has a 20 trillion dollar debt and Congress could decide to stop paying at any point in time, leaving North Carolina taxpayers to foot the entire bill." That statement elicited opposition from 55 percent of voters surveyed, but that number changed after the survey listed other pros and cons.

Gov. Cooper's proposed budget calls for the expansion of Medicaid. A group of Democratic state legislators submitted identical Medicaid expansion bills, H.B. 5 and S.B. 3, on the first formal day of this session of the General Assembly. The primary sponsors of the House bill said all Democratic members support it. Rep. Donny Lambeth, R-Forsyth, also plans to reintroduce his "Carolina Cares" Medicaid expansion bill that would contain a work requirement for some people to receive benefits. He has said his bill would work "more like an insurance product for those working who can pay a portion of the cost, and the benefits and coverage are built around preventive and wellness care. Closing the health insurance coverage gap is a priority of the Coalition on Aging this legislative session. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 3/19/19)

**Medicaid Expansion and Amendment Rules:** Some Senate Republicans are suggesting that further consideration of Medicaid expansion might violate the chamber's rules after Senators voted along party lines to table a Medicaid amendment in another health insurance bill. As the Senate debated S.B. 86 which would allow more small businesses to join together in association health insurance plans, Sen. Kirk DeViere, D-Cumberland, proposed an amendment that would insert Senate Democrats' proposed Medicaid expansion bill into the small business insurance legislation. The amendment was tabled after Sen. Dan Bishop, R-Mecklenburg and a sponsor of the insurance bill, said that "Medicaid expansion is a worthy issue to debate, but it's a totally separate issue." The defeat of DeViere's amendment prompted Senate staffer Brent Woodcox to point out that Senate rules say that legislation in tabled amendments "shall not be embodied in any other measure." Pat Ryan, a spokesman for Senate leader Phil Berger who has consistently expressed opposition to Medicaid expansion, confirmed that the rule would apply unless two-thirds of the Senate vote to suspend the rule. Democrat Senators contend that the rule does not need to derail the Medicaid expansion proposal as rules are modified all the time. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 3/14/19)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District Special Election:** Twenty-six candidates – 17 Republicans, six Democrats, two Libertarian Party members, and one Constitution Party member – are running for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District seat to replace Republican Rep. Walther Jones, who died on Feb. 10. Jones had represented the district since 1995 which includes parts or all of 17 counties in Eastern North Carolina. The Republican field includes three sitting lawmakers: state Reps. Greg Murphy, Phil Shepard and Michael Speciale. The primary is April 30. The general election or primary runoff will be July 9. If a runoff is needed, the general election will be Sept. 10.

**9<sup>th</sup> District Candidates:** Thirteen candidates are running for the now-vacant 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District seat previously held by Republican Rep. Robert Pittenger. The field includes 10 Republicans, including state Senator Dan Bishop from Mecklenburg County, Dan McCready - 2018 candidate and the only Democrat running, and one candidate each from the Green Party and Libertarian Party. The Republican candidates will compete in a May 14 primary contest. The general election is scheduled for Sept. 10; however, if no Republican candidate gets more than 30 percent of the vote in the primary election, a runoff election will be held Sept. 10, followed by a general election Nov. 5.

**9<sup>th</sup> District Probe:** The U.S. Justice Department has opened a second front in a criminal investigation of alleged election fraud in North Carolina's 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. The department's Public Integrity Section, which prosecutes political corruption cases, has issued grand jury subpoenas to Republican Mark Harris and other parties in the case. The Justice investigation

comes on top of a state probe by Wake County prosecutors that already has resulted in five arrests. It would widen the scope to include federal crimes. (Jim Morrill, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, 3/12/19)

**Voter ID Delay:** Senate Bill 214 which delays the implementation of the photo ID requirement until 2020, thus bypassing the special elections in the state's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional and scheduled municipal elections, has been signed into law by Gov. Roy Cooper. In passing the legislation, lawmakers noted that they were worried that voter IDs would add further instability to the elections for the vacant Congressional seats, and were concerned about the ability of state and local elections boards to "ensure uniformity" in photo ID requirements. The law also puts photo IDs on hold to shift focus on absentee by mail voting rules and procedures, which have been put under scrutiny following a state investigation into the 9th Congressional District race that found evidence of illegal activity involving the mishandling of absentee mail ballots. (WFAE RADIO, 3/14/19)

**IDs Denied for Voting:** Most UNC system student IDs cannot be used for voting in 2020 under current law. The State Board of Elections rejected requests of nearly all of UNC's campuses to have their students' IDs cleared for use at the polls. All 17 UNC institutions applied for approval last week. The only UNC schools whose students and employees can use IDs to vote next year are NC State University, NC Central University, Elizabeth City State University, Appalachian State University, and UNC Asheville. A handful of other UNC schools had only their employee IDs approved for voting. Some community colleges and private colleges and universities also had their student IDs approved. Students at Duke University, Meredith College, Shaw University, and St. Augustine University will be able to use their school IDs to vote. The board approved Native American tribal enrollment cards and IDs for employees of some state agencies, charter schools, and local governments. About 850 colleges, universities, state and local employers and tribal entities were eligible to submit requests for ID approval, state Elections Director Kim Strach said in a letter to legislators. Of those, 81 applied and 72 were approved. The deadline for the Board of Elections to approve or reject applications was last Friday. Rep. David Lewis, R-Harnett, who was a key negotiator on the voter ID law, said Tuesday he was interested in changes that would make more student and employee IDs good for voting. However, Sen. Ralph Hise, R-Mitchell, co-chairman of the Senate Redistricting and Elections Committee, said the voter ID law is fine the way it is. (Lynn Bonner, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 3/16/19 and 3/19/19)

**ID Lawsuit:** Litigation in state court challenging North Carolina's new photo voter ID law will now continue before multiple judges tasked with weighing whether the requirement violates the state constitution. Wake County Superior Court Judge Vince Rozier has ruled the case must be transferred to a three-judge panel because the litigation filed by several voters challenges the law's constitutionality for all voters lacking a qualifying ID. Rozier dismissed one specific claim in the lawsuit, but he let stand two others that Republican legislative leaders argued were speculative or failed because the plaintiffs lacked legal standing to sue over them. The ruling filed last Wednesday is the latest action within three lawsuits challenging either a constitutional amendment approved by voters in November mandating photo ID or the law passed later to implement the amendment. (THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 3/13/19)

**Election Changes Proposed:** Last week, Kim Strach, executive director of the N.C. Elections Board, presented suggested changes at the House Elections and Ethics Law Committee that would

crack down on election fraud and make it easier to vote in the state. Suggested changes proposed by Strach included:

- Use state funds to pay for postage associated with returning an absentee ballot. Pre-paying for postage might prevent voters from giving their absentee ballots to collectors
- Clarify that photo identification isn't required to request an absentee ballot.
- Require people who witness absentee ballots to not only sign, but also date their signatures. People who fill out absentee ballots are required to do so in the presence of two people or someone who's a certified notary. Those people aren't required to date their signature. However, the N.C. elections board added a "date" line in 2018 after finding inconsistencies in ballot signatures in 2016. The date line has "investigative value," the board said in a letter.
- Require those who request absentee ballots to log in to county elections offices by signing a sheet. Some county elections boards do this already, but it's not required. And the logs have "proved tremendously valuable in investigative efforts to identify those (people) delivering stacks of Absentee Ballot Request Forms to county boards," Strach said in a letter.
- Deter the practice of photocopying absentee ballot request forms. The elections board would like the ability to vary the form's design and graphics each year.  
(Paul A. Specht, THE NEWS & OBSERVER and THE (Elizabeth City) DAILY ADVANCE, 3/13/19)

**Ruling Delayed:** A North Carolina appeals court has set aside temporarily a trial judge's ruling that voided two constitutional amendments because some district boundaries for lawmakers who placed them on the ballot had been previously declared racial gerrymanders. The state Court of Appeals has granted Republican lawmakers a temporary delay of the February decision by Wake Superior Court Judge Bryan Collins. He threw out amendments that voters approved in November mandating photo voter ID and lower caps on income tax rates. Collins agreed with the NAACP that the 2018 legislature was "illegally constituted" and so lacked authority to propose alterations to the North Carolina Constitution. Wednesday's order says the appeals court will decide next whether to extend stopping enforcement of Collins' decision while the substance of the case is appealed. (THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 3/06/19)

**Delay in National PayDay Rule Sought:** The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's (CFPB) new Director Kathy Kraninger is seeking to delay the payment protections requirements in the national payday lending rule and eliminate the important ability-to-repay provisions in the rule. When the rule was passed, over 170 organizations in the state, including the Coalition on Aging, signed on to support the rule. Last week, the Coalition signed on to a letter urging the Bureau to keep the August 19, 2019 compliance date for the rule in place.

**North Carolina Institute of Medicine Task Forces:** The NC Institute of Medicine (NCIOM) is providing leadership for a number of task forces and projects that bring together stakeholders to identify evidence-based solutions to address health issues in North Carolina. A Task Force on Health Services for Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing has been established to study the current state and limitations of health services for the deaf and hard of hearing population in North Carolina and the consequences of those limitations. Another task force that will begin to meet for the first time in April is the Task Force on Serious Illness Care. It has been established to develop a workable plan to meet the needs of individuals living with serious illness and their caregivers across the state of

North Carolina. The NCIOM, in partnership with agencies and organizations that provide care and advocacy around issues of aging, palliative care, hospice care, and long-term supports and services, will convene the Task Force ten times through 2019 and issue a final report in early 2020. To learn more about these two Task Forces and the other work of the Institute of Medicine click [here](#).

**Adult Guardianship:** The group Rethinking Guardianship has been working since 2015 on ideas for changing the North Carolina laws and practice governing the removal of a person's right to make life decisions. If a person is found to lack the ability to make and communicate key decisions, a North Carolina county clerk of court can name someone to look after his or her affairs. The working group has an active legislative subgroup looking at potential changes to be proposed to the General Assembly. About 5,000 people in North Carolina have appointed public guardians, some 85 percent of them with intellectual or other developmental disability and/or mental illness, according to the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities. The Rethinking Guardianship group's approaches -- such as increased oversight and finding housing in alternative settings -- could help in some cases. See this [article](#) by Tommy Goldsmith with NC HEALTH NEWS for more information about Rethinking Guardianship work.

**Flu Deaths:** North Carolina's number of flu-related deaths has increased to 148 for the 2018-19 season, the state's Department of Health and Human Services reported Thursday. Seven people died from the flu during the week that ended March 16, and an additional six victims were added to tallies from previous weeks. DHHS has cautioned that the current total does not represent all flu-associated deaths in the state since many go undiagnosed or unreported. Ten of the latest 13 victims were 65 and older, while two were 50 to 64 years old and one was in the 25-to-49 age group. The flu season officially began Oct. 1 and typically runs through March 31, though it has lingered several weeks beyond that at times. (Richard Craver, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 3/21/19)

**Televised Sessions:** On March 6, the N.C. House approved [H.B. 218](#) by a vote of 115-1 to begin video streaming its daily sessions on the General Assembly's website and to study whether it's feasible to create a dedicated television channel as well. A fiscal note produced by the General Assembly's Fiscal Research Division estimates the initial cost to the General Assembly to install the equipment and hire a new staffer to run the broadcast at \$397,543. After the first year, it would cost about \$71,000, which covers the salary and benefits for the new position. House Speaker Tim Moore reports that he has already directed the House principal clerk to start the process of broadcasting the sessions over the legislature's website. The Senate will still have to vote on the bill, even though it does not impact that chamber. The bill has been referred to the Senate Rules and Operations Committee. (Lauren Horsch, THE INSIDER, 3/07/19)

**Rural Budget Proposals:** Gov. Roy Cooper's proposed budget for 2019-2020 includes a heavy emphasis on economic development needs in the state's rural communities, including funding for broadband internet grants, jobs incentives, water and sewer infrastructure, and dozens of specific projects. His proposal calls for a new economic development program called Rural Investments Strengthening Economics, or RISE, which would be similar to the state's existing jobs incentives programs but would only be available in the 80 most economically distressed counties. The program would get \$5 million in the next fiscal year and \$10 million in the following year, replacing the

existing Main Street Solutions Fund. A new rural neighborhood revitalization fund would get \$6.5 million. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 3/07/19)

**Hospital Reimbursements:** The State Health Plan (SHP) and state Treasurer Dale Folwell report that they have agreed to increase by \$52 million the annual reimbursement rates for many rural hospitals. The increase would be included in the controversial SHP Clear Pricing Project that Folwell unveiled in October. Folwell said the adjustments would increase payments to rural providers by 20 percent from the original proposal, "while still saving taxpayers almost \$258 million and plan members almost \$57 million." The proposed changes to the SHP have been controversial, drawing complaints from health-care providers and the N.C. Healthcare Association. Cody Hand, senior vice president for advocacy and policy for the N.C. Healthcare Association, responded to the higher rural hospital reimbursement proposal by saying "this latest move does nothing but add more tax dollars onto a failing system." A bipartisan group of legislators are backing a bill, [H.B. 184](#), which would form a joint legislative study committee "on the sustainability of the State Health Plan" and put off the the Clear Pricing Project changes to the State Health Plan proposed by Treasurer Folwell that are set to start on Jan. 1, 2020 until at least 2022. (Richard Craver, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 3/14/19 and Will Doran, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 3/01/19)

**Medicaid Bidder Appeal:** An unsuccessful bidder for North Carolina's new managed-care initiative to cover most Medicaid patients has appealed state government's decision to leave it out. The group "My Health by Health Providers" filed its formal protest on Feb. 25 with the Department of Health and Human Services. The organization is composed of 12 local hospital systems and New Mexico-based insurer Presbyterian Healthcare Systems. The organization blames DHHS for a "deeply flawed design and evaluation process" that wrongly left it out. The department awarded contracts this month to four conventional insurers and one physician partnership. The cumulative contract values could reach \$6 billion annually. A "My Health by Health Providers" news release says its systems provide 80 percent of the state's Medicaid hospital care and fit the legislature's desire to offer in-state provider coverage. (THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2/25/19)

**Health Rankings:** A lack of affordable housing drives down health and keeps North Carolinians in poverty, according to the latest annual County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, released Tuesday by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. Taken as a whole, residents in Wake County have the best health outcomes in North Carolina. Those in Robeson County have the worst outcomes. Urban areas tend to place higher in the rankings, but cities also struggle with affordable housing and have pockets where health outcomes are lower. In total, 14 percent of North Carolina households spend more than half of their income on housing costs. But a deeper dive into the numbers show wide racial disparities. Households headed by black residents are most burdened by severe housing costs at 21 percent, compared to white households at 11 percent. (Jason deBruyn, WUNC RADIO, 3/19/19)

**Proposed Insurance Hikes:** A proposed 19 percent increase in mobile home insurance premium rates in North Carolina is of great concern to the state's poorest citizens and the agencies and groups that serve them. The N.C. Rate Bureau recently applied for a 19 percent increase in premiums for homeowner casualty policies and 19.9 percent for home fire policies. The proposed rate increases are subject to approval by the N.C. Department of Insurance, which normally approves a much lower increase than the insurance industry requests. But after a 4.8 percent increase last year, any increase

may force many residents in the state to do without insurance on their residences. That could be most severely felt in counties with large populations residing in mobile homes. If approved, any rate increase would go into effect on Feb. 1, 2020. State Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey has set a public hearing for Sept. 4. (Neill Caldwell, CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS, 3/05/19)

**Blue Cross Merger:** Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina announced last week that it will be combining with the Oregon-based insurer Cambia Health Solutions, a move that would join together two large Blue Cross and Blue Shield-affiliated insurers. The two companies would together cover around six million people and have about \$16 billion in combined revenue. The companies said the goal of the combination was to improve quality, lower costs and speed up the development of new services. As part of the agreement, the companies will merge the corporate management, administrative and operational services under the Cambia Health Solutions name. Blue Cross NC CEO Patrick Conway will remain CEO of Blue Cross NC and will also become the CEO of Cambia as part of the deal. The two not-for-profits said that a formal acquisition will not occur and there will be no financial payout between the two companies. The companies said the health plans will remain locally led and separate. (Zachery Eanes, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 3/12/19)

**Blue Cross Rebates:** North Carolina's largest health insurer reported on March 1 that it expects to reimburse about 700,000 customers after administrative and other costs outstripped a limit allowed by the health care overhaul law championed by President Barack Obama. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina will for the first time provide rebates required by the Affordable Care Act when insurers fail to limit administration, marketing and profits to 20 percent or less of premium dollars. Insurers must spend at least 80 percent of premiums on providing medical care, rising to 85 percent for large-group plans. The Durham-based nonprofit company earned \$685 million in profits in 2018 and collected \$9.1 billion in premiums. It collected an average of \$6,900 in total premiums and spent \$5,326 in claims per insured customer, the company said. Blue Cross has more than 3.7 million members. (Emery P. Dalesio, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 3/03/19)

**Telemedicine Grant:** Twenty western counties in the state will benefit from a \$98,273 federal grant aimed at improving telehealth technology. The grant comes from the Appalachian Regional Commission's Power fund. The Office of Rural Health within the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services and the N.C. Department of Information Technology's Broadband Infrastructure office were the applicants. The grant is aimed at "investigating existing resources to implement telehealth infrastructure." (Richard Craver, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 2/23/19)

**NC Housing Finance Agency's 2018 Investment and Impact Report:** The North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) has released its 2019 Investment and Impact Report, "Housing Drives." NCHFA financed \$2 billion in real estate activity in 2018. This represented an increase of 50 percent in just three years and nearly 100 percent since 2014. [Read the full report here.](#)

**NC State Research Project Looking for Participants in Cognitive Ability Study:** Researchers in the Daily Well-Being in Adulthood Lab at NC State University are seeking to understand the factors associated with promoting everyday functioning and well-being over the course of adulthood in individuals with different levels of cognitive ability. They are seeking individuals from the community who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or other related dementias to participate in a research project funded by the National Institutes of Health. Participation requires a

two to three hour commitment and follow-up session after about 6 months. It pays \$50 per session and involves engaging computer tasks, blood pressure recordings, and short surveys. One's participation in this research will help contribute to the understanding of the functional capabilities of those with cognitive impairment. To find out more, contact the NC State Daily Well-Being Lab at [wellbeinglab@ncsu.edu](mailto:wellbeinglab@ncsu.edu) or (919) 925-0511.

**Minimum Wage:** State Democratic lawmakers and worker advocates got behind an effort this week to raise North Carolina's minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15 an hour by 2024. Lawmakers stressed their plan would gradually increase the minimum wage to make the transition easier for employers. After 2024, the minimum wage would be indexed to keep pace with inflation. State lawmakers set a \$15-an-hour minimum wage for all state workers in the 2018-19 state budget, but the Republican majority has historically been leery of forcing such increases on the private sector, arguing that it would cost jobs and hinder economic growth. Some North Carolina employers have already indicated their plans to raise the minimum wage. In December, UNC Health Care announced its plans to boost employees' minimum hourly wage to \$15 by July 2019. The new minimum wage would affect about 9,000 housekeepers, stock clerks, nursing assistants, cashiers and other UNC employees across the Triangle. The adjustment would cost UNC Health Care about \$15 million a year. It has been almost a decade since North Carolina's minimum wage was raised to \$7.25 an hour. (Laura Leslie, WRAL NEWS, 3/19/19)

**Doctor Splits:** Hospital systems have been snapping up physician practices and hiring doctors at a record pace for the last several years. A Physicians Advocacy Institute study found that the percentage of physicians employed by hospitals nationwide increased from 25.8 percent in 2012 to 44 percent last year, with more than 74,000 doctors joining health systems. Many outpatient services, which don't require an overnight stay in the hospital, can be provided in a hospital or in a physician's office. Medicare and other payers typically reimburse lower amounts for those services when they're done at a doctor's office instead of a hospital. Hospitals are permitted to tack on so-called facilities fees when they perform those procedures. (Mark Tosczak, NC HEALTH NEWS, 3/19/19)

**Real ID Express Days:** The N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles is giving people more opportunities this spring to get their N.C. REAL IDs quicker. The agency is hosting its REAL ID Express Days at four additional locations in the state according to an NC DMV news release. They will be in Raleigh, Kernersville, Greensboro and Hendersonville. To find out times and dates this spring, click [here](#). During REAL ID Express Days, people can convert their current driver license or ID cards to REAL IDs. Anyone with an expiration date six months before the REAL ID date will be eligible to renew their license or ID card during their visit. Duplicates and first time ID cards will also be available. (GREENSBORO NEWS & RECORD, 3/19/19)

**Civil Fines Money:** A Wake County judge has reinstated a decade-old judgment against the state for hundreds of millions of dollars in civil fines that weren't paid to school districts over several years. Under the state constitution, fines collected by state agencies are supposed to be turned over to school districts, but the state diverted that money to other uses between 1996 and 2005. School districts sued and won a \$747.8 million judgment against the state in 2008. Since then, the state has paid only \$18.1 million, or 2.4 percent, of the judgment. The North Carolina School Boards Association and several school districts filed suit again last summer, as the judgment was about to lapse after 10 years. (Matthew Burns, WRAL NEWS, 3/06/19)

**Gerrymandering Case:** A North Carolina case that will be heard this month by the U.S. Supreme Court is "the best opportunity ever" to ban so-called partisan gerrymandering, a redistricting reform advocate said earlier this month. Seth Waxman, a former U.S. Solicitor General, said the N.C. case will test whether courts can put limits on what he called "utterly raw political gerrymandering." The high court will hear arguments on March 26 about two cases that critics say epitomize the worst in partisan districting. One involves a redistricting plan by Maryland Democrats. The other focuses on a 2016 plan by North Carolina Republicans. Together, the cases could lead to a landmark ruling this spring. Last year a panel of federal judges ruled that the "pro-Republican bias" of the N.C. redistricting plan violated the First Amendment and other constitutional provisions and represented "an impermissible effort to 'dictate electoral outcomes.'" The case went to the Supreme Court, which sidestepped the question of partisan districting and sent the case back on a procedural issue. The lower court affirmed its ruling, sending the case back to the high court. Two N.C. cases -- *Rucho v. Common Cause* and *Rucho v. League of Women Voters of North Carolina* -- are combined in the challenge. This month's hearing won't be the first time N.C. districting plans will have reached the Supreme Court. Multiple redistricting cases have gone there, starting with "Gingles" in 1986. By challenging multi-member districts, that case paved the way for the election of hundreds of black elected officials in North Carolina and across the country. Subsequent N.C. cases refined and limited the extent to which race could be used in drawing voting districts. (Jim Morrill, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, 3/06/19)

**Court of Appeals:** The General Assembly passed and the Governor has signed [S.B. 75](#) which would restore the Court of Appeals membership to 15 judges. In 2017, the General Assembly voted to reduce the number of judges on the Court of Appeals to 12. This bill comes after a lawsuit over the reduced membership. Rep. David Lewis (R-Harnett) said the General Assembly and the Governor's Office agreed to remedy the case by restoring the membership to 15 judges. Senate Bill 75 passed 115-1 -- with Rep. Larry Pittman, R-Cabarrus, voting no. (Lauren Horsch, THE INSIDER, 2/28/19)

**Duke Energy Satisfaction:** Duke Energy has again ranked near the bottom among big electric utilities in the U.S. for residential customer satisfaction, according to a report released this week. Charlotte-based Duke's score of 70 also represents a 4 percent decline from last's year report, according to the results released by the American Customer Satisfaction Index, a Michigan-based firm that tracks customer satisfaction across a range of industries.

**Paternity Leave:** New dads would be treated like new moms under a proposal to change how state employees qualify for paid time off donated by their co-workers. [S.B. 130](#) would make it clear that parental leave for state employees includes fathers. Current state policy allows employees to donate paid time off to female coworkers for maternity leave. The bill also proposes to spare parents from

having to use up vacation or sick time before using the donated leave to stay home with their children. Otherwise, there is no paid parental leave for state workers in North Carolina. Federal law allows for 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected parental leave for workers at public agencies, elementary and secondary schools, and companies with 50 or more employees. This bill would allow for up to six weeks of donated time within the first 12 weeks after birth or adoption. Employees of state agencies, community colleges or public schools would be covered. S.B. 130 is sponsored by Sen. Jay Chaudhuri (D-Wake), Sen. Danny Earl Britt Jr. (R-Robeson), and Sen. Joyce Krawiec (R-Forsyth). The lawmakers filed an identical bill two years ago but it was never voted on. (Craig Jarvis, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 2/27/19)

**Disability Rights Releases Report on Impact of Disasters on People with Disabilities:** A report issued in the last few weeks by Disability Rights North Carolina (DRNC) provides strong evidence that federal, state and local emergency management officials must take action to ensure the well-being of people with disabilities during natural disasters. Analyzing the response to Hurricane Florence, the report shows how public officials must do more to include the voices of people with disabilities and disability rights advocates as they plan for future emergencies and ensure their safety. [Read the full report.](#)

**Long Term Care Advocacy Day:** Friends of Residents in Long Term Care will sponsor a Long Term Care Advocacy Day on Wednesday, April 3, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the General Assembly. To register and to find out more details about the Day and a pre-event training webinar, click [here](#).

**Neighbors Supporting Neighbors:** Coalition member and past Secretary of the Coalition Marty Lamb along with social work intern Davonda Holloway from NC State University have been working on an initiative in Marty and her husband Bill's Cameron Park neighborhood in Raleigh to connect neighbors – young professionals, families with children, middle aged adults, and seniors – to support each other through life's transitions. As a part of this effort, a forum series is being offered this spring for neighborhood residents and other interested friends. The forums are on practical estate planning which covers wills, trusts, and estates; diet, nutrition, and aging; and medical memberships, the local YMCA's new initiatives for aging in place. Talk with Marty or Davonda at a Coalition meeting to learn more about the exciting things going on in Cameron Park.

**Changes for Families in Action:** After decades of various initiatives involving substance use, tobacco and alcohol prevention, Families in Action has a new name -- Community Impact North Carolina. Anna Godwin has also been named the new executive director of the organization. (Olivia Neeley, THE WILSON TIMES, 3/18/19)

**Health Care Fraud:** Federal prosecutors say the owner of a North Carolina mental health company has been sentenced to prison following her conviction on tax evasion and filing false Medicaid claims. The U.S. Department of Justice says in a news release Catina Denise Farrington of Cypress, Texas, was sentenced by a judge on Friday to 60 months in prison to run concurrently. Farrington pleaded guilty last September to health care fraud conspiracy and tax evasion for the tax year 2014. Prosecutors say that from 2011 through 2015, Farrington submitted thousands of false claims to Medicaid for services that weren't performed. They said she also earned more than \$1 million from the Durham County business and evaded income taxes by transferring funds to various bank accounts and paying personal expenses from those accounts. (THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 3/03/19)

**Skilled Workers:** North Carolina needs to get more students graduating from high school and college to have enough highly skilled workers to meet the demand in the state, according to a new report released Feb. 28. The new report from UNC-Chapel Hill's Carolina Demography and the John M. Belk Endowment found that 47 percent of North Carolinians ages 25 to 64 have a postsecondary degree or nondegree credentials. The Leaky Pipeline report says the state needs to get the percentage up to at least 60 percent by 2030 to meet the demands for a highly educated workforce. The report says that the state needs to act because by 2020, 67 percent of all jobs in North Carolina will require some education and training beyond high school. Just reaching the 60 percent mark means 672,000 more North Carolina adults need to obtain a postsecondary degree or nondegree credential. A major issue, the report found, is that there are vast disparities across the state in terms of graduation rates and educational attainment. Of North Carolina's 100 counties, the report found that only Orange, Wake, Durham and Mecklenburg counties had populations where at least half the adults have an associate's degree or higher. But the report also noted that the region that includes the Triangle has the state's highest high school graduation rate gap between white students and black and Hispanic students. (T. Keung Hui, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 2/28/19)

**Handicapped Plates:** Parents and legal guardians of people with disabilities would be eligible to receive handicapped license plates under a bill, [S.B. 61](#), that passed the Senate and has been sent to the House where it has been referred to the Committee on Transportation. Current law allows parents and guardians to receive the handicapped parking placard that hangs on rear-view mirrors, but only disabled people themselves can get the license plate. Parents and guardians would need to be recertified every five years. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 2/28/19)

**Proposal for New Overtime Rules:** The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) issued proposed regulations that would increase the salary threshold for exemptions from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) overtime pay requirements from the current level of \$455 per week (\$23,660 per year) to \$679 per week (\$35,308 per year). Under FLSA, employers (including nonprofits) generally must pay one-and-a-half time the usual hourly rate to any employee who works more than 40 hours in a week unless the employee: (1) is paid on a salary basis; (2) is paid at least the salary threshold set forth by DOL; and (3) satisfies a duties test as an [executive](#), [administrative](#), or [professional](#) employee. (NC Center for Nonprofits Public Policy Update, 3/15/19)

**NCOA Job Openings:** The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is looking to fill the following positions: Senior Director – Research and Evaluation, E-mail Marketing Coordinator, Media Relations Manager, and Senior Director of Human Resources. To find out more, click [here](#) and scroll down. (NCOA Week, 3/19/18).

**Medicare Annual Wellness Visit:** People with Medicare are able to use their coverage to get a free annual wellness visit, but the rules around using it can be confusing. Leslie Fried, Senior Director of NCOA'S Center for Benefits Access, spoke with *The Washington Post* about what the annual wellness check does and does not provide, and how to avoid charges when requesting one. [Read the article](#) (NCOA Week, 3/19/18).

**Scholarships to Age+Action Conference:** NCOA is offering 20 scholarships to enable attendance at the 2019 Age+Action Conference, June 17-20, in Washington, DC. Individuals from nonprofit

organizations and state or local government agencies are eligible to apply. Submit your application by March 29. [Apply for a scholarship](#). (NCOA Week, 3/19/18).

**2019 HCBS Conference Call for Sessions Deadline Extended:** The National Association for States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD) has extended the [Call for Sessions](#) for the 2019 Home and Community Based Services Conference, held August 26-29, 2019 in Baltimore, MD. The updated deadline to submit your session is Friday, March 29. The [HCBS Conference](#) highlights best practices from across the country in home and community-based services. The conference includes federal, state, and local policymakers as well as those who administer, manage, and deliver waiver and other HCBS programs. (Friday Updates, NASUAD, 3/15/19)

**Older Americans Month 2019 Materials Now Available:** Older Americans Month is observed annually in May. The 2019 theme is Connect, Create, Contribute. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has a variety of resources already available for the 2019 observance, including logos, posters, and postcards. These and other materials can be accessed at [acl.gov/oam](http://acl.gov/oam). ACL encourages people to use the hashtags #Connect, #Create, and #Contribute for #OAM19 this May. (Friday Updates, NASUAD, 3/15/19)

**Open Long Term Care Jobs:** There are 47,922 open jobs posted by direct employers in the nursing care facility (including SNFs), assisted living, and continuing care retirement community (CCRC) sectors this month according to the latest *Gartner TalentNeuron* statistics. That represents an increase of more than 4,300 open jobs compared to January figures. The *Gartner TalentNeuron* statistics also show an estimated 2,661,000 potential candidates in the nation's workforce whose skills likely match the qualifications being sought by long term care employers. Figures show that 3,058 direct employers are competing for candidates this month which is a slight increase over January. The average number of days a job was posted was 32 days in March. Finding qualified employees is one of the greatest challenges facing long term care providers and early 2019 statistics prove that the challenge is only growing in the strong economy with a low unemployment rate. (Long Term Care Leader, 3/13/19)

**Suspicious Activity Reports on Elder Financial Exploitation: Issues and Trends:** The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has published a report highlighting suspicious activities targeting older adults. This report analyzes a non-public data set to shed light on the volume and characteristics of elder financial exploitation (EFE). Specifically, this study examines elder financial exploitation Suspicious Activity Reports (EFE SARs) filed with the federal government by financial institutions such as banks and money services businesses between 2013 and 2017. The goal of this report is to analyze the complex problem of elder financial exploitation and identify ways to improve prevention and response. Click here to read the full [report](#). A webinar on the key findings of the report will be on Wednesday, April 9, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Click [here](#) to join the webinar online. For audio call: 1-800-779-4691; Conference number: PWXW8892029 and Audience passcode: 7732522. RSVP to: [olderamericans@cfpb.gov](mailto:olderamericans@cfpb.gov). (Friday Updates, NASUAD, 3/15/19 and CFPB Release)

**AARP Launches National Campaign to Lower Drug Prices:** On March 12, AARP announced the launch of 'Stop Rx Greed,' a nationwide campaign aimed at lowering prescription drug prices. The goal of AARP's sustained campaign is to help drive down drug prices for all Americans by advocating for a variety of legislative, executive, and regulatory actions at both the federal and state

level. As part of the campaign, AARP Research conducted a national survey of likely voters ages 50 and older. The survey found that significant majorities of self-identified Republican, Democrat, and independent voters shared concerns about the high price of drugs, and support common-sense policies that will lower prices. Survey findings include:

- 72 percent say they are concerned about the cost of their medications.
- 63 percent say the cost of prescription drugs is unreasonable.
- 90 percent support allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices.
- 80 percent report taking at least one prescription medication.
- Nearly 40 percent say they did not fill a prescription provided by their doctor with cost being the most common reason.

The Stop Rx Greed campaign will include national television, radio and digital ads, editorial content, emails to members, social media posts, ongoing advocacy and grassroots activity in D.C. and the states, and a petition calling on Congress and the Administration to take action now. As part of the campaign, AARP will push for support of a number of policy solutions at the national and state level to help lower drug prices, including:

- Allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices.
- Allowing states to negotiate lower prices with drug companies.
- Giving state Attorneys General authority to crack down on outrageous price increases.
- Clamping down on pay-for-delay and other loopholes that keep lower cost generic drugs off the market.
- Capping consumers' prescription drug out-of-pocket costs.
- Preserving state pharmacy assistance programs.

For more about Stop Rx Greed, visit [www.aarp.org/rx](http://www.aarp.org/rx). (AARP Press Release, 3/12/19)

**National Nutrition Month:** March is National Nutrition Month. This observance is led by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. The Administration for Community Living's (ACL) [Nutrition Program](#) includes services such as the Congregate Nutrition Program and the Home-Delivered Nutrition Program, which provide healthy meals in group settings, such as senior centers and faith-based locations, as well as in the homes of older adults who live alone. ACL has developed two [infographics](#) to promote nutrition and the critical benefits of Nutrition Services Programs. The USDA is also celebrating Nation Nutrition Month and has some excellent educational materials and activities available online. [Click here](#) to explore their resources. (Friday Updates, NASUAD, 3/15/19)

**Alzheimer's Disease Programs Initiative - Grants to States and Communities:** Cooperative agreements under this funding opportunity announcement (FOA), Alzheimer's Disease Program Initiative (ADPI), are dedicated to the development and expansion of dementia-capable home and community-based service (HCBS) systems in States and Communities. There are two application options contained in this FOA, one for States (Option A) and the other for Communities (Option B). No entity would be eligible to apply for both State and Community options. The systems resulting from program activities under both program options will provide quality, person-centered services that help individuals remain independent and safe in their communities. Apply for this funding opportunity by April 1, 2019. [Click here](#) to learn more. (Friday Updates, NASUAD, 3/15/19)

**Core Benefits Sheet Updated:** NCOA has updated its "cheat sheet" explaining how core benefits for low-income individuals with Medicare are administered. It also features basic eligibility thresholds for the programs. [Download the document.](#) (NCOA Week, 3/12/19)

**Medicare Extra Rx HELP Act:** U.S. Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA) has introduced the Medicare Extra Rx HELP Act (S. 691) to help Medicare beneficiaries afford their medications. The bill would help low-income older adults reduce their prescription drug out-of-pocket costs by eliminating the Part D Extra Help program's asset test and extending eligibility to beneficiaries living below 200% of poverty (about \$25,000). The current asset test penalizes seniors who did the right thing during their working years by creating a modest nest egg of savings for retirement. [Read more about the bill.](#) (NCOA Week, 3/12/19)

**2019 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures:** The Alzheimer's Association has published the 2019 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures report. This annual report offers insight into the burden of Alzheimer's and dementia on individuals, caregivers, government and the nation's health care system. The report provides an in-depth look at the latest national statistics on Alzheimer's prevalence, incidence, mortality, and costs. It also examines awareness, attitudes, and utilization of cognitive assessments among older adults. Key findings from this report include:

- An estimated 5.8 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's dementia in 2019
- Total national cost of caring for those with Alzheimer's and other dementias is estimated at \$290 billion (not including unpaid caregiving) in 2019
- 48 percent of caregivers who provide help to older adults do so for someone with Alzheimer's or another dementia
- Only half of older adults are being assessed for thinking and memory issues by their physicians

[Click here](#) to read more. (Friday Updates, NASUAD, 3/8/19)

**Emerging Technologies to Support an Aging Population:** The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy has released a new report identifying innovations that have the potential to improve quality of life for Americans who live with physical or cognitive burdens due to aging or disability. The report identifies six opportunities for emerging technologies to help Americans live longer, healthier, and more independent lives. The six primary areas where technology may have a positive impact include: Key activities of daily living, Cognition, Communication and social connectivity, Personal mobility, Transportation, and Access to healthcare. The report also identifies the needs and challenges found throughout the six capabilities and the R&D needed to bring these innovations to fruition. [Click here](#) to read more. (Friday Updates, NASUAD, 3/8/19)

**Bills Introduced Extending Expiring Medicaid Home and Community-Based Service Programs:** Bipartisan bills have been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives to extend two Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) programs that help older adults stay out of nursing homes. Both programs are set to expire on March 31. The Money Follows the Person (MFP) program would be extended for 5 years by H.R. 1342, introduced by Reps. Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Brett Guthrie (R-KY). HCBS spousal impoverishment protections would be made

permanent by H.R. 1343, introduced by Reps. Dingell and Fred Upton (R-MI). [Read Rep. Dingell's press release](#) | [Learn more about MFP](#) | [Learn more about spousal impoverishment protections](#). (NCOA Week, 3/5/19)

**Free Tax Return Preparation for Older Adults:** The deadline to file 2018 tax returns is April 15. The Internal Revenue Service offers two programs that can help senior households make sure their filings are correct and on time – the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program. Both are free and offered at convenient locations such as libraries, schools, and shopping malls across the country. [Learn more](#) | [Find the closest VITA/TCE site](#). (NCOA Week, 2/26/19)

**New Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Data Posted:** The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has posted the fiscal year 2017 data for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman programs work to resolve problems related to the health, safety, welfare, and rights of individuals who live in LTC facilities (i.e. nursing homes, board and care, assisted living, and other residential care communities). In 2017, over 1,300 full-time-equivalent staff and 6625 volunteers provided LTC Ombudsman services to residents. Highlights of the program in 2017 include:

- Resolved 201,460 complaints initiated by residents, their families, and other concerned individuals;
- Provided 402,000 instances of information and assistance to individuals;
- Visited 68% of all nursing homes and 30% of all board and care, assisted living, and similar homes at least quarterly;
- Conducted 4,426 training sessions in facilities on such topics as resident rights;
- Provided 127,068 instances of information and assistance to LTC facility managers and staff; and
- Participated in 21,211 resident council and 1,788 family council meetings.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Ombudsman Program. (Friday Updates, NASUAD, 2/22/19)

**CMS Policy Podcast Aims to Reach Stakeholders via Modern Platform:** CMS has launched a new podcast intended to help explain the agency's policies and programs. "CMS: Beyond the Policy," discusses updates and changes to policies and programs in an easily accessible and conversational format. New episodes of the podcast will be released periodically and will welcome a range of subject-matter experts and stakeholders, including Administrator Verma. The inaugural episode of the podcast focused on Evaluation and Management Coding (E/M Codes). This episode is available for download on iTunes and Google Play. You can also [access the recording](#) on the CMS website. [Click here](#) to learn more about this podcast. (Friday Updates, NASUAD, 2/22/19)

**Seed Grants for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children:** The Brookdale Foundation Group has issued a Request for Proposals for creating or expanding supportive services to grandparents and other relatives raising children. Up to 15 programs will be selected to receive a seed grant of \$15,000 based on progress made during the first year and potential for more in the

future. Technical assistance will also be provided. Any 501 (c)(3) or equivalent not-for-profit organizations can apply. The RFP proposal and guidelines can be downloaded by visiting this website: <https://protect2.fireeye.com/url?k=f5c5da61-a991c31d-f5c5eb5e-0cc47adc5fa2-436fcb4551da46ef&u=http://www.brookdalefoundation.org/>. Proposals are due at the Brookdale Foundation Group office in New Jersey on Wednesday, June 12, 2019. For more information, contact Melinda Perez-Porter at [mpp@brookdalefoundation.org](mailto:mpp@brookdalefoundation.org). (ACL, From Our Partners, 3/19/19)

**Light Physical Activity Linked to Lower Risk of Heart Disease in Older Women:** Light physical activity such as gardening, strolling through a park, and folding clothes might be enough to significantly lower the risk of cardiovascular disease among women 63 and older, a new study has found. This kind of activity, researchers said, appears to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease events such as stroke or heart failure by up to 22 percent, and the risk of heart attack or coronary death, by as much as 42 percent. To learn more, [click](#) here. (NIH Press Release, 3/15/19)

## **People in the News**

**Linda Shaw**, Executive Director of the NC PACE Association, has announced her plans to retire in 2019. She has agreed to continue in her role until the earlier of the hiring of the new Executive Director or August 31, 2019. She was hired in 2012 as the first Executive Director of the Association and is one of only a handful of full-time state executive directors in the country. She garnered a national reputation while serving as the Chair of the National PACE Association's State PACE Association Leadership Council and as an ex-officio member of the National PACE Association's Board of Directors.

**Nancy Francis** has been hired as the Area Agency on Aging Director for the Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments located in Henderson. She was the former services coordinator for Coaliton member The Center for Volunteer Caregiving in Cary. She will begin the position on March 25.

**Trudy Atkins**, long-time aging advocate from Greensboro died on March 15 at the age of 94. She lead a distinguished career in public affairs which included serving as the right hand person for Dr. William Friday, president of the UNC System for many years. When Dr. Friday retired in 1986, she turned her attention to work for the family business, Southern Trade Publications, which publishes trade journals and the Retirement Resource Guide where she served as editor. She was an active advocacy volunteer for AARP North Carolina and numerous other causes.

Gov. Cooper has appointed **Ellen D. Whitlock**, Executive Director of Senior Resources of Guilford, to the **North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service**.

Gov. Cooper has appointed **Terry Hales** of Advance as a representative of the 13th congressional district to the **North Carolina Veterans Affairs Commission**.

Gov. Cooper has appointed **Mark Davis**, a Court of Appeals judge, to the **state Supreme Court** to fill the vacancy created when he named **Cheri Beasley** the chief justice. Davis will begin serving next month and will serve through the end of 2020 at which time he will face election for the seat. With Davis' appointment, six members of the seven-member state Supreme Court are Democrats. Davis fills Beasley's old seat, which she held for over six years until she succeeded Chief Justice

Mark Martin on March 1. (Gary D. Robertson, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS and Jeff Tiberii, WUNC RADIO, 3/11/19)

**Former North Carolina Congressman Frank Balance** died on Feb. 22 at the age of 77, following a procedure at a Raleigh hospital, according to a family spokesperson. Prior to representing the state's 1st District in Congress from 2002 until 2004, he served more than two decades in the North Carolina House and Senate. He held the No. 2 spot in the Senate chamber.

On Feb. 28, Gov. Roy Cooper announced that he is appointing **Rep. Ken Goodman** (D-Richmond), to the **Industrial Commission**. The appointment is subject to General Assembly confirmation and as of this time has not been confirmed. If approved, Goodman's term would begin on May 1, 2019. He would have to resign his General Assembly seat. He is considered one of the more moderate Democrats in the House. (Lauren Horsch, THE INSIDER, 3/01/19)

Novant Health Inc. has announced that it has hired **Ann Caulkins**, former publisher of The Charlotte Observer, as a **senior vice president and president of Novant Health Foundation**. Caulkins will be in charge of designing and implementing philanthropy plans across all of Novant's markets. Novant's regional foundations focus on the critical needs in five areas: infants and children; cancer; heart and vascular; stroke and neuroscience; and research and education. Caulkins served as president and publisher of the Charlotte newspaper for 12 years. (Richard Craver, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 3/11/19)

**Kimberly Reynolds**, the **executive director of the N.C. Democratic Party** since 2015, is stepping down on April 1. She is planning to start "her own company to foster the next generation of Democratic leaders," according to a news release from the party. (THE INSIDER, 3/20/19)

The U.S. Senate has confirmed Henderson County native **Allison Jones Rushing** as a **circuit judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit**. Rushing, 37, earned her B.A., summa cum laude, from Wake Forest University, where she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and her J.D., magna cum laude, from Duke University School of Law, where she served as executive editor of the Duke Law Journal. (THE (Hendersonville) TIMES-NEWS, 3/05/19)

HCA Healthcare has tapped veteran hospital leader **Greg Lowe** to serve as **president of its Asheville-based division comprised of Mission Health facilities** it acquired this year. Lowe previously served as CEO of HCA's Chippenham and Johnston-Willis hospitals, a two-campus system in Richmond, Virginia. He effectively replaces Mission President and CEO **Dr. Ron Paulus**, who is transitioning to become a strategic adviser for HCA, reporting to Chuck Hall, president of HCA's National Group. (Jack Gallop, NC BUSINESS NEWS WIRE, 2/21/19)

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

March 22, 2019 - Monthly Meeting of the NC Coalition on Aging at 10:00 a.m. in Room 104 of the Brown Building on the Dix Campus (801 Biggs Drive) in Raleigh NC

**March 25, 2019 – Care4Carolina Monthly Stakeholders Meeting from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. At NC Healthcare Association**

March 26, 2019 - Rural Day Presented by the NC Rural Center at the Raleigh Convention Center, Raleigh, NC

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

March 31-April 2, 2019 - National 2019 Alzheimer's Impact Movement Advocacy Forum - at Washington Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, D.C.

April 3, 2019 - Long Term Care Advocacy Day at the General Assembly - sponsored by Friends of Residents in Long Term Care

April 3, 2019 and 1st Wednesday of Each Month - Webinar Series: Moving Mountains, SNF Provider Training, Tools and Insight to Conquer 2019 Industry Changes. Contact Leslie at LeadingAge NC at [leslie.roseboro@leadingagenc.org](mailto:leslie.roseboro@leadingagenc.org).

April 9-13, 2019 - 40th Annual Southern Geontological Society Conference at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort in Miramar Beach, Florida - [More Information click here](#)

April 15-18, 2019 - 2019 ASA Aging in America Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

April 26, 2019 - Monthly Meeting of the NC Coalition on Aging at 10:00 a.m. in Room 104 of the Brown Building on the Dix Campus (801 Biggs Drive) in Raleigh NC

**April 26, 2019 – Accelerating the Pace: Advancing the Science in Alzheimer’s and Dementia – Presented by Alzheimer’s Association Eastern North Carolina Chapter, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at One Eleven Place, 111 Realtors Way, Cary, NC**

April 28-30, 2019 - 47th Annual Convention and Expo of the Association for Home and Hospice Care of North Carolina - at Raleigh Convention Center, Raleigh, NC

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

April 29-May 1, 2019 - NC Public Transportation Association Annual Conference and Expo - in Wilmington

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

**October 7-8, 2019 – NC Affordable Housing Conference at the Raleigh Convention Center.**

**Check out the [calendar](#) on the Coalition’s website for a listing of additional upcoming events and activities.**

## **Resources/Articles**

- TED.com: [The "Dementia Village" That's Redefining Elder Care](#)
- NC Retired Governmental Employees' Association [White Paper on Pension Reform](#), March 2019
- [CMS eMedicare Technologies to Drive Patient Navigation for Seniors](#)
- [Opioids and Elder Abuse: A Disquieting Connection](#)
- [CMS considers tossing hospital star ratings methodology](#)
- Washington Post: [Trump budget proposes big cuts to health programs for poor, elderly and disabled](#)
- KMWorld.com: [NC Health Information Exchange gets makeover with SAS Analytics and InterSystems](#)
- Everyday Health: [Flu Season Keeps Going as New Deadlier Strain Hits US](#)
- Public News Service: [Bills suggest bigger role for NC nurses in health-care access](#)
- WFAE: [People With Disabilities In NC Face A Housing Crisis](#)
- Mountain Xpress: [Mission Health sale brings changes to adult day care, other services](#)
- Carolina Journal; multiple outlets: [Blue Cross partners with companies to open Medicaid clinics](#)
- CNN: [Newly discovered Alzheimer's genes further hope for future treatments](#)
- FOX: [Some adults may need another Measles vaccination, health experts say](#)
- WSJ: [My Health group files protest with N.C. DHHS over Medicaid reform initiative](#)
- WRAL: [Cooper remains 'determined' on Medicaid, school bond, rural broadband](#)
- NY Times: [CBD oil is everywhere, but scientists still don't know much about it](#)
- Washington Post: [For older people who stay in their homes, help is needed but often is inadequate](#)
- Clinical Pain Advisor: [Medicaid work requirements are increasing the cost of being sick in America](#)
- NPR: [As Parents And Grandparents Age, More And More Millennials Are Family Caregivers](#)
- AP News: [Justice Department targeting scams against older people](#)
- National Association of Area Agencies on Aging: [Policy Brief on Recommendations for Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act](#)

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

**[With little budget leeway, advocates bring growing needs of older NC residents to NCGA](#)**

**[NC to Consider Hiking Personal Needs Allowance for Long-Term Care Residents](#)**

**[Advanced practice nurses press legislature for autonomy from MD supervision](#)**

**[Adult guardianship group to propose changes in law, practice to NCGA](#)**

**[As mental health needs rise among farmers, experts are reaching out](#)**

[Doctors breaking away from hospitals say they can provide medical care for less](#)

[Medicaid expansion looms large in Cooper's budget bid](#)

[For many, Medicaid expansion is personal](#)

[Move over, Triangle: Health care startups growing in Charlotte](#)

[Mental health providers, others ask for delay to electronic health record requirement](#)

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

[Is It Alzheimer's Or Another Dementia? The Right Answer Matters](#)

[VA Struggles To Unlock The Reasons Behind High Suicide Rates Among Older Veterans](#)

[Trump Administration Cuts The Size Of Fines For Health Violations In Nursing Homes](#)

[Walk Your Dog, But Watch Your Footing: Bone Breaks Are On The Rise](#)

[Alzheimer's Screenings Often Left Out Of Seniors' Wellness Exams](#)

[Double-Booked Surgeons: Study Raises Safety Questions For High-Risk Patients](#)

[Life Lessons From Grandma: Eat Last, Ignore Naysayers, Stop Texting!](#)

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

**March 22** (Brown Building)

**April 26** (Brown Building)

**May 17** (Brown Building; meeting will be from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.)

**June 28** (Brown Building)

**August 23** (Brown Building)

**September 27** (annual meeting at the NC State University Club)

**October 25** (Brown Building)

**December 6** (Brown Building).

**Meeting Location, Time, and Call-In Number:** Unless indicated otherwise, meetings will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in room 104 of the Brown Building on the Dix Campus (801 Biggs Drive) in Raleigh. 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#.

## **Have You Paid Membership Dues for 2019?**

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

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

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

For 2019, the membership dues remain the same as 2018 -- \$100 for agencies and organizations and \$20 for individual supporters. The Coalition has a hardship provision for those who 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 Executive Director, at [mmbethel72@gmail.com](mailto:mmbethel72@gmail.com).

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

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