



COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

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

The **Coalition's Day at the Legislature**, which will be held on May 10 is fast approaching. To see instructions for the Day, go to <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/> for details. Talking points about the Coalitions **priorities for the short legislative session** can also be found there. We are expecting a big turnout of Coalition members that day to visit with legislators about our priorities and to also be available in the 1300 quadrant of the Legislative Building to answer questions about aging and caregiver issues as well as to share information about resources and services available for older adults and their families. If you are planning to attend and have not done so already, please let Theresa Johnson Troup, Chair of the committee coordinating this event, know. Theresa can be reached at ncadulldayservices@gmail.com.

General Assembly Back with a Bang – After only being in session for a week, the NC General Assembly is back in full swing for the short legislative session. The Governor's budget has been unveiled to legislators and House Appropriations Committees have meetings scheduled this week to begin discussions for developing a draft budget proposal. To keep up to date on scheduled meetings go to <http://www.ncleg.net/LegislativeCalendar/>. With this being an election year, there is speculation that this will truly be a short session.

New Faces at the Legislature – When the legislature returned on April 25, there were two newly sworn in Senators present. Senator Jay Chadhuri (D Wake - District 16) was appointed on April 16 to fill the seat vacated by Sen. Josh Stein who resigned to focus on his run for attorney general. Sen. Deanna Ballard (R Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Caldwell, and Watauga counties – District 45) was appointed on April 25 to fill the term of Sen. Dan Soucek who resigned on April 8. He was not seeking re-election, and Sen. Ballard won the Republican primary election in March for this seat. Meanwhile, on the House side, Rep. Jacqueline Schaffer (R Mecklenburg – District 105) resigned her seat on April 22. No replacement has been announced for her seat at this time.

Bills to Appropriate Funds for Dementia Caregiver Programs Introduced – Companion bills, [Senate Bill 735](#) and [House Bill 1001](#) which originated from the Joint Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services have been introduced. These bills would appropriate funds in the amount of \$500,000 to the Department of Health and Human Services to support Project CARE (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empy) and the No Wrong Door to accessing benefits initiative. In addition, the bills would direct the Department of Health and Human Services to

explore and report on possible expansion of North Carolina’s Medicaid home and community based services waiver programs.

Stay Up to Date on News on the Legislative/Political Fronts – Sometimes it feels like you need a program to keep up with what is going on at the General Assembly as well as in the world of politics in North Carolina. Fortunately, there are many resources that provide up to date coverage, including polling data and fact checking of statements, about all of the developments. Some of these resources are:

- [@NCCapitol](#) (WRAL TV)
- [PoliticsNC](#)
- [Under the Dome](#) (News and Observer)
- [NC Spin](#)
- [NC Health News](#)
- [PolitiFact NC](#) (partnership with News and Observer)
- [NC Policy Watch](#)
- [John Locke Foundation](#)
- [Public Policy Polling](#)
- [Elon University Poll](#)

Voter ID Law Upheld by Federal Judge – On April 25, U.S. District Judge Thomas Schroeder ruled that North Carolina’s voter ID law is constitutional and should remain in effect. This ruling has been widely covered by media sources such as the [News and Observer](#). On April 28, the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals granted a quick review of this ruling and attorneys were told to have all their briefs submitted to the appellate court by June 14. Legal authorities who have been following this case say that it is possible that a hearing could be held in July and a ruling issued before the November general election. It is anticipated, however, that any ruling will be challenged up to the U.S. Supreme Court. Aging advocates have been following this case as one of the groups most likely to have difficulty obtaining an ID is older adults.

Judges Draw Political District Maps – Starting in late April, ten retired judges, Republicans and Democrats, began a simulation exercise at the Duke University Sanford School of Public Policy to draw political districts for North Carolina. The experiment called “Beyond Gerrymandering: Impartial Redistricting for North Carolina” is led by Tom Ross, former UNC system president who now is a Terry Sanford distinguished fellow at Duke. Collaborators on the exercise include the non-partisan Common Cause North Carolina and POLIS, the Center for Leadership, Innovation, and Service which is part of the Duke Sanford School. Many people hope that this initiative will help provide impetus for creating a process in the state for taking the politics out of the redistricting process. To read more about this, click [here](#).

Senior Games State Finals Calendar Finalized – Dates and locations for all NC Senior Games State Finals 2016 events and activities has been finalized. The schedule is as follows:

State Finals Pickleball Tournament, Carolina Courts, Concord - August 30-Sept. 1
State Finals Basketball Tournament, ECU Student Recreation Center, Greenville – Sept. 16-18
State Finals Big Week, (Raleigh/Cary/Durham Events) - September 26-October 2
State Finals Golf Tournament, Tanglewood, Clemmons - October 4-5
State Finals Bocce and Cornhole Tournaments, Clayton Community Park, Clayton – Oct. 5-6
State Finals Softball Tournament, Walnut Creek, Raleigh - October 24-26

To find out more details, including a preliminary schedule, go to the Senior Games State Finals [website](#).

Older Americans Month – Our friends at the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services shared this information regarding this special observance:

Happy Older American’s Month! Help North Carolina celebrate by promoting activities, inclusion, and wellness for older Americans in your community. This is a time to raise awareness about the contributions of older adults who have paved the way for future generations . The 2016 Older American’s Month theme is **Blaze a Trail. The US Administration for Community Living has materials and information at <http://oam.acl.gov/>. The materials include: Trailblazer Selfies, Logos, Posters, and a Trailblazer Story Competition Guide. A copy of Governor PAT McCrory’s Older Americans Month Proclamation is available at <http://governor.nc.gov/document/older-americans-month-2>.**

Blaze a trail!

President Signs Older Americans Act – On April 19, President Obama signed the bill reauthorizing the Older Americans Act. To see the statement from the White House about this, click [here](#). The legislation to reauthorize the Act was passed by Congress with unanimous bipartisan approval nearly five years after it expired. To learn more about the Act, click [here](#). Almost half of the funding for the state’s Home and Community Care Block Grant which provides services to help older adults stay in their homes and communities comes from the Older Americans Act.

Changes in the Hearing Aid Business – There are a lot of interesting developments going in regards to hearing aids. On April 24, there was an informative [article](#) in the Work and Money Section of the News and Observer about how the consumer electronics industry is encroaching on the hearing aid business by offering products that are less expensive and available without the involvement of audiologists or other professionals. In April, the Food and Drug Administration held a daylong workshop on whether regulations on hearing aids should be relaxed in an effort to lower costs. A White House advisory group has recommended that regulations should be relaxed. The News and Observer article provides a good overview of this issue and where things stand.

Senior Center Month – The National Council on Aging’s National Institute of Senior Centers has announced that September is Senior Center Month. The theme for this year is “Find Balance at Your Center.” The National Council on Aging will make program materials about this observance available in June.

Retirement Research Foundation (RRF) Accepting Applications for Proposals – Letters of intent for RRF grants which support direct services, advocacy, education, and training programs for professionals working with elders, and research to seek causes and solutions to significant problems of older adults are due June 20. The deadline for applications is August 1. To find out more click [here](#).

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, (WEAAD), was launched on June 15, 2006 by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect. Communities across the country, including North Carolina, continue to carry out many activities on WEAAD each year. In North Carolina this year, in and around June 15, many communities in the state will be sponsoring Elder Abuse Awareness Walks. At the Piedmont Triad Walk on June 18 at the Triad Park in Kernersville, there will be a world record attempt at 10:30 a.m. Go to the [walk](#) to find out what that is all about.

CMS Urged to Improve Mental and Behavioral Health Data Transparency – U.S. House Ways and Means Committee leaders sent a bipartisan letter to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Acting Administrator Andy Slavitt, pressing the agency to collect, analyze, and publish additional data regarding the mental and behavioral health of Medicare patients. In their letter, the lawmakers called on CMS to expand upon its recent initiatives to improve data transparency so that health care providers can better meet the needs of beneficiaries. In addition, this information will also enable Congress to better understand the mental and behavioral health issues that Medicare beneficiaries face in their daily lives.” The letter can be found [here](#).

Security Freeze Information – A security freeze is a right provided by the 2005 Identity Theft Protection Act. To find out more about what a security freeze is and how it works, click [here](#).

Other Reports and Resources of Interest:

- From National Public Radio – [“Secrets of the Very Old and Healthy – Start When You’re Young”](#)
- From National Public Radio – [“Doctors Unsure How to Talk with Patients about End-of-Like Care”](#)
- From National Public Radio – [“A Baby Boomer with Parkinson’s Report Back from Front Lines of Aging”](#)

- From the New York Times – [“Aging in Place”](#) by Jane E. Brody
- By TIME – [“These Are the Genes Behind Healthy Aging”](#) by Alice Park
- From WebMD – [“News Related to Healthy Seniors”](#)
- From ScienceDaily – [“The Social Lives of the Elderly Mirror How They Grow Old”](#)
- From Science Daily – [“Depression Symptoms that Steadily Increase in Later Life Predict Higher Dementia Risk, Study Shows”](#)
- From Savvy Living – [“Booster Shots Recommended for Adults”](#)

Sympathy is extended to the families of Vernon Dull and Jo Ward Tongue who both recently passed away. Mr Dull, from Mocksville, served as Speaker of the Senior Tar Heel Legislature from 2003 to 2005. He died on April 15. Ms. Ward Tongue from Zebulon died on April 27. She worked as a regional long term care ombudsman with the Triangle J Area Agency on Aging in the early days of establishing the regional ombudsman program and was instrumental in the building of the Wendell Senior Center.

Coalition’s Annual Meeting – Mark your calendar. The Coalition’s annual meeting and luncheon will be held on Friday, September 23, at the NC State University Club. More details will be available soon on this. If you are interested in serving on the committee to help plan for the annual meeting, contact Kay Castillo, Vice-President of the Coalition, who is heading up a committee to plan this event. Kay can be reached at advocacy@naswnc.org.

May Coalition on Aging Meeting – The Coalition meeting for the month of May will be held on Friday, May 20, in the first floor conference room at the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services located in Taylor Hall on the Dorothea Dix campus in Raleigh (693 Palmer Drive). An agenda for the meeting will be available in mid-May.

Coalition on Aging Membership – Membership in the Coalition on Aging is open to any agency, organization, group, or individual who is interested in aging in North Carolina. To renew your membership or to sign up for the first time, go to <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/membership.aspx>.

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