



COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

NC Coalition on Aging May Update – May 10, 2017

Senate Budget Proposal Falls Short in Addressing Needs of Older Adults – The Senate budget proposal was released last night (Tuesday). Attached is a summary overview of key items related to aging in the budget. Upon quick review, it appears that the Senate did little to address priority issues identified by the Coalition. Only \$969,549 in non-recurring funding is appropriated for the Home and Community Care Block Grant. This continues existing non-recurring funding that would have terminated at the end of the fiscal year if the General Assembly did not take action. There is no new additional funding for the Block Grant to address the waiting list of 10,000 people. There is also no new funding for adult protective services (APS) or guardianship services even though APS reports have increased 52% over the past seven years and the need for publically funded guardians has more than doubled over the past decade.

In one bit of good news, the reimbursement rate for Medicaid personal care services was increased to an effective hourly rate of \$15.76 from an effective rate of \$15.52 per hour for services occurring after December 31, 2017. The proposed budget also provides additional funding on a temporary basis for facilities that serve recipients of State-County Special Assistance. Total funding is \$10 over the two years of the biennium with a 50% match provided by the appropriate county. The amount of the temporary addition is \$34 per month for each resident of a facility who is a recipient of State-County Special Assistance.

In reviewing the budget, it also appears that the Senate is not proposing a cost-of-living increase for retired state employees.

The media is just beginning to release stories about the budget proposal. Coverage by the [News and Observer](#) and WRAL [@NCCapital](#) of yesterday's press conference by the Senate leadership provide details about the overall budget plan. Additional information about the budget proposal will be forwarded when it becomes available. The budget proposal is being debated in the Senate Appropriations Committee today and is expected to be acted on and passed by the full Senate by the end of this week. The Coalition now needs to turn our attention to the House as the baton will be passed on to them.

Non-Revenue and Non-Appropriations Bills Crossover List – 2017 – The NC General Assembly website has a [list](#) of bills that made the April 27 crossover deadline and are still eligible for consideration this session. Of course, no bill is really dead until the final gavel

sounds adjourning the legislative session. Key bills which met the crossover deadline that we are monitoring include the following (note: several of these bills were incorporated in the Senate budget proposal).

- [H0024=S0022](#) Study Unfunded Liability/Retiree Health Fund
- [H0036](#) NC IOM Study of Eye Care Access
- [H0084](#) Driver's License/Deaf or Hard of Hearing Designation
- [H0115](#) Retirement Technical Corrections Act of 2017
- [H0156](#) Eyeglasses Exemption From Medicaid Capitation
- [H0176](#) Pensions Integrity Act of 2017
- [H0183](#) Retirement Admin. Changes Act of 2017
- [H0206=S0152](#) NC Cancer Treatment Fairness
- [H0248](#) Support for Older Adults & DHHS Study
- [H0283](#) DHHS Recommend Telemedicine Policy
- [H0299=S0218](#) State Health Plan Administrative Changes
- [H0399=S0255](#) Stop Images Taken Without Consent From Dissemination
- [H0466=S0384](#) The Pharmacy Patient Fair Practices Act
- [H0550=H0338](#) Establish New Nurse Licensure Compact
- [H0591](#) Study/Law Enforcement Officer Interaction With Disabled Drivers
- [H0657](#) Improve Adult Care Home Regulation
- [H0702](#) Seniors Community College Tuition Waiver
- [S0160](#) Handicap Parking Privilege Certification
- [S0368](#) Notice of Medicaid SPA Submissions
- [S0451](#) Joint Survivorship Clarifications
- [S0486](#) Uniform Voting Hours Act
- [S0569](#) Uniform Power of Attorney Act

American Health Care Act – What's In It – The National Council on Aging (NCOA) has issued a summary of key provisions of the Act that would particularly impact older adults. Click [here](#) to see the summary.

FY 2017 Federal Budget Update – Key provisions related to aging in the budget deal reached last week in Congress to fund the government through September 30 are as follows:

- Modest increases to Older Americans Act nutrition services (\$3 million total, split \$2 million to congregate and \$1 million to home-delivered meals);
- \$2 million increase to Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services activities at the Administration for Community Living;
- \$34 million cut to the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP/Older Americans Act Title VII); and
- \$5 million cut to the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP).

For more information, see the [budget tables](#) prepared by the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD) that outline the FY2017 appropriations bill released by Congress.

Dementia-Friendly Hospital – The Outer Banks Hospital in Nags Head, which is part of Vidant Health and Chesapeake Regional Healthcare, has taken steps to become a Dementia-Friendly Hospital. This designation is part of the efforts undertaken by the Outer Banks’ Dementia Task Force to build a dementia-friendly Outer Banks community. It builds on efforts advanced in North Carolina’s first Alzheimer’s state plan to increase awareness about Alzheimer’s and to educate communities across the state about the increasing number of persons with dementia and the urgent need to build a strong support system for persons with dementia and their family caregivers. To better serve persons with dementia and their families, the Outer Bands Hospital will:

- Recognizes the signs and symptoms of dementia upon a patient’s admission.
- Provides training for staff on how to care for a person with dementia.
- Asks family members and caregivers to provide detailed information about the patient’s preferences.
- Makes special clinical and nonclinical accommodations for patients with dementia.
- Emphasizes the nonpharmacological management of the expression of the disease.
- Provides specially trained companions to help patients with dementia feel comfortable and safe.
- Involves family and caregivers in the discharge planning process.
- Provides dementia education to patients and caregivers.

For more information about the Alzheimer’s State Plan, contact Mark Hensley, Dementia Services Coordinator, with the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services at (919) 855-3417 or mark.hensley@dhhs.nc.gov.

Brief Notes and Updates:

- Congratulations to **Lynn Templeton**, Director of Coalition member The Center for Volunteer Caregiving, for being named the *News and Observer’s Tar Heel of the Week* on April 23. The Center which recently celebrates its 25th anniversary helps people in Wake County remain independent by providing transportation and other services to older and disabled person and their caregivers.
- Heather Burkhardt, Assistant Director of the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services, has announced that after 18 years at the agency she will be leaving on June 23 to join the staff at Resources for Seniors in Raleigh, the agency she worked at prior to joining the Division. Heather will be greatly missed and we wish her all the best in her new job.

- A [2015 study of home delivered meal participants](#) which was conducted by Brown University's Center for Gerontology and Healthcare Research and funded by AARP found that participation in the traditional Meals on Wheels program (those receiving daily meals delivered by a volunteer who provides a friendly visit and safety check) has a significant, positive impact on the health, wellbeing, and social connectedness of homebound seniors. Key findings of the study were that older adults who received daily meals exhibited improvements in their mental health, were less lonely, felt connected and less isolated, felt more confident about living independently in their own home, ate healthier food, and experienced reduced rates of hospitalizations and falls when compared to seniors who did not receive the service. The return on investment demonstrated by the program was significant.
- Medicare recognizes a list of medications that can be potentially inappropriate for older adults called the [Beers List](#). The list includes commonly prescribed prescription medications such as proton pump inhibitors and opioids. Older adults who take these medications at higher doses over long periods of time are at higher risk for complications. Many of the medicines need to be tapered over time and not stopped cold turkey.
- The May edition of the *AARP Bulletin* notes that of all adults over the age of 30, more than 1 in 3 were grandparents in 2014. There are now more than **70 million grandparents** in the U.S. according to the last census which is a 24% increase since 2001.
- The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is reporting on **new research that may help to explain why the struggle to maintain a healthy weight** is a lifelong challenge for many people. The average American gains an extra 30 pounds from early adulthood to age 50. Consuming too many calories and getting too little exercise plays a role for many people, but according to the research, another reason may lie in a strong and previously unknown biochemical mechanism related to the normal aging process. An NIH-led team recently discovered that the normal process of aging causes levels of an enzyme called DNA-PK to rise in animals as they approach middle age. While the enzyme is known for its role in DNA repair, their studies show it also slows down metabolism, making it more difficult to burn fat. To read more about this, click [here](#).
- The **state has fired** Archer Western Contractors of Charlotte, the **contractor hired to build the new Broughton Hospital in Morganton**, the psychiatric hospital serving patients in the western part of the state. The Hospital is two years late and several years away from completion. It was initially expected to open in the fall of 2014. To read more about this and the status of efforts, click [here](#).

- The state Debt Affordability Advisory Committee chaired by State Treasurer Dale Folwell recently released its annual report with analysis of the impact of future debt issuance on the state's fiscal position. For the first time, the primary recommendation of this year's report suggests **significant additional money be put toward North Carolina's unfunded pension and health care obligations** representing retired state employees' benefits. Treasurer Folwell reports that under the new proposal, the Committee endorsed placing funds in a trust for the purpose of funding the pension and health care liabilities with deliberate and gradual action.
- NCOA will present a **Spotlight on Older Adults and Behavioral Health** webinar of Thursday, May 12, at 2:00 p.m. The webinar will present the latest national data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSA) on depression, suicide, and substance abuse or misuse in older adults. A description of the Mental Health Association of New York City's initiatives to improve access to behavioral health services for older adults will be shared. To find out more and to register, click [here](#).
- The latest **Elon University poll** has found that 48% of North Carolina voters believe first-term Governor Roy Cooper is doing a good job and 29% approve of the way the state legislature is performing its duties. The poll also found that 74.6% of voters do not approve of the manner in which the U.S. Congress is handling its job.
- **Dr. Aldoa Wos**, the former head of the NC Department of Health and Human Service, is slated to be named vice-chairwoman of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.
- There are several resources that provide a **quick look at what is going on in the world of politics**. [Politico's Playbook](#) is available on the Politico website or you can have it sent to your in-box. [NPR's Up First](#) 10 minute podcast covers news from politics to pop culture. It is hosted by Rachel Martin, David Greene and Steve Inskeep, with reporting and analysis from NPR News and is available weekdays by 6 a.m.
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has posted a copy of the proposed [Medicare Program FY 2018 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Rate Update and Hospice Quality Reporting Requirements](#). Comments on the rules are being accepted until 5:00 p.m. on June 26.
- **In states that expanded Medicaid** under the Affordable Care Act, the **rate of low-income adults lacking health insurance dropped** 7.5 percentage points more than in non-expansion states by 2015, according to an Agency for Healthcare Research and

Quality study in the May issue of *Health Affairs*. Researchers analyzed federal survey results for more than 97,000 low-income adults between the ages of 19 and 64 who either lived in states that expanded Medicaid in 2014 or in states that did not expand Medicaid in either 2014 or 2015. The rate of uninsurance fell by 18.2 percentage points in expansion states and 10.7 percentage points in non-expansion states. Survey respondents in expansion states were also significantly more likely to report that their health insurance coverage was better in both 2014 and 2015, compared to respondents in non-expansion states. To learn more, click [here](#).

- **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** which will take place on June 15, 2017, is a global campaign by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. It was established over 10 years ago to help promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older adults while raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect. In SFY 15-16, county Departments of Social Services in North Carolina received 25,980 reports of adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- The Commonwealth Fund's [Scorecard on State Health System Performance, 2017 Edition](#), assessed states on more than 40 indicators of health care access, quality, costs, and outcomes. This interactive tool shows the gains that each state could achieve by improving its performance to the level of better-performing states, as well as the losses that would result if a state failed to sustain its performance.

Upcoming Meetings/Events

June 2, 2017 – Symposium on **Preventing Alzheimer's Disease: Opportunities and Challenges** hosted by the Bryan Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at Duke University. National keynote speakers are Dr. Eric Reiman, Director of the Alzheimer's prevention initiative in Columbia as seen on CBS 60 minutes; Dr. Rob Califf, former Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, and George Vradenburg, Chairman and Founder of UsAgainstAlzheimer's and founding Advisory Board member of the National Alzheimer's Project Act as well as founding member of the World Dementia Council. The symposium will showcase the latest Duke discoveries. It will take place at the Duke Nursing School in room 1014 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (continental breakfast provided). Registration is required. To register, call 919-668-0820 or e-mail DukeBryanADRC@duke.edu.

May 17, 2017 – **NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse 2017 Annual Meeting and Conference** at the NC Judicial Center (901 Corporate Center Drive) in Raleigh – 9:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Click [here](#) for more information.

June 13-14, 2017 – **NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature** meeting at Hotel Europa in Chapel Hill.

August 28-31, 2017 – **National Home and Community Based Services Conference** at Baltimore Marriott Waterfront.

Articles/Resources:

News and Observer – May 3, 2017 – [Limiting NC Retirement Benefits Will Hurt State Employees, Critics Say](#)

Winston-Salem Journal – May 1, 2017 – [Rep. Donnie Lambeth – A Common Sense Bill for Covering the Uninsured](#)

News and Observer – April 22, 2017 – [As Retiree Population Grows, Hunt for Housing Intensifies](#)

May Coalition Meeting – Due to the Memorial Day holiday, the May Coalition meeting has been moved up a week. It will be on May 19 at 10:00 a.m. in room 104 of the Brown Building which is located at 801 Biggs Drive on the Dix Campus. This is the same place we met last month. It is the hearing room for the NC Division of Health Service Regulation. The Brown Building is the third building on the right if you enter the Campus off of Goode Drive from Lake Wheeler Road. It is yellowish in color and has a large ramp in front of the building. Room 104 has an outside entrance on the left side of the building. Handicap parking is available in the lot adjacent to the building and handicap accessibility to the building is available via the front door using the ramp. Free parking is available on the street in front of the building or in the lot across the street. Click [here](#) to get directions and a map to the building. The Brown Building is number 17 on the map. The agenda for the meeting is still being finalized, but considerable time will be spent discussing the budget proposal put forth by the state Senate, pending state legislation, and developments at the federal level pertaining to the American Health Care Act and other key issues.

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

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