



COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

NC Coalition on Aging Mid-Month Update – October 2016

After the Storm – Our thoughts are with all those who have been impacted by Hurricane Matthew in the last week as well as those who suffered extensive flooding in the weeks prior to the Hurricane. Much has been written about the fact that disasters affect older adults disproportionately, especially those with chronic diseases, disabilities, or conditions that require extra assistance to leave an unsafe area and recover from an event. There is no shortage of resource materials about disaster preparedness and recovery, and many people who work with older adults will seek out information in the weeks and months ahead as they look to further refine plans for assisting seniors during times of disaster. A helpful resource for information is the U.S. Administration for Community Living which has a special section on it's [website](#) on “Keeping Older Americans and People with Disabilities Safe and Healthy During Emergencies.” This site has numerous helpful links.

NC Health News has an informative article this week titled [“When Floods Recede: Troubles Rise”](#) that offers reminders and information about the dangers after the flooding stops and clean up begins.

Presidential Candidates Positions on Aging Issues – The National Council on Aging (NCOA) has researched where the two major party candidates for President stand on issues of concern to older adults and the aging network. The research includes a review of campaign statements issued by the candidates, media analysis comparing the candidates positions, as well as information about what national organizations are saying about the candidates. To review the information, click [here](#).

AARP Releases Part III of Where Candidates for Governor Stand on Issues – AARP North Carolina has released Part III of its three-part series which looks at where Governor Pat McCrory and Attorney General Roy Cooper stand on issues important to older North Carolinians. In Part III, the candidates present their proposals to make communities across the state “age-friendly” and better places to age. Click [here](#) to watch the video of the third series as well as the first two parts of the series which examined proposals to address financial security and to help family caregivers.

Gubernatorial Debate – Governor Pat McCrory, Attorney General Roy Cooper, and Libertarian candidate Lon Cecil will participate in a final debate on October 18 at 7:00 p.m. The hour-long

debate will be hosted by WRAL News and will be moderated by Anchor David Crabtree and Capital Bureau Chief Laura Leslie. The debate will air live on WRAL-TV, will be streamed live on WRAL.com and will be available to other media outlets statewide. It will also air on FOX50 at 11:00 p.m.

Questions About Voting – With all that has been going on in North Carolina related to voting provisions, many people, including older adults, may have questions about things such as early voting, same-day registration, voting by mail, curbside voting, etc. There are many resources to help provide answers to these and other questions. The [NC State Board of Elections](#) and [Democracy North Carolina](#) both have good websites and materials that can be downloaded.

Senior Tar Heel Legislature Sets 2017 Legislative Priorities – The NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature met last week and as part of that meeting selected their legislative priorities for the legislative session next year. The priorities are:

- Reestablish the Study Commission on Aging
- Increase funding for the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG)
- Increase funding for senior centers
- Sustain and expand Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternative to Running on Empy)
- Strengthen and fund North Carolina's adult protective services program (APS)

The Senior Tar Heel Legislature was created by the NC General Assembly in 1993 to provide information to senior citizens on the legislative process and matters being considered by the General Assembly, to promote citizen involvement and advocacy concerning aging issues before the General Assembly, and to assess the legislative needs of older adults by convening a forum modeled after the General Assembly. Each county has a delegate to the Senior Legislature and most counties also have an alternate delegate. Delegates and alternates must be age 60 or older. The current Speaker of the Senior Tar Heel Legislature, the top elected position, is Dr. Althea Taylor-Jones from Kernersville.

Your Voice/Your Vote Initiative – The NC Justice Center has a Your Voice/Your Vote – Election 2016 initiative which looks at challenges facing the state and identifies questions to ask candidates for office about how they would address these issues. To learn more, click [here](#).

Fact Sheet on North Carolina Emergency Department (ED) Visits with Diagnosis of Dementia – A new fact sheet provides data about North Carolina's 2010-2014 emergency department visits by persons 65+ with a diagnosis of dementia. The fact sheet is produced with support from the UNC Injury Prevention Research Center and the Injury and Violence Prevention Branch of the NC Division of Public Health. Some findings presented from the fact sheet include:

- In 2010-2014, there were 599,611 ED visits with a diagnosis of a mental health disorder among patients 65+. 224,550 (37.4%) of these visits had a diagnosis of dementia.

- Rates of ED visits with a diagnosis of mental health disorder remained steady across the five years of the study. ED visits rates with a diagnosis of dementia increased from 1,609 ED visits per 100,000 person-years in 2010 to 4,320 visits per 100,000 person-years in 2014; a percent increase of 168%.
- Rates of dementia increased with increasing age. Patients 85+ had the highest rate of dementia with 12,489 visits per person-years.
- The ten North Carolina counties with the highest rates of ED visits with a diagnosis of dementia among patients 65+ (visits per 100,000 person-years in parentheses) were Robeson (6,608), Lenoir (6,255), Northampton (5,905), Greene (5,257), Avery (5,244), Wayne (5,204), Iredell (4,763), Cleveland (4,720), Bertie (4,706), and Pasquotank (4,619).

The fact sheet provides information and supportive data that should be helpful in addressing recommendations of the NC Strategic Plan for Addressing Alzheimer’s and Related Dementias released earlier this year. Specific relevant recommendations from the Plan include:

Recommendation 4.3: Assess health system capacity for people with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias.

Recommendation 4.9: Expand the Dementia Friendly Hospital initiative.

The fact sheet will be posted soon on the NC DETECT website at <http://www.ncdetect.org/>. NC DETECT (Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool) provides public health officials and hospital users with the capacity for statewide early event detection and timely public health surveillance.

Dementia Friendly America Statewide Conference – Last Call for Registration – The Conference, which will take place on Tuesday, October 18, at the Renaissance Centre in Wake Forest from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., will provide an overview of the Dementia Friendly American concept, examine what is happening regarding dementia in North Carolina, and look at how to foster support for dementia friendly communities in our state. To register for the Conference, click [here](#).

Allen Roses, Noted Alzheimer’s Researcher, Dies of Heart Attack – Dr. Roses, the Duke University scientist who established a genetic link to Alzheimer’s disease, died of a heart attack on September 30 at the age of 73. At the time of his death, Dr. Roses was the Jefferson-Pilot Corporate Professor of Neurobiology at Duke’s School of Medicine and the owner and CEO of Zinfandel Pharmaceuticals, a small Chapel Hill pharmaceutical company that is working with a Japanese drug company to develop a medicine to delay the onset of Alzheimer’s. Earlier in his career, Dr. Roses was chief of neurology at Duke and for a decade was senior vice president for genetic research at GlaxoSmithKline. An article about Dr. Roses and his work can be found [here](#). We extend condolences to Dr. Roses’ family. He will be greatly missed.

Alzheimer’s Candlelight Reflection Ceremony – Save the date for the Alzheimer’s Association’s annual candlelight Reflections on the Art of Love ceremony which will be held on Thursday, December 8, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the City of Raleigh Museum. Light refreshments will be served at 5:30 p.m.

Putting a Face on Medicaid Expansion in North Carolina is a new study released this week by the NC Poverty Research Fund in Chapel Hill, and it provides a compelling case for why North Carolina should expand Medicaid. In addition to including data about the lost federal funding and the number of people who are losing out on care due to the failure to expand Medicaid, the report includes stories from doctors about the problems experienced by their patients who are missing health insurance coverage. There are also stories from people in our state who share what it is like to not have health insurance and the impact this has on their health. To see a copy of the study, click [here](#), and to see a copy of an article about the study from NC Policy Watch, click [here](#). The *News and Observer* and the *Charlotte Observer* also had a good article on October 14 entitled [“In NC, Thousands Still Lack Insurance and Health Care; What Should the State Do?”](#) and *Capitol Broadcasting Company* did an editorial [“Transcend Petty Partisan Politics and Expand Medicaid”](#) on October 7.

NPR Program Looks at Impact of Medicaid Policy Change on Personal-Care Services – On October 4, the WUNC Public Radio program *The State of Things* had a program about the loss of eligibility for personal-care services by some Medicaid recipients following a policy change by the state. To hear the story in which host Frank Stasio talks with Michael Gabelein, staff investigative reporter for *Carolina Public Press*, click [here](#).

2016 Elder Index Released – The [Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index](#) (Elder Index) offers a tool to increase understanding about the true cost of growing old. The Index presents local expenses, savings requirements, and what incomes are needed to achieve economic security by family type at the city, county, and state levels. The Index was developed by the [Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston](#) with Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), and is currently maintained through a partnership between the Gerontology Institute and the National Council on Aging (NCOA). The Elder Index is a measure of the income that older adults need to meet their basic needs and age in place with dignity. It is specific to household size, location, housing, and health status. It includes the cost of housing, health care, transportation, food, and miscellaneous essentials. The database can be used to:

- Find out how much is needed to be economically secure, by location and family type
- Compare expenses across locations and family types
- Download national, state, county and city index data
- Access additional information on elder economic security

The Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging within University of Massachusetts Boston’s Gerontology Institute has published [Living Below the Line: Economic Insecurity and](#)

Older Americans Insecurity in the States 2016, which summarizes what the Elder Index looks like across the states. Key findings include:

- The 2016 Elder Index estimates that half of older adults living alone, and 1 out of 4 older adults living in two-elder households, lack the financial resources required to pay for basic needs.
- This means that a large percentage of older adults are living in a gap between poverty and economic security.
- Individuals in this “gap” often have incomes too high to qualify for many means-tested public programs, yet too low to achieve intermediate or long-term economic security.
- In every state, the share of older adults living “in the gap” between the federal poverty level and the Elder Index is larger than the share living in poverty.

Recommendations for Measuring Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Quality –

In September, the National Quality Forum issued a report that provides a framework for measuring the quality of HCBS and makes recommendations for the future. The report, which was two years in the works, is very timely as more states take on reforms towards managed care and integration. To get the report, click [here](#).

Flu Vaccines – It’s that time of the year again when people are being urged to get the fly shot. This year, there are two different flu vaccines available that are designed specifically for people age 65 and older. One option is the Fluzone High-Dose, which has been available since 2010. The other is the new FDA approved FLUAD vaccine. Fluzone High-Dose is a high-potency vaccine that contains four times the amount of antigen as a regular flu shot does which creates a stronger immune response. The new FLUAD vaccine contains an added ingredient called adjuvant MF59 that also creates a stronger immune response. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend one vaccination over another. Medicare Part B covers 100% of the costs of any flu shot as long as your doctor, health clinic or pharmacy agrees not to charge you more than Medicare pays.

October Coalition Meeting – The Coalition is pleased that Secretary of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Rick Brajer, will join us for the Coalition’s monthly meeting on October 28. Secretary Brajer will give very brief remarks but he wants to spend most of his time at the meeting hearing from Coalition members about the needs of older adults and their family caregivers and about what is working well as well as where challenges exist in providing programs and services for our state’s older residents. Time at the meeting will also be devoted to hearing presentations about issues for consideration for the Coalition’s 2017 legislative agenda. The meeting will be at 10:00 a.m. in the first floor conference room at the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services (693 Palmer Drive, Taylor Hall on the Dix campus).

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.

Coalition on Aging Membership – Are you interested in getting more involved in being an advocate for older North Carolinians? If yes, consider becoming a member of the Coalition on Aging. Membership in the Coalition 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/>.