



## COMING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

### **NC Coalition on Aging First of the Month Update – October 2016**

**Annual Meeting/Luncheon** – Special thanks to everyone who attended the Coalition’s annual meeting and luncheon on September 23. We had good attendance and everyone there had a great time networking and recapping the Coalition’s work for the last year. Dr. Robert Friedland from Georgetown University gave a very engaging presentation about the importance of making our voices heard with elected officials, and we had the opportunity to celebrate the six decades of work in aging by Dot Crawford (pictured below) from Macon County by presenting her with the Coalition’s 2016 Pioneer Award. Additional pictures from the meeting/luncheon can be found at <http://www.nccoalitiononaging.org/gallery.html>.



**Correction on Date for Gubernatorial Debate** – The debate between Governor Pat McCrory and Attorney General Roy Cooper sponsored by the NC Association of Broadcasters Educational Foundation will that will take place at the UNC-TV studios in Research Triangle Park will be on October 11. We had reported by mistake in a previous *Update* that it would be on October 30. Thirty TV stations and statewide radio will air the debate which will be moderated by Chuck Todd with NBC.

**Medicare Open Enrollment Period Starts in Mid-October** – The Medicare Open Enrollment Period for 2016 starts on October 15 and runs through December 7. During this time, all people with Medicare can change their Medicare health plans and prescription drug coverage for next year to better meet their needs. The Seniors’ Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) in the NC Department of Insurance is available to help Medicare beneficiaries and their families over the phone or in-person in all 100 counties in North Carolina. For more information about SHIIP and the Medicare Open Enrollment Period, call 1-855-408-1212.

**Overnight Respite Pilot Update** – On September 12, the Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee of the NC General Assembly heard an update report from Jesse Goodman,

Chief of the Health Care Personnel Education and Credentialing Section with the NC Division of Health Services Regulation on the overnight respite pilot program. Teresa Johnson Troup with the NC Adult Day Services Association attended this committee meeting and shares this information from the report. Thirty-four participants have been served with 209 overnight stays during January 1 – July 31, 2016 at pilot sites in Asheville and Raleigh. S.L. 2015-241 established a new licensure program for overnight respite in adult day centers. The current pilot program authorized by S.L. 2011-104 is to be repealed on July 1, 2017, or the date the licensure program begins if earlier. The proposed rules for overnight respite have been published in the NC Register and the NC Medical Care Commission is accepting public comments on the rules as well as the fiscal note for the rules until November 14. A public hearing regarding the rules is scheduled for November 2, 2016, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 104, Brown Building at 801 Biggs Drive, Raleigh.

Respite is an approved service under North Carolina's Medicaid waivers. For the CAP D/A (Community Alternative Program for Disabled Adults) and Innovations waivers, the waiver needs to specify the provider type for the service and a waiver amendment may be required. The Division of Aging and Adult Services is scheduled to add overnight respite to the list of services funded under the Home and Community Care Block Grant once the service is licensed and operational.

**AARP Surveys North Carolina Voters 45 and Older** – AARP North Carolina has released the results of a survey of voters age 45 and older in the state of gubernatorial issues facing North Carolina. The survey of 1,000 registered voters which was conducted August 18 – 21 found that most plan on voting in November. Among the issues facing older voters, anxiety about financial security in retirement and feeling stressed over providing care to a loved one were two issues in which majorities of voter would like to know where candidates for Governor stand. Key findings of the survey include.

- 51% are very/somewhat anxious about their finances in the future and having enough money to live comfortably through their retirement years.
- At least half worry a lot or sometimes about not saving enough (60% lot/sometimes), not being able to pay for an unexpected emergency (58% lot/sometimes), and not planning enough for retirement (53% lot/sometimes).
- At least one in five worry a lot or sometimes about taking on too much debt (38% lot/sometimes), not being able to pay bills (36% lot/sometimes), or not being able to find or keep a job (23% lot/sometimes).
- 21% are not participating in a retirement saving plan offered by an employer.
- 52% report that Social Security is the largest share of future or current retirement income.
- 55% say their largest share of retirement income will be or is coming from a pension or 401K.
- 42% say the greater part of their retirement income will come or is from personal savings or investments.

- Among those currently employed or looking for work, at least 45% say that health expenses (45%), paying off debt (45%), not having enough money to cover bills (46%), and rising utility costs (47%) have been obstacles to saving in retirement.
- 76% support a professionally managed state retirement savings plan with 43% saying they strongly support such a plan.
- 76% say they agree that elected officials should support legislation that makes it easier for workers without employer saving options to save money in retirement.
- 87% say they have not read, heard, or seen any information on where North Carolina gubernatorial candidates stand on the issue of helping workers save for retirement.
- 19% of survey respondents said they are currently providing unpaid care for an adult loved one who is ill, frail, elderly or has a disability.
- Of those providing care to a loved one, 78% are feeling emotionally stressed and stressed with balancing job and family (63%), and 44% are feeling financially strained with caregiving responsibilities.
- 86% of respondents said it is important to them that the state maintain home and community based services that allow older North Carolinians to live independently at home for as long as possible. 63% say this is very important.
- 78% agree that elected officials in the state should support legislation that maintains or provides services for unpaid caregivers, with 50% saying they strongly agree.
- Since January of 2016, only 9% of respondents say they have read, heard, or seen any information on where gubernatorial candidates stand on the issue of providing community services that would help family caregivers take care of their loved ones in their own homes.

To read a story from the News and Observer about the survey and a public policy breakfast held by AARP North Carolina where the survey was released, click [here](#). For more information about the survey or the methodology, contact Jennifer Sauer at [jsauer@aarp.org](mailto:jsauer@aarp.org).

**AARP Releases Part II of Where Candidates for Governor Stand on Issues** – AARP North Carolina has released Part II 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 II, the candidates share their proposals to help the estimated 1.9 million family caregivers. **CLICK HERE** to watch the video of the proposals.

**Revisions to Nursing Home Regulations Released** – The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has just released a comprehensive revision of federal nursing home regulations which facilities must meet to participate in Medicare and Medicaid programs. The regulations and explanatory material, which total over 700 pages, can be accessed [here](#). In issuing the new regulations, CMS noted that the changes are necessary to reflect the substantial advances that have been made over the past several years in the theory and practice of service delivery and safety. These revisions are an integral part of CMS’s efforts to achieve broad-based improvements both in

the quality of health care furnished through federal programs, and in patient safety, while at the same time reducing procedural burdens on providers. The regulations are effective on November 28, 2016 and are to be implemented in three phases. A detailed discussion regarding the different phases of the implementation timeline can be found in Section B. II “Implementation Date.”

**Congress Approves Short-Term Funding Plan** - Congress averted a government shutdown last Wednesday, September 28, as the Senate and then the House approved a short-term spending bill, allowing lawmakers to avoid a crisis and return home to campaign. The stopgap spending bill, which will fund the government through December 9, had been held up in a debate over financing for the lead-tainted water system in Flint, Michigan. A conference meeting between House and Senate leaders to iron out differences between the House and Senate versions of the Flint water projects legislation is not expected to take place until after the election. To read more about this, click [here](#).

**CDC Reports 31 Million Adults 50+ Are Inactive** – Although regular physical activity is vital for healthy aging, a new study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that 28% of adults 50 and older are inactive. To learn more about the report and recommendations for action, click [here](#).

**Bill Introduced to Strengthen Medicare** – Democratic Congressional leaders on Medicare issues have introduced the Medicare Affordability and Enrollment Act (S 3371, HR 6109) which, among other things, would cap out-of-pocket spending, significantly improve Medicare low income protections, and make permanent funding for low-income outreach and enrollment activities. Click [here](#) to see a section by section summary of the proposed Act.

**International Day of Older Persons** – October 1 was the 2016 United Nations International Day of Older Persons. This designation is to take a stand against ageism by drawing attention to and challenging negative stereotypes and misconceptions about older adults and aging. Although October 1 has passed, interesting information about the designation can be found [here](#).

**Application Requirements for Accountable Health Communities Model Revised** – The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has revised the application requirements for its grants for the Accountable Health Communities Model. To find out more about the grants which will support bridge organizations to increase a patient’s awareness of available community services through screening, information dissemination, and referral, click [here](#).

**October Coalition Meeting Coming Up** – 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).

**Other News and Resources of Interest:**

- From *News and Observer* – September 22, 2016 - [How to Handle Benefits for Seniors: NC Voters Get Choice in Senate Race](#)
- From *Durham News* on August 21, 2016 and *News and Observer* on September 29, 2016 – [Senior ‘Diva’ Keeps on Moving and Motivating](#)
- From *The Times-News* –September 24, 2016 - [Growing Senior Population Struggles with Food Insecurity](#)
- From *AP* – September 26, 2016 - [Walking Is Medicine? It Helped High-Risk Seniors Stay Mobile](#)
- From *News and Observer* – September 15, 2016 – [Seniors Are More Social Media-Savvy Than You Might Think](#)
- From *NC Health News* – September 26, 2016 – [Letter From Insurer Could Contain Unwanted Medicare “Conversion”](#)
- From *NC Health News* – September 9, 2016 – [Disabled and Want to Vote? New Website Makes the Process Clearer](#)
- From *NC Health News* – September 30, 2016 – [Survey: N.C.’s Health Care System Ranks 40<sup>th</sup> in the U.S.](#)
- From *NC Health News* – September 22, 2016 – [Candidates Decry High Drug Prices, But They Have Few Options for Voters](#)
- From *NC Health News* – August 26, 2016 – [Need a Ramp in NC? Here Are Some Resources to Check Out](#)
- From *NC Health New* – August 26, 2016 – [Tax Credits for Ramps, Grab Bars to Help Seniors Stay at Home](#)

**Submitting Information for Updates** – If you have news or information on activities and events you would like to have included in an *Update* to Coalition members, please send details to Mary Bethel, Coalition President, at [mmbethel72@gmail.com](mailto:mmbethel72@gmail.com).

**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/>.**