**Minutes of North Carolina Coalition on Aging Meeting**

**Friday, August 27, 2021 (10:00 a.m.)**

**(Zoom Conference Call due to cancellation of in-person meetings because of COVID-19)**

**Records Indicated at Least 75 People Were On the Call Including:**

Tracy Colvard – Board Chair, Maxim Healthcare Group

Chad Walker – Treasurer, Board Member

Mary Bethel – Secretary, Board Member

Martha Fowler – Board Member/SEANC

Janice Tyler – Board Member, Orange County Department on Aging/NC Assoc. on Aging

Ray Riordan – Board Member

Heather Burkhardt – Coalition on Aging Executive Director

Adam Sholar – NC Health Care Facilities Association

Alan Winstead – Meals on Wheels of Wake County

Allyse Buck

Ana Pardo – NC Justice Center

Angela Ellis – Martin Co. DSS

Annetta Brown – Upper Coastal Plains Area Agency on Aging

Audrey Edmisten – NC Division of Aging and Adult Services

Autumn Cox – Triangle J Area Agency on Aging

Ben Popkin – Friends of Residents/Popkin Strategies

Betsy White – Access Dental Care

Bill Lamb – Friends of Residents

Carolyn Pennington – Triangle J Area Agency on Aging

Chanell McCain – Individual Member/IPRO

Chris Brandenburg – AARP NC

David Rhew – NC Public Transportation Association

Davida Martin – Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging

Dawn Oakey Gartman – NC Division of Aging and Adult Services

Dr. Deryl Davis Fulmer – NC Retired Governmental Employees Association

Elaine Whitford – The Center for Volunteer Caregiving

Ellen Schneider – UNC Center for Aging and Health

Gina Upchurch – Senior PharmAssist

Greg Tanner – Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services

Guy Brown – NC Alliance for Retired Americans

Harold Barnette – Institute for Family Caregiving

Heather Altman – Harmony Advisors

Jo Paul – NC SHIIP

John Gibbons – RHA Health Services

John Olmstead – NorCCRA

Jonathan Williams – NC Bar Assoc. (Elder & Special Needs Law Section)/Clarity Legal Group

Karen Appert – Southern Gerontological Society/ NC DAAS Senior Hunger Initiative

Kay Castillo – NASW-NC

Dr. Kezia Scales – PHI

Kristen Brannock – Resources for Seniors

Laura Schlabach – Individual Member/NC Dept. of Justice Medicaid Investigations Division

Lauren Zingraff – Friends of Residents

Les Geller – SAGE Central NC of the LGBT Center of Raleigh

Linda Atack – Individual Member/Retiree

Lisa Hoskins – The Center for Volunteer Caregiving

Lisa Riegel – AARP NC

Dr. Lisa Tyndall – Foundation for Health Leadership & Innovation/Center of Excellence for

Integrated Care

Lynette Tolson – NC PACE Association

Madeline Ricketts – NC Coalition on Aging Intern/UNC-CH School of Social Work

Margalita Hooper-Vinson – Individual Member

Mark Hensley – AARP NC

Marty Lamb – Friends of Residents/Individual Member

Mary Marlin – Upper Coastal Plains Area Agency on Aging

Mary Williams-Stover – Individual Member/Retiree

Natasha Vos – NC Center for Health and Wellness, UNC Asheville

Nicolle Miller – NC Center for Health and Wellness, UNC Asheville

Paola Learoyd – Randolph Cloud and Associates

Patricia Calloway – Generations Ashe

Rafael de Albuquerque – AARP NC Intern

Rebecca Freeman – NC Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS)

Roger Manus – Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging

Sandra Deutsch – Wake County Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee

Stevie John – High Country Area Agency on Aging

Susan Bone

Tom Akins – LeadingAge NC

Tommy Goldsmith – NC Health News

Tony Davis – NC Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Tracy Honeycutt – Mid-Carolina Area Agency on Aging

Valerie Arendt – NASW-NC

Willetha Barnette – Institute for Family Caregiving

2 Interpreters

2 Captioners

**Speaker:** Richard Duncan – RL Mace Universal Design Institute

**Opening Remarks and Introductions** – Tracy Colvard, Chair of the Coalition’s Board, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. He welcomed everyone and put in a plug for the annual meeting next month.

**Minutes from June 25, 2021 Coaliton Meeting** – Mary Bethel, Secretary

* The minutes were e-mailed earlier to all those on the Coalition’s distribution list.
* There was general agreement to accept the minutes as distributed.

**Treasurer’s Report** – Chad Walker, Treasurer

* The bank balance is approximately $72,600. There is increased revenue due to annual meeting sponsorships that are beginning to come in as well as new member dues. Expenses are routine.
* The balance is indicative of the cyclical nature of revenue coming in to the Coalition.
* Registration for the annual meeting was encouraged.

**Legislative Update** – Heather Burkhardt, Executive Director

Heather provided an update relative to legislative action on items being advocated for by the Coalition this legislative session. Highlights are as follows:

**Stabilize the Direct Care Workforce Crisis**

* Permanent Wage Increases for Direct Care Workers

The Governor’s and House version of the budget include a wage increase for direct care workers in both ICF/IDDs and those working in Medicaid home and community-based services. These wage increases provide important reimbursement increases with a requirement to enhance the rate of pay for workers.

* One-Time Bonus Payment Program for Eligible Direct Care Workers

The Senate version includes a one-time bonus of $1,500 per worker.

The House version of the budget includes a provision in Section 39.21(a) which provides a bonus of approximately $2,000 per worker. These one-time funds of $133,000,000 are from the State Recovery Fund.

**Increase Home and Community-Based Services**

* Expansion of Home and Community Care Block Grant

The House version of the budget includes a recurring expansion of the Home and Community Care Block Grant which would reduce the waitlist by an estimated 1,500 individuals.

* Increase Slots for Community Alternatives Program for Disabled Adults

The Governor’s, House and Senate budget versions include at least 114 additional slots.

* Expand State-County Special Assistance In-Home Program

The House version includes a Special Provision titled “Removal of the CAP on the Number of Allowable Sate-County Special Assistance In-Home Payments - Section 9A.3” which would eliminate the 15% cap for all State-County Special Assistance and increase standard monthly payment to individuals enrolled in the Special Assistance in-home program to 100% of the monthly payment the individual would receive if the individual resided in an adult care home and qualified for Special Assistance.

* Establish HCBS Special Fund

The House version of the budget establishes a Home and Community Based Services Fund as a non-reverting special fund. The NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Health Benefits, is authorized to utilize funds in the HCBS Fund to implement, or supplement the implementation of, activities to enhance, expand, or strengthen HCBS under the Medicaid program in accordance with section 9817of the ARPA.

**Address Food Insecurity for Seniors**

* Nutrition Services for Older Adults

The Governor’s and House budgets provide $3,585,000 in non-recurring funds for the State Fiscal Recover Fund to provide nutritional services for older adults in response to COVID-19. Funding is to provide two meals per week or $20 in groceries per week to eligible older adults, to provide two weeks of meals to high-risk older adults after a hospital discharge, and to expand the North Carolina Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

* Food Banks

Both the House and Senate budgets provide $40,000,000 in non-recurring funds to be distributed equally to the six food banks to meet the increased demand caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Remove the Reimbursement Rate Cap for Adult Day Services Providers**

* HB 731 passed the House and is stalled in Senate Rules and Review Committee.

The House budget bill includes a Special Provision for the “Authorization for Local Entities to Set Reimbursement Rates for Adult Day Care, Adult Day Health, and Associated Transportation Services Funded by the Home and Community Care Block Grant and the State Adult Day Care Fund- Section 9A.3B.(a) G.”

**Invest in Adult Protective Services**

* The Governor’s, House, and Senate budgets include $2,579,576 in non-recurring funds from the American Rescue Plan Act to provide supplemental funding for adult protective services.

**Increase DHHS Competitive Non-Profit Grant Funding**

* The House budget provides $700,000 in recurring funding for the NC DHHS Competitive Non-Profit Grant funding and $250,000 in non-recurring funds with an allocation going directly to NC Senior Games.

**Increase the Personal Needs Allowance for Residents in Adult Care Homes**

* Both the House and Senate budgets provide $2,030,400 in recurring funding increase for the personal needs allowance for Special Assistance recipients from $46 to $70 a month for items such as clothes, toiletries, and other essentials. It is included in the special provision as “Increase in State-County Special Assistance Personal Needs Allowance-Section 9A.2.(a).”

**Align the State-County Special Assistance Income Eligibility for Residents in Adult Care Homes with Social Security and Supplemental Security Income Cost of Living Adjustments**

* House includes a special provision titled “State-County Special Assistance Program Changes which includes necessary modification to § 108A-42.1.

**Support Transportation Funding**

* ROAP and SMAP cuts last year were non-recurring and have been restored this year in both the House and Senate proposed budgets.

Both the House and Senate budgets include $209,718 in non-recurring funds for FTA Section 5311(b)(3)/Rural Transit Assistance Program and $781,873 non-recurring funds for FTA Section 5310/Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Persons with Disabilities through the American Rescue Plan.

Heather noted that after this meeting she will send everyone a copy of a handout she has prepared for House and Senate Conference Committee members about these legislative priorities. Mary Bethel commented on the importance of individual as well as group advocacy on behalf of these issues. Several comments were made about other issues being proposed in either the Governor’s, House, or Senate budget proposals. Tom Akins, speaking on behalf of the NC Adult Day Services Association, thanked the Coalition for its work to get the cap removed on adult day services rates. Efforts to eliminate the cap have been undertaken for years without results.

**Guest Speaker** – Richard Duncan, Executive Director of RL Mace Universal Design Institute

Topic: Community Housing for Older Adults

Mr. Duncan provided a very informative presentation. He noted that many older adults are living in homes that have or will cease to be places where they can live safely and independently. Most people do not do planning for retirement housing. New construction options are limited and advance remodeling is infrequent. The purpose of community housing is to create dwellings where residents can live independently and age safely for as long as possible without major renovations; all while maintaining a typical, appealing design. He spent the bulk of his presentation discussing new construction and renovation housing options for age friendly homes. He talked about target areas including the entrance, interior circulation, the bedroom, the bathroom, the kitchen, the laundry, storage, controls, and lighting. Following his presentation, Mr. Duncan spent considerable time responding to questions from those in attendance. (A copy Mr. Duncan’s PowerPoint presentation plus a summary provided by Mr. Duncan of a recently completed survey of Accessory Dwelling Activities and Policies across the state were sent to Coalition members following the meeting).

**Activities and Updates Since the March Meeting** – Heather Burkhardt, Executive Director

* The Coalition has a new intern from the UNC-CH School of Social Work. Madeline (Matty) Ricketts is from Ohio and will be with us through April for three days a week.
* On Wednesday the road map for the Essential Jobs/Essential Care initiative was rolled out. This will be a working document. There will be three monthly policy webinars offered on key goal areas of the initiative starting in September and continuing through November.
* A grant application has been submitted for a systems change grant to the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to help build capacity to move forward on the Essential Jobs/Essential Care initiative. A site visit with the Foundation will be held in September. The Coalition will continue to look for funding opportunities to help address our mission.
* On Monday, Heather and Rep. Donna White participated in an advocacy forum for AARP NC on legislative developments.
* Registration is open for the annual meeting on September 24 which will be hybrid in nature (both in-person and by Zoom). Safety protocols for in-person attendance were highlighted. Tom Akins was thanked for helping to secure the keynote speaker, Dr. Robyn Stone. All those who have signed on as sponsors were thanked. Sponsorship opportunities are still available.
* Heather noted that she has now been at the Coalition for a year. She stated that she was looking forward to working with the Board on strategic planning going forward.
* The deadline for the submission of nominations for the Pioneer Award is September 1.
* The Board of Directors has approved a new award this year that will be given at the discretion of the Board called the Champion for Aging Award. Rep. Donna White will be the first recipient of this.
* There was a reminder that there will be a vote at the annual meeting on revisions to the by-laws and six new Board members will be elected. There are currently 15 nominations for the six Board slots. Nominations remain open through today. The Nominating Committee will meet on August 31 to make sure that those nominated meet criteria for nomination. Coalition members will receive profiles of each eligible nominee and Coalition agency/organizational members will vote for new Board members. The top six vote getters will be put on the slate for official approval at the annual meeting. The importance of diversity on the Board was noted. Heather also reviewed proposed changes to the by-laws that will be voted on at the annual meeting. Les Geller commented that the language for Article I, Section 3, on Commitment to Equity might need a tweak relative to the sexual orientation/gender language. He volunteered to work with Heather on refining this language. John Olmstead also had a question about Article VIII (Conflict of Interest) and the origin of the requirement for this. Heather stated that she consulted with NC Center for Nonprofits and they suggested the Coalition have such a policy. Adam Sholar added that he thought the IRS requires such a provision.
* Mary Bethel pointed out that in addition to all the things shared by Heather, she does many more things on a routine basis to support members and to keep the Coalition running smoothly.

**Sharing by Coalition Members/Updates/Announcements**

* Bill Lamb announced that Friends or Residents (FOR) will hold its Fall Gala on October 22. It will be a Facebook Live event. FOR also is doing a project funded by a civil monetary fine grant (grantee of NC State University School of Social Work) on resident councils in nursing homes. They will be developing a guide and working with five pilot facilities. The guide will be made available to all nursing facilities.
* Karen Appert stated that she is working with DAAS on an awareness campaign about Senior Hunger. October 4-8 is Malnutrition Awareness Month. She also chairs the NC Serious Illness Coalition’s Caregiver and Patient Engagement Workgroup which the Coalition on Aging is involved with.
* Tony Davis with the NC Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing announced that the Division is distribution clear masks (24 to a box) for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf/blind and for providers.
* Dr. Deryl Davis Fulmer with the NC Retired Governmental Employees Association was pleased to announce that the Association will be celebrating 50 years of service this year. They have 65,000 members in the state.
* David Rhew with the NC Public Transportation Association said that public transportation providers across the state are very involved with the launch of managed care. Four of the five managed care health plans in the state have already moved to the model of public transit as the first provider and this is being worked on for the fifth plan. Fifty-three of the public transit providers in the state are with both transportation brokers now.
* Lynette Tolson with the NC PACE association shared there has been an RFA for PACE expansion in the state. There is a hope that the four programs that have applied will be approved and PACE can be expanded to serve 47 counties. September is PACE month.
* Mary Bethel noted the news about COVID booster shots and the emphasis on reaching people who are immunocompromised first and about the proposed mandate for vaccinations of staff in facilities.
* Janice Tyler stated that her program and other local aging agencies will be doing messaging about getting the flu shot.
* Rebecca Freeman with DAAS reported that the Piedmont Triad Area Agency on Aging is providing the call center for people to reach out to about at home vaccinations. There are still a few gaps in some counties where it is hard to get an at home shot. DAAS is working with the Old North State Medical Society on access. Rebecca also shared that the Area Agencies on Aging in the state have received additional funding for vaccination outreach. Ten of the 16 Area Agencies now have contracts in place for this and many of them are hiring staff to coordinate efforts. DAAS is hiring a staff person to lead efforts.
* Les Geller announced that SAGE Raleigh is working on a professional networking event and the Pride Festival will be April 2, 2022 at McKimmon Center. Sponsors are welcome for this. They are also working on several live events and a picnic at the NC Museum of Art on September 11.

**Adjourn –** There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned by Tracy at 12:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Bethel, Secretary

**Remaining Coalition Meeting Dates for 2021 (general meeting time is 10:00 a.m. to**

**12:00 noon)**

September 24 October 22

(annual lunch meeting) December 3