

2023 Legislative Priorities

Organizations and individuals that represent and support our state's aging population coming together to give voice to issues that affect older North Carolinians.



In the next 20 years, the number of North Carolinians aged 65 and older will increase by 52%. During this same period, the 85+ segment will grow by a dramatic 116%. This group of the oldest old are most likely to need care and support. In sharp contrast the number of working age North Carolinians (18-49) will grow by only 17%. This changing demographic shift has been known for decades but the state is ill equipped to handle the growing needs for long-term services and support, workforce adequacy and support for family caregivers. This shift in the state's population comes as the pandemic has exacerbated existing problems and presented new challenges for our state's seniors. The priority issues for the NC Coalition on Aging for 2023-2025 are presented in three categories below to address the wide variety of aging needs in our state.

ENSURE ACCESS TO A FULL ARRAY OF LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS ACROSS SETTINGS

- Increase the Medicaid permanent reimbursement rates to cover current costs of providing services to ensure the stability of providers and support competitive worker wages.
- Implement solutions to improve direct care workforce adequacy such as prioritizing training for working with older adults, hiring incentives to recruit more candidates, and loan assistance.
- Ensure there is not a cliff in the availability of services and support for older adults and people with disabilities after ARPA funds are expended.

SUPPORT ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR OLDER ADULTS AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

- Increase access to health care by eliminating the health insurance coverage gap. Expanding access to health insurance is critical for seniors not yet eligible for Medicare and the direct care workforce providing essential support.
- Support individuals' ability to save for retirement by developing a state-facilitated, privately operated Individual Retirement Account.
- Increase support for family caregivers who are the backbone of our care delivery system by taking actions such as expanding options for care assistance, increasing benefits and protections for those who are in the workforce, and expanding the definition of family for caregiving and leave related policies.

INVEST IN VULNERABLE ADULTS

- Invest state dollars in adult protective services, provided by county departments of social services, to provide funding for adult services program staff and essential services.
- Update state guardianship statutes to allow for supportive decision making and least restrictive options.
- Explore and fund options to ensure older adults and people with disabilities have safe and affordable housing such as expanding funding for home improvement and repair and increasing property tax exemptions provisions.
- Implement the recommendations of the Andrea Harris Taskforce from June 2022 to address health disparities experienced by older adults of color.