



**NC Coalition on Aging Members' Meeting**  
**January 24, 2025, via ZOOM**

**75 Attendees**

**Board Chair Mary Bethel** opened the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

**Lee Dobson, Treasurer's report**

- NCCOA ended 2024 in a favorable financial position - on target and within plan.
  - No unusual expenses. In December we had anticipated expenses such as Network for Good, Microsoft, and Board liability insurance.
  - Revenue grew slightly because we have not incurred the salary of an Ex. Director since September although NCCOA retained contracted services from Carrie on an hourly basis to help with administrative tasks. New Ex. Director will start on Feb 3, 2025.
- Pending Board's approval, the 2025 budget has been compiled. It includes updates in a few areas to reflect minor changes to anticipated revenue and expenses.
- We received the second year of funding from Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation for our direct care worker and caregiver work.
- NCCOA is in its membership renewals period, and we encourage organizations and individuals to [renew](#) their membership for 2025.

**Member Spotlight**

[Association for Home and Hospice Care of NC](#) by Kathie Smith, Senior VP of Home Care and State Relations. AHHC, started in 1972, is one of the oldest Home Care, Home Health, Hospice, and Palliative Care trade associations in the nation. Its' team of professionals and nurses provide resources, education, advocacy, and leadership to its 750+ members across the state. AHHC's non-profit foundation, Carolinas Foundation for Hospice & Home Care, was established in 1998 to support innovation that improves access to quality care in the Carolinas.

**Planning for the 2025 Legislative Session – Presentations on Three Priority Issues**

Mary shared the Coalition's [2025 Priorities](#) as a frame of reference. We will be working in collaboration with others to advance these and other priorities. Today's session is intended to help educate members on these three priority issues.

- **Health Care Workforce Stabilization** by Andy McCracken, Director of the Center for Workforce for Health. Click [here](#) for access to the slides presented during the meeting.

The goal to drive strategic action addressing today's workforce crises and plan for the future.

- [NC Health Talent Alliance](#) is tackling our state's critical health workforce shortages and supports employer-led problem-solving initiatives and guides alignment on policy efforts. The initiative focuses on understanding the regional workforce needs and developing targeted programs to fill identified gaps.
- [Caregiving Workforce](#) is focused on strengthening NC's nursing, direct care, and behavioral health workforce. Through the Caregiving Workforce Strategic Leadership Council, it seeks to generate solutions aimed to establish a sustainable structure and governance model for the realization of the strategic blueprint. For information click [Caregiving Council](#).
- Data-Hub and [Solutions Playbook](#) is a dynamic resource that provides data profiles, templates to prioritize strategic action, and identify promising practices.
- **State-facilitated Privately Operated Retirement Savings Program** by Demarcus Andrews, Associate State Director of Advocacy, [AARP NC](#). Click [here](#) for information. Click [here](#) for access to the slides presented during the meeting.
  - AARP's supports the creation of a public-private retirement savings partnership that allows North Carolinians to *Work and Save* their own money for the future as a benefit for small businesses. They will be working with Rep. Lowery again as bill sponsor.
  - This is a plug and play solution: A worker owns their account and can take it from job to job, while saving as much or as little as they want through paycheck deductions. The accounts are voluntary for employees and employers.
  - It will cost a \$1M dollar set-up investment. The state had options for how to recoup that investment.
  - 16 states have implemented *Work and Save*; 12 states are studying the plan.
  - NEXT STEPS: Join AARP NC for an Advocacy Day on Work and Save planned for Feb 12.
  - Contact Demarcus Andrews at 919-597-8264, or [daaandrew@aarp.org](mailto:daaandrew@aarp.org). He will get back with people who asked several questions that need further explanation.
- **Special Assistance Rates Rebase** by Jeff Horton, Executive Director of [NC Senior Living Association](#). Click [here](#) and [here](#) for information on SA. Click [here](#) for the detailed slides presented during the meeting.

Jeff defined Assisted Living- Adult Care Homes that support older adults in the community. He provided a detailed explanation of the SA program and its challenges. Their legislative request for 2025 is to rebase State and County Special Assistance by increasing the SA rate to support access to care for vulnerable seniors.

### **Update Report by Board Chair Mary Bethel**

- February 3, 2025, [Sandra Phelp](#) will start as the new Executive Director. We are thrilled.
- [NC Multisector Plan on Aging](#) is convening its implementation workgroups. She thanked the many Coalition members who are volunteering their time and expertise to operationalize this ambitious and important Plan. If you are interested, please reach out to staff at the Division of Aging.
- Hurricane Helene Relief Fund workgroup is meeting next week to finalize distribution of the funds collected.
- The Legislative session convenes January 29<sup>th</sup> with many new faces. Rep. Destin Hall was elected as Speaker of the House and Senator Phil Berger is returning as President Pro Tempore. For details on new members visit [NC General Assembly](#).
- NCGA Policy Research leader Theresa Matula who has been the lead staff person on aging issues for many years is retiring the end of the month and will not be replaced before the session. We thank her for her years of services. She will be missed. With her departure, we will need to build relationships with existing staff who will be taking over her responsibilities.
- NCCOA sent congratulatory letters to Governor Stein and the new DHHS Secretary, Dr. Sangvai. We provided the 2025 priorities. Dr. Sangvai has been invited to join a meeting.

### **Direct Care Worker Initiative Report by Trish Farnham, Project Director**

- WECARE Initiative - Recruiting 50 Direct Care Worker across the sectors for a multi-month pilot called [Partnering to Improve Care](#), focused on how to partnership with families. Deadline Feb 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **Policy/Legislative Committee Report by Kay Castillo, Committee Chair**

- [2025 Priorities](#) are posted on the website.
- Advocacy Day planning workgroup is meeting on Monday, January 27, 2025. Please send dates to Kay or Mary of times we need to work around in scheduling this Day.

### **Health Equity Committee by Dr. Deryl Davis Fulmer, Co-Chair**

- At their last meeting on January 10, they hosted an excellent presentation by Lindsey Golden with the Alzheimer's Association and Co-Chair of the Bi-POC subgroup about Alzheimer/dementia and health equity. The slide deck for the presentation is posted on the Coalition's website.
- Watch for a new survey that will be launched in the coming weeks.
- Join the Coalition's Health Equity Workgroups by contacting [Dr. Deryl Davis Fulmer](#) or [Rosalie Calarco](#), Committee Co-Chairs
- The next Committee meeting is March 14 at 10:00 a.m.

### Sharing from Coalition Members

- **Social Security:** Brian Simpson shared information about the [Windfall Elimination Provision \(WEP\) & Government Pension Offset](#), link to their [Newsletter](#) containing valuable information, and shared that [Identity Theft Awareness Week](#) is January 27-31, 2025. They are teaming up with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to host a free webinar about how to spot, avoid, and report identity theft on **Thursday, January 30, 2025, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.** To join click [here](#).
- **Carol Kelly** shared a book – *Ageing of the Oppressed* by Silvia Perel-Levin. The book offers provocative, moving, and powerful stories and analyses of the marginalization in older age and the interaction of age and other forms of discrimination in the denial of human rights.
- **NC Association of Aging:** Janice Tyler shared that NCAOA is hosting the North Carolina State Aging Conference for aging service providers, students, and seniors on February 25-26, 2025, at the Carolina Inn, Chapel Hill. Registration is open, plan to come. Also, there is an Aging Bootcamp scheduled for Feb 24 as well at the Seymour Center in Chapel Hill.
- [NC Guardianship Association](#) is hosting their conference on April 23-25, 2025, at Carolina Beach. The Association is continuing work to further update outdated guardianship laws, but there probably will not be any action taken this legislative session.
- Vicki Gold shared a book she has written: *Aging Safely, Wisely and Well*, a movement and mindset guide for older adults.
- Sandra Phelps, the incoming Executive Director was on the call and said hello to everyone and noted how excited she was to be coming on board in February.

### Upcoming NCCOA Meetings

- Monthly Membership Meeting- February 28 at 10:00 am.
- Health Equity Committee - March 14 at 10:00

Respectfully submitted, Lee Dobson, Secretary/Treasurer