



NC Coalition on Aging Members' Meeting
May 16, 2025, via ZOOM

64 Attendees

Mary Bethel, Board Chair opened the meeting with welcomes at 10:02 a.m. This meeting is a joint meeting with the NC Serious Illness Coalition.

Lee Dobson, Secretary/Treasurer's Report

- Coalition's IRS Form 990 has been filed for the 2024 fiscal year. We ended the year on a positive note.
- Membership dues from January - April are down slightly from the same period last year. Please check your membership status with Sandra. If you are not a member, please visit the Members section on the Coalition website, www.nccoalitiononaging.org to join. Dues are \$200 for organization and \$25 for individuals.
- The annual meeting will be held on September 26 at the Hilton Garden Inn near Crabtree (the same location as last year). Look for sponsor information in the next month.

NC Serious Illness Coalition (NCSIC) Update by Heather Altman, Executive Director

- Heather testified several weeks ago to the General Statutes Commission in support of [HB 349, Update Requirements/Advanced Health Care Directives](#) bill that passed the House unanimously on 4/15/2025, and is awaiting Senate review. This bill, if enacted, will make it easier for individuals to make their wishes known. The bill would update the requirements for health care powers of attorney and advance health care directives to two witness OR notary, rather than AND. Also, the bill would authorize the Secretary of State to receive those electronic files.
- She also discussed the community training program "Creating an Unbroken Circle of Care," which provides education on serious illness, caregiving, and bereavement over a four-day course with follow-up coaching sessions. The video will be shown at the upcoming [NC Serious Illness Coalition](#) meeting on June 20th. All are welcome.

Membership Spotlights

Transitions LifeCare - Betsy Barton.

- Hospice and Palliative Care for individuals and their families is delivered with compassion, support, and expertise as they navigate the end of life or life-changing illness. She presented an overview of their services, including hospice care, palliative care, and grief support, highlighting that 97% of their care is provided in patients' homes rather than inpatient facilities. Transitions LifeCare offers a variety of expert care and support services in Chatham, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Harnett, Johnston, Nash, Orange, Wake, and Wilson counties.
- A new 25-minute documentary video called "[An Act of Love](#)" about serious illness and end-of-life will be shown at their campus on **Wednesday, June 18**. Watch the [Video Trailer](#).

AARP-NC - Mark Hensley (*this segment was presented after Trish's update*)

The presentation focused on North Carolina's age-friendly initiatives. It highlighted the state's growing older population and the importance of creating livable communities for all ages. He discussed the [Eight Domains of Livability](#) for age-friendliness, including housing, transportation, and social inclusion, and

shared examples of communities across North Carolina that have embraced age-friendly principles. Mark also introduced resources available through AARP, including [Livability Newsletter](#) and the [Livability Index](#) tool. The presentation concluded with a call to action for continued efforts to make North Carolina a great place to age, live, and play. It is exciting to explore what is possible in communities to make them age friendly. Mary Bethel highlighted that this program complements the work under the [All Ages, All Stages NC's Multi-Sector Plan for Aging](#).
[AARP-Powering-Livable-Communities.pdf](#)

Coalition Updates provided by Mary Bethel, Trish Farnham, and Sandra Phelps Federal Action on Medicaid

- House Energy and Commerce Committee voted their portion of the reconciliation bill which included provisions related to Medicaid out of committee on Thursday. While changes to FMAP (state Medicaid match) and per capita caps were not mentioned, other items such as more frequent enrollment (every 6 months vs. annually) and increasing co-pays were included. These requirements would place a significant burden on beneficiaries impacting access to care.
- A successful meeting was held last month with Congressman Richard Hudson's staff. Families and caregivers talked about the importance of protecting Medicaid and the impact cuts would have on seniors and individuals living with disabilities across the state.

NCCOA Policy Comments Submitted

- Trish shared that on April 30 the coalition submitted comments to Medicaid regarding the integration of dually eligible beneficiaries into the Standard Plan managed Medicaid model. The Coalition values Medicaid's commitment to coordination of care of this population; and to further simplifying the process outlined in 'Improved Standard Plan Accountability' section. We encourage the department to ensure they have fully mature plans before integrating this highly vulnerable population.
- As a long-time trusted collaborator, the Coalition welcomes continued dialogue between DHHS and members on these critical policy decisions. [NC-COA-Public-Comment-on-Standard-Plan-Reprocurement-5-6-2026-released.pdf](#)

Direct Care Workforce Initiative-ZSR/WECARE Updates – Trish Farnham, Project Coordinator

- Trish met with grant funders on May 16 to provide an update on the WECARE project.
- Favorable results from the pilot where 50 direct care workers and family caregiver tested training modules designed to increase support for direct service workers and foster stronger collaboration with family caregivers.
- On [May 28 a Virtual Listening Session](#) will be held, hosted by the North Carolina Institute of Medicine, to present key learnings from the pilot. Pre-registration is required.

Departure Announced - Trish announced that she has accepted a full-time position with the Center for Workforce for Health. Trish's contributions to the NCCOA have been invaluable and she will be missed tremendously. However, this is not a goodbye. At the Center she will apply her talents and passion to strengthening the systems of care for frontline workers and family caregivers across North Carolina. We will continue to collaborate with her closely. Trish was thanked for all she has done for the Coalition.

Sandra shared that NCCOA has invested in an advocacy platform called Congress+ to help connect constituents with lawmakers. Members will soon see more opportunities to engage with lawmakers using this platform.

Melinda Munden, Director of the NC SHIP program, reported that SHIP has received their partial funding award and expects to receive additional funds for the year from the Administration for Community Living (ACL). SHIP is in a uncertain situation with proposed changes at the federal-level. We encourage all to continue to advocate for needed funding for this program.

Policy Committee Report by Kay Castillo, Committee Chair

- Aging Advocacy Day, held on May 7, was a grand success! Approximately 50 advocates attended and met with lawmakers and their staff on aging issues. Thank you to all those who attended.
 - [2025 Legislative Priorities](#) are posted on the website.
- Older American's Month celebration, also on May 7, held at the NC Farmer's Market, was well attended. The event was co-hosted with NC Senior Games, AARP North Carolina, NCDHHS, NCCOA and The State's Farmers Market. There was live entertainment, guest speakers, activities and more. The theme was *Flip the Script on Aging!* Thank you to all those who attended.

Mary provided legislative updates, emphasizing again the importance of contacting Congress regarding Medicaid. She shared details on the budget plan unveiled by the NC House's Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee and bills related to aging pending in the General Assembly. Continuing funding for NC Senior Games was in the House budget and there was not a budget cut for the SHIP program as was proposed in the Senate budget plan. More information on the budget proposal as well as an update on additional items related to aging is shared in the Coalition's newsletter that will be sent out today. Mary indicated that the Coalition is advocating for continued funding for SHIP and other programs at the federal level. The group discussed concerns about funding delays and service cuts at the local level.

Health Equity Committee Report by Dr. Deryl Davis Fulmer and Rosalie Calarco, Co-Chairs

- The LGBTQ+ Committee announced that the membership survey will go out in June, during Pride month. This survey will collect baseline information.
- Deryl noted that the committee needs feedback on what practices organizations have already implemented supporting LGBTQ+ and how the NCCOA can help with resources or training. Watch for the survey.

Member Announcements

The meeting concluded with updates and announcements from Coalition members as follows:

- **May 20** – Kevin Robertson – The NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse conference will be held in Cary.
- **May 21** - Katie Kutcher – Centralina Area Agency on Aging is hosting [Evidence-Based Health Programming and How It Can Flip the Script on Aging from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.](#)
- **May 21** - [NCSILC Presents: A Special Lunch & Learn](#) with Alyssa Hampton at noon. This session will focus on breaking barriers, navigating benefits, insurance and financial success.
- **May 28** - Trish Farnham – The NC Center on the Workforce for Health is hosting a [Virtual Listening Session: Direct Care Workshop Series on at 6:00 p.m.](#)
- **June 4** – Lee Dobson – There will be a Pre Conference Intensive on the Multisector Plan on Aging prior to the Medicaid Long Term Care Services and Supports Conference from 2:00 – 3:15 p.m.
- **June 20** - Heather Altman - [NC Serious Illness Coalition](#) will be featuring the video “Unbroken Circle of Care” at their next meeting in June.

- **Sep 22-24-** Jeff Horton - NC Senior Living Association is hosting their [Fall Conference that will be held on Sept 22-24](#) at the Caesars Casino and Conference Center located in Danville, Va.

Upcoming NCCOA Membership Meetings (from 10:00 – 12:00):

- June 27, 2025 – via ZOOM
- July – No meeting
- August 22, 2025 – via ZOOM
- September 26, 2025 - Annual Meeting, in-person at the Hilton Garden Inn in Raleigh

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 am.

Respectfully submitted, Lee Dobson, Secretary & Treasurer