

## Coming Together to Advocate for Older Adults

### NC Coalition on Aging Updates January 2020



#### A Message from Tracy Colvard, Chairman of the NC Coalition on Aging Board of Directors

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Coalition on Aging, we sincerely hope everyone had a great year end to 2019. As we move forward into 2020 with a new Executive Director (Allison Costanzo) who each of you will meet very soon if you have not already done so, we would like to take a moment and thank each of you individually and the organizations that you represent for your generous support. The Coalition was extremely fortunate for the leadership Mary Bethel brought to the Coalition and it is her wish to keep the train rolling for bigger and better things for the Coalition as we all move forward. As most of you know, Mary has agreed to join the Board of Directors and continue to help build the Coalition behind the scenes to make sure we are as successful as possible in our future endeavors. Never hesitate to reach out to Allison or myself if we can be of service in any way. Here is to a prosperous 2020!



#### Coalition Welcomes New Executive Director

The Coalition on Aging is excited that Allison Costanzo joined the Coalition on January 1 as the new Executive Director. Allison is a North Carolina native (originally from Durham) who currently lives in Raleigh, NC. Allison's resume includes work for the Council on Aging of Henderson County and Meals on Wheels America where her passion for serving older adults began. Allison is excited to help the Coalition serve our members and be an advocate for older adults in North Carolina. To contact her please email [executivedirector@nccoalitiononaging.org](mailto:executivedirector@nccoalitiononaging.org)



#### Coalition Event Celebrates Holidays and Mary Bethel's Retirement

It was cold outside on the evening of December 12, but the atmosphere inside the large gathering space at Transitions LifeCare in Raleigh was warm and festive. Coalition members and friends of aging in the state gathered for a holiday social and fundraiser honoring Mary Bethel on her retirement as Executive Director of the Coalition. The evening provided the opportunity to network as well as to recognize Mary not only for her work with the Coalition but for her 40+ year career working with aging in the state

including stints at the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services and AARP North Carolina. Tommy Goldsmith, a talented musician and reporter for NC Health News who has written numerous articles related to issues pertaining to aging in the state, provided the entertainment for the event. Thanks to all who attended.



Mary Bethel (right) enjoys the evening with friends and fellow aging advocates (left to right) Suzanne Black, Lisa Riegel, Teresa Johnson Troup, Kay Castillo, and Abby Emanuelson.

### **January Coalition Meeting**

The first meeting of 2020 was held on January 24th at 10:00am in the Brown Building (Room 104) on Dix Campus (801 Biggs Dr. Raleigh, NC). Allison Costanzo was welcomed as the new Executive Director for the Coalition. Three new partnership agreements were announced for the year. United Healthcare, represented by Melissa Church, was recognized as a Premium Partner. Two Champion Partnerships – the NC Assisted Living Association/Poyner Spruill and the Association for Home and Hospice Care of North Carolina/Transitions LifeCare – were also unveiled. They were represented by Frances Messer, Ken Burgess, Tracy Colvard, and Chad Walker. Rebecca Freeman made remarks on behalf of the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services about the Division’s Healthy Aging Task Force Planning. A presentation about the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program grant received by the UNC Center for Aging and Health was provided by Dr. Jam Busby-Whitehead and Ellen Schneider. There is a new call in number for Coalition meetings: (425)426-6365: passcode 335101.



Representatives from United Healthcare, NC Assisted Living Association, The Association for Home and Hospice Care of North Carolina, Transitions LifeCare and the NC Coalition on Aging at the January 2020 meeting.

## Additional 2020 Coalition Meeting Dates

- February 21
- March 27
- April 24
- May 29
- June 26
- August 28
- September 25 (annual meeting)
- October 23
- December 4

## Legislative Updates

### Legislators Continue to Stick with Piecemeal Budget

The NC General Assembly finished its 2019 legislative session on Tuesday, as the NC Senate choose not to vote to override Governor Roy Cooper's veto of the state budget for FY2019-21 ([H.B. 966](#)). Without a state budget in effect, legislators have taken a piecemeal approach to funding state government for the current fiscal year, which began on July 1, 2019. Under state law, recurring funding from last year's state budget automatically continues for the current fiscal year. To address many of the state's new funding needs and various policy provisions that are necessary for the effective operation of state programs, legislators passed 21 "mini-budget" bills last fall. Governor Cooper signed 16 of these "mini-budget" bills into law and vetoed five of them. To help your nonprofit understand how the "mini-budget" bills affect funding and provisions that are important to the work of nonprofits, the Center prepared a [comparison chart of key nonprofit provisions](#) in the full budget, the enacted "mini-budget" bill, and the vetoed "mini-budget" bills.

Legislators will return to Raleigh for the 2020 short session on April 28. The General Assembly is unlikely to reconsider the state budget for the current fiscal year during the short session. (Nonprofit Policy Matters, North Carolina Center for Nonprofits, January 2020)

### Early Voting Begins Soon

North Carolina's statewide primary Election Day is Tuesday, March 3. As trusted institutions, it is important for organizations to encourage their staff, boards, volunteers, and clients to register to vote and to share nonpartisan information about elections. Here is some basic information about the primary election that your organization can share with your staff, board, volunteers, and clients:

- The primary ballot will include contested party races for President, U.S. Senate, congressional seats, Governor, Council of State, state legislative positions, and county board membership.
- The North Carolina State Board of Elections has posted sample ballots for all elections online. To find your sample ballot (and your polling place), enter your name in the [Voter Search](#).

- Early voting will be available in all 100 counties from February 13-29. The NC State Board of Elections has compiled [one-stop early voting locations for every county](#).
- [Absentee ballots](#) are now available. Any eligible voter can request an absentee ballot. Under a recent change to absentee ballot laws, most voters may not receive assistance in requesting absentee ballots. However, nonprofits and others may assist voters with absentee ballot requests if the voters need this assistance due to blindness, disability, or inability to read or write. Also, residential facilities for seniors and individuals with disabilities are still allowed to use multi-partisan assistance teams to provide absentee ballot assistance to their residents.
- February 7 is the deadline for voter registration for the primary election. After that, eligible voters who have never registered in North Carolina or have moved since the last election can only register during the early voting.
- Unaffiliated voters can choose any party's ballot in the primary election.
- Voters will not be required to show photo ID to vote in this year's primary election. That could change for the general election in the fall, depending on the outcome of a forthcoming appeal of a [recent court decision](#) temporarily stopping the voter ID requirement. (Nonprofit Policy Matters, North Carolina Center for Nonprofits, January 2020)

### **Three Measures Governor Cooper Vetoed Were Addressed at Short Session in January**

The three measures that Governor Cooper vetoed that were on the Senate schedule during January's short session on January 14 were:

- The vote on the teacher raises bill was 28 to 21, which failed to reach the supermajority required for an override.
- There was no vote on the state budget covering the fiscal year that is now more than half over, including teacher raises and many other spending and tax policies. The Senate adjourned without ever calling up the budget, instead sending it back to committee.
- The Senate also upheld Cooper's veto on a bill dealing with regulations.

The legislators agreed to reconvene on April 28<sup>th</sup> to begin their short session. Not everyone was happy about the short day, citing the need to get work done. (News & Observer, January 14, 2020. Dawn Baumgartner Vaughan)

### **Medicaid Compromise Bill was Filed During January Session**

One bill was filed during January's one-day session aimed to expand Medicaid with a compromise from Rep. Billy Richardson, D-Cumberland. House Bill 1032 would scale back expansion of Medicaid programs using no federal funding. This idea stems from a concern raised by Senate leader Phil Berger, about the federal government not continuing to pay its share of the program.

The proposal would use approximately \$500 million combined with taxes on pharmaceuticals, hospitals and prepaid health plan premiums- which is the same amount of money that North Carolina would pay under the standard Medicaid expansion model. These funds would expand Medicaid to those making 100 percent of the poverty level. It is worth noting that other Medicaid expansion proposals would

cover those making up to 130 percent of the poverty level. No action was taken on this bill. (The Insider, January 15, 2020)

### **Tax Bill Proposed but No Action Taken**

The NC House introduced a bill during January's one day session to allow for bigger medical expense income tax deductions. This would allow taxpayers to deduct medical and dental expenses that exceed 7.5% of their income, currently the law is 10% of their income. Congress made the change in a wide-ranging tax passed in December, but states have to act to apply the same policies to state tax filings. (The Insider, January 15, 2020)

### **New Healthcare Partnership Connects More North Carolinians to Healthier Lives**

An ambitious public-private partnership that intends to connect health care and social service providers so North Carolina's 10 million people can lead healthier lives is up and running. With 50 of the state's 100 counties functioning within a statewide initiative called NCCARE360 as of Jan. 1, individuals and families in those counties with hunger, housing, behavioral health or other challenges who don't know where to turn for help now have a way to access services more quickly. Brought to life through a partnership between the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services and the Foundation for Health Leadership & Innovation, the statewide initiative is said to be the first of its kind in the nation. NCCARE360 has already recruited 667 healthcare and social service providers to its referral network, with about 2,400 of their employees using software provided by Unite Us, a New York-based technology company that builds coordinated care networks. All 100 counties are expected to be up and running by the end of 2020. The Coalition had a presentation on NCCARE360 last year. (Carolina Public Press, January 17, 2020. Neil Cotiaux)

### **Legality Reviewed from 2017 General Assembly Session**

A North Carolina appeals court on January 21 upheld the legality of a legislative session Republicans quickly called in December 2016 to push through laws that weakened the power of incoming Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper. The unanimous decision of three judges on the intermediate-level Court of Appeals affirmed a 2018 trial-court ruling that declined to declare as unconstitutional the procedures used in calling and passing legislation during the three-day session.

The group Common Cause and several citizens who sued in 2017 argued that the rushed session -- announced and convened mere hours after another legislative session on Hurricane Matthew relief -- violated their right in the North Carolina Constitution to "instruct their representatives." The GOP-dominated General Assembly used it to pass laws that in part diluted the governor's powers. (The Associated Press, January 21, 2020. Gary D. Robertson)

### **More Broadband Coverage to Come to Rural North Carolina**

The Federal Communications Commission says it will use more accurate coverage maps as it gets ready to disburse more than \$20 billion worth of funds to increase broadband coverage in rural areas -- potentially helping thousands of households and businesses in North Carolina. However, a majority of the money, which comes from the FCC's new Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, would be distributed using existing maps that overstate how many households in the country truly have access to high-speed, reliable broadband, according to rules proposed by FCC Chairman Ajit Pai.

Historically, the FCC has overstated how many households and businesses are able to access broadband because of how it defined access. The FCC has relied on internet service providers (ISPs) to self-report which census blocks are served by broadband. However, if just one home in a census block is served, then the entire census block is counted as served. Census blocks, which have hundreds or thousands of people in them, can vary drastically from each other. In size, they can range from a single square block in a city to hundreds of square miles in rural areas. Advocates have complained about that methodology, and the FCC said last year it would create more detailed maps. With more accurate maps, more areas could become eligible for federal and state dollars.

But the first phase -- and largest chunk -- of the \$20 billion Rural Digital Opportunity Fund won't use those new maps. The first \$16 billion of the fund will go to competing broadband providers who promise to extend service to the parts of the country that have no current access to high-speed broadband. The FCC estimates that there are 6 million homes and businesses across the country that meet that definition. In North Carolina, that translates to an estimated 169,000 homes and businesses. The funds will be paid out over the next 10 years. The FCC will vote on Pai's proposal on Jan. 30. (The News & Observer, January 14, 2020. Zachery Eanes)

### **Electricity Reform in the Carolinas**

A group of state lawmakers from North and South Carolina want to deregulate the states' electricity markets by allowing competition for power production. At a press conference on January 16 in Charlotte, the lawmakers said they want the two states to study the issue together and suggest reforms. Rep. Larry Strickland, R-Johnston, said he wants North Carolina to convert the current regulated monopoly to a competitive system. A bill he introduced this session would allow for creation of a regional entity that would own power transmission lines in the Carolinas, and require the state to study the benefits of the idea. He said the goal would be a system that lowers costs and gives customers more choices, or, as he put it, "transition from a vertical, integrated monopoly structure to a market-based system that puts the interests of utility customers at the center of the discussion." (WFAE Radio, January 17, 2020. David Boraks)

### **Legislative Races are Starting to be Predicted in North Carolina**

The Cook Political Report is starting to break down what legislative races look like in many key states, including North Carolina. The best current estimate is that Democrats have a better shot at taking a

majority in the NC Senate than in the NC House. These ratings came at the same time as a new national advocacy group announced that it will support twelve NC House and eight NC Senate races for Democrats using grassroots donations and volunteers. Both the House and Senate in North Carolina continue to lean Republican, however the House remains in the likely Republican category as well. The article from Cook, located here: <https://cookpolitical.com/handicapping-2020-state-legislature-races> references the redistricting done in 2020 which favors Democrats, but still sees Republicans being the front runners across the state. (Cook Political Report, January 2020. Louis Jacobson)

### **Request for Comments from the Department of Health and Human Services Division of Health Benefits (NC Medicaid) for North Carolina's Design for State-funded Services Under Behavioral Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disability Tailored Plans**

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)--Division of Health Benefits (NC Medicaid) is pleased to share for comment, "[North Carolina's Design for State-funded Services Under Behavioral Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disability Tailored Plans](#)." While the implementation of Managed Care has been suspended as legislative action is needed to move forward, the Department continues to work on the design of Tailored Plans to serve individuals with behavioral health and intellectual disabilities in lieu of Standard Plans. In addition to managing Medicaid services, Behavioral Health I/DD Tailored Plans also will be responsible for managing State-funded Behavioral Health, Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD), and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) services as the Local Management Entities-Managed Care Organizations (LME-MCOs) do today for the uninsured, underinsured and Medicaid beneficiaries.

Please share your comments on the policy paper with the Department at [Medicaid.Transformation@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Medicaid.Transformation@dhhs.nc.gov) by Jan. 29, 2020.

The Department will host a webinar for stakeholders in January 2020 that will walk through aspects of State-funded Services design included in the policy paper and address stakeholder questions. Further details on the webinar will be forthcoming.

For now, North Carolina's move to Medicaid Managed Care has been suspended. Individuals will continue access Medicaid and State-funded Behavioral Health, I/DD and TBI services through the LME-MCOs as they do today.

### **News in North Carolina**

#### **NC Adult Day Care Centers Serve Vital Purpose, but Face Stagnant Rates**

In a recent article in North Carolina Health News, (reporter Thomas Goldsmith) reports on "Adult day care centers don't have as high a profile as assisted living and nursing homes, but provide a level of care that can allow an older person to stay at home instead of at a residential center." He dives into reports on costs, the responsibility of the state verse private entities, and the importance of adult day care facilities. Click on the link below to read the entire article.

<https://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2020/01/07/nc-adult-day-care-centers-serve-vital-purpose-but-face-stagnant-rates/>

### **To Prevent Senior Deaths from Falls, NC Providers Turn to Exercise and Home-proofing**

North Carolina Health News (Thomas Goldsmith) reports on “Death following falls is on the rise among seniors. But keeping up strength and mobility can prevent falls, as can making homes safer for those at risk, say North Carolinians working to counter the trend.” He dives into fall prevention in the home for seniors and discusses the two key factors in beating the odds: exercise and home modifications. There was a 30% national increase in the rate of falls among older people during a nine-year period, ending in 2016 which strengthens the argument for the need to exercise and fall-proof one’s home. Click the link below to read the full article which highlights senior centers’ and their fall prevention efforts as well as how people are working on their homes to prevent falls.

<https://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2020/01/22/to-prevent-senior-deaths-from-falls-nc-providers-turn-to-exercise-and-home-proofing/>

### **Friends of Residents Names New Executive Director**

Lauren Zingraff, MSW, has joined Friends of Residents as the Executive Director effective January 1, 2020. As Executive Director, Lauren will be assuming day to day responsibility for the work of FOR including communication, administrative and management, fundraising and working with FOR's Board of Directors to represent the voice of long-term care consumers and their families. Welcome, Lauren. The Coalition looks forward to working with you!

### **Division of Aging and Adult Services- Lifespan Respite Care Program Grant Opportunities**

The NC Division of Aging and Adult Services has been fortunate to receive Lifespan Respite Care Program grants from the U.S. Administration for Community Living for the last 10 years. It’s a project that has been awarded approximately \$1.9 million dollars to date for direct service respite, system improvements, and the support of family caregivers of people with special needs across the lifespan. If To find out more you want to know more about the Lifespan Respite Voucher program provided in NC, visit this link. <https://www.highcountryaging.org/services/lifespan-respite-project>. They are currently accepting applications to provide \$500 respite vouchers to unpaid family caregivers.

### **Radon Tests Available**

In North Carolina, officials with the state Department of Health and Human Services estimate that 435 residents will die from radon-related lung cancer in 2020. In an effort to make people more aware of the dangers, the state is again giving away 3,000 radon test kits as part of National Radon Action Month. The kits can be requested by visiting the state Department of Health and Human Services' Radiation Protection Section. Click here for the link to order your kit:

[http://www.ncradon.org/Order\\_Test\\_Kit.html](http://www.ncradon.org/Order_Test_Kit.html)

Radon comes from natural deposits of uranium in soil, rock and water. Radon gas is usually harmlessly

dispersed in outdoor air. The problems arise when homes or other structures are built on top of radon-producing geological formations. As radon gas moves up through the soil, it can be drawn into a home through differences in air pressure. High levels of radon have been detected in homes in all 100 North Carolina counties. It is most prevalent in the Blue Ridge Mountain region and in a band of four counties in the Piedmont -- Warren, Franklin, Vance and Wake, where the gas is generated in large, subterranean granite formations. (NC Health News, January 17, 2020 Greg Barnes)

### **North Carolina Institute of Medicine Update**

Berkeley Yorkery, the Associate Director of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine, will be leaving this position in February. She is noted as being an incredible partner and leader, with a can-do attitude, sharp policy analysis and willingness to do her best by the health of North Carolinians. She will be missed by the Institute and those who worked with her as she heads to her new role with the Center for Child and Family Policy at Duke University. The Institute of Medicine is actively working to fill her position/role and will have a plan in place for the interim.

### **Partner's Corner:**

*(This year we begin a new feature for our Update. Each month our partner agencies/organization will share a message)*

Thank you to our 2020 partners! If you are interested in learning how to become a partner and have a message to the Coalition's membership in the newsletter, please email [executivedirector@nccoalitiononaging.org](mailto:executivedirector@nccoalitiononaging.org)

### **United Healthcare- Premium Sponsor**

#### **An Invitation to Join Us in Your Communities**

United Healthcare hosts Member Orientations across North Carolina throughout the year to help our members understand and use their benefits. We create a personalized Member Orientation experience recognizing our most vulnerable populations have more unique health challenges, are nervous about navigating the health care system and unsure how to utilize their value-added benefits. Our mission is to go above and beyond to create new ways to maximize personalized engagement with our DSNP members to further help them live healthier lives, increase education and awareness of plan benefits, and increase their satisfaction with the plan. During these events we assist members with completing their Health Risk Assessment Forms and we help them place their Personal Emergency Response System and Over the Counter Catalog Orders. In late January through the end of February we have 10 Member Orientations scheduled and invite NC Coalition on Aging member organizations to join us. At no cost to your organization we will provide a space in our exhibit hall to meet and engage with members of your community. Our typical attendance ranges between 50-125 people.

If you are interested in participating please feel free to connect with one of our outreach representatives in your area.

County	Date	Time	Location	Contact
Wayne	1/28/2020	10am-12pm	W.A. Foster Rec Center 1012 South Johns Street, Goldsboro, NC 27530	Benjamin Pinault <a href="mailto:Benjamin_pinault@uhc.com">Benjamin_pinault@uhc.com</a>
Surry	1/30/2020	10am-12pm	Jones Family Resource Center 215 Jones School Rd Mt Airy, NC, 27030	Brittany Mikeal <a href="mailto:Brittany_mikeal@uhc.com">Brittany_mikeal@uhc.com</a>
Johnston	2/4/2020	10am-12pm	Smithfield Recreation and Aquatics 600 E Booker Dairy Rd, Smithfield, NC, 27577	Denise Rollins <a href="mailto:Denise.rollins@uhc.com">Denise.rollins@uhc.com</a>
Gaston	2/6/2020	10am-12pm	Erwin Community Center 913 North Pryor Street Gastonia, NC 28052	Jennifer Felts <a href="mailto:Jennifer_felts@uhc.com">Jennifer_felts@uhc.com</a>
Halifax	2/11/2020	10am-12pm	Centre at Halifax Community College 200 College Drive Weldon, NC 27890	Surelyne Lee <a href="mailto:surelyne_lee@uhc.com">surelyne_lee@uhc.com</a>
Iredell	2/13/2020	10am-12pm	Ralph Bentley Community Center 324 Wilmington Ave, Statesville, NC 28677	Tiffany Cottingham <a href="mailto:tiffany_cottingham@uhc.com">tiffany_cottingham@uhc.com</a>
New Hanover	2/18/2020	10am-12pm	St Matthews Lutheran Church 612 South College Road, Wilmington, NC, 28403	Kelly Milefski <a href="mailto:kelly_m_milefski@uhc.com">kelly_m_milefski@uhc.com</a>
Burke	2/20/2020	10am-12pm	Collett Rec Center 300 Collett St., Morganton, NC, 28655	Brittany Mikeal <a href="mailto:brittany_mikeal@uhc.com">brittany_mikeal@uhc.com</a>
Edgecombe	2/25/2020	10am-12pm	Rocky Mount Senior Center 427 S Church St., Rocky Mount, NC, 27801	Benjamin Pinault <a href="mailto:benjamin_pinault@uhc.com">benjamin_pinault@uhc.com</a>
Cleveland	2/27/2020	10am-12pm	Cleveland County Memorial Library 104 Howie Drive, Shelby, NC 28150	Jennifer Felts <a href="mailto:jennifer_felts@uhc.com">jennifer_felts@uhc.com</a>

### Transitions LifeCare and The Association for Home and Hospice Care- Champion Sponsor

**1979 Hospice of Wake County** | In the beginning, just 1 doctor & 2 nurses. Charter as a non-profit corporation. Campus built. Nurses & spiritual care counselors & social workers & nurse aides & volunteers & nurse practitioners & doctors. Name change. Kids at [Camp Reflections](#), kids on [hospice](#). Harold saluted the flag. Lucy came for [grief counseling](#). Reid dedicated our campus. Melinda wed in the spiritual sanctuary. [Palliative care](#) gave Sophia more time with her grandchildren. Barbara lived in

the [Hospice Home](#) for 10 days. Resources for [caregivers](#). [Home health](#) doubled in size. Life changing.  
| **Transitions LifeCare 2020**

### **North Carolina Assisted Living Association and Poyner Spruill- Champion Sponsor**

NCALA and Poyner Spruill are honored to be 2020 sponsors of NC Coalition on Aging. Frances Messer, NCALA President, and Ken Burgess, heading Poyner Spruill's Health Law Section, said "supporting the Coalition accords with both organizations' mission."

NCALA supports 250+ assisted living communities serving 15,000+ frail elderly residents, offering education, legislative advocacy, and regulatory support.

Poyner Spruill is a NC law firm with statewide, regional, and national presence in long-term care. Ken is General Counsel for NCALA and Legal Counsel to NC Healthcare Facilities Association. He represents several NC hospital systems, scores of assisted living and skilled nursing facilities, and other healthcare providers.

### **National Updates and News**

#### **Medicaid Expansion Improved Health in Southern States: Study**

A new study finds that Medicaid expansion improved people's health in Southern states, resulting in fewer declines in people's health. The [study published](#) in Health Affairs finds that Medicaid expansion made declines in health status 1.8 percentage points less likely in states that expanded the medical coverage. It examined 12 Southern states, including those that have accepted the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, like Kentucky, West Virginia, Arkansas and Louisiana, and those that have not, like Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

"We found that Medicaid expansion was associated with lower rates of self-reported health declines and a higher likelihood of maintaining baseline health status over time," the study finds.

A majority of the 14 states that have rejected the expansion of Medicaid are in the South. Resistance to Medicaid expansion has been declining, with multiple red states accepting the expansion in recent years, often through ballot initiatives that put the question to voters in the state. Medicaid expansion passed by ballot initiative in Utah, Nebraska and Idaho in 2018. Protecting Medicaid was one of the top rallying cries for activists fighting Republican ObamaCare repeal efforts in 2017, and advocates are now trying to build on that movement by expanding the program in the 14 states that are still resisting expansion. Texas and Florida are the main prizes, as they have the highest populations of the holdout states.

"Medicaid expansion improved health," John Graves, one of the study's authors and a professor at Vanderbilt University, [wrote on](#) Twitter. "But improvements are as much, if not more, a result of stemming of health declines as they are a result of moving people to better states of health." (The Hill, January 7, 2020. Peter Sullivan) <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/477133-study-medicaid->

[expansion-improved-health-in-southern-states](#) *Closing the health insurance coverage gap is a priority issue of the Coalition on aging.*

### **2020 Trailblazers in Aging Awards** (NCOA Week, January 22, 2020)

Congratulations to those selected as the 2019 Trailblazers in Aging Award recipients. To nominate someone for the 2020 Award, please click the link below:

[https://eiseverywhere.com/website/6044/2020-trailblazers-in-aging-awards-/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=01212019\\_NCOAWeek](https://eiseverywhere.com/website/6044/2020-trailblazers-in-aging-awards-/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=01212019_NCOAWeek)

### **Questions linger after Fifth Circuit ruling on ACA**

Public policy and advocacy experts are evaluating the potential effects of the Fifth Circuit Court's decision in *Texas v. United States* last month. The case has been returned to the lower court and could have major impact on the Affordable Care Act (ACA). While the ACA continues to be in effect with no immediate threat to the benefits for older adults, a decision by the Supreme Court could come later this year. (NCOA Week, January 8, 2020) [Read more about the court's decision](#)

### **Updated Elder Index™ Highlights Senior Concerns**

Developed by the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston, the Elder Index™ measures the income that older adults need to meet their basic needs and age in place with dignity. It has recently been updated with estimated 2019 data which suggest that half of older adults living alone, and 23% of older adults living in two-elder households, lack the financial resources required to pay for basic needs. (NCOA Week, January 8, 2020)

### **NCOA Mourns the Passing of Former Leader**

Jim Sykes, former Board Chair for the National Council on Aging, passed away the first week of January. (NCOA Week, January 8, 2020)

### **Aging issues in Congress**

Congress has been busy with a variety of year-end bills that include aging issues. The bills incorporate the final appropriations for FY20, including small funding increases for a number of aging services programs. In addition, the National Council on Aging (NCOA) organized 71 diverse national organizations representing seniors, people with disabilities, and health care providers to sign a letter urging Congressional action on key end-of-year Medicare and Medicaid issues. They want to prevent a rise in prescription drug costs for many vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries that would take effect January 1. They also urged Congress to make the expiring Medicaid home and community-based services program permanent, and extend and increase funding for low-income outreach and enrollment

activities. Congress has decided to extend most expiring programs only until May 22, 2020, when a broader package of Medicare and Medicaid reforms will hopefully pass. (NCOA Week, Dec. 18, 2019)

[Click here for 2020 Funding Table](#) and [Here for the NCCOA Letter to Congress](#)

### **House Passes Prescription Drug and Medicare Expansion Bill**

On Dec. 12, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 3, (The Lower Drug Cost Now Act). The bill caps Medicare Part D prescription drug out-of-pocket spending and strengthens the Low-Income Subsidy program, all while expanding Medicare coverage for dental, vision and hearing services, and eligibility for other low-income assistance. All Democrats and two Republicans voted for the bill. Efforts are now focused on getting action on this in the Senate. (NCOA Week, Dec. 18, 2019)

### **Options for Medicare Enrollment Changes Remain**

Medicare's Open Enrollment Period for health and drug plans ended December 7, but older adults may still have options to switch coverage if they meet certain conditions. Learn about the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period, which runs January 1-March 31, and the circumstances that would qualify beneficiaries to change their coverage via Special Enrollment Periods. (NCOA Week, December 11, 2019)

### **We're Getting Old, But We're Not Doing Anything About It**

One of the paradoxes of this presidential campaign is that while many of the candidates are in their eighth decade of life, fundamental issues associated with the aging of American society are still receiving relatively little attention from the public, the press and politicians themselves. In 2031, the oldest baby boomers will turn 85, entering the land of the "old old" and facing exponentially higher risk for dementia, serious physical disabilities and long-term dependency.

Like climate change, the aging of America demands serious reconsideration of the way we live. Conforming the issue and its many implications, from Medicare's failure to cover long-term care to the ethics of physician-assisted dying, requires what seems to be the most difficult task for human beings-thinking about the future. To continue reading this interesting article click here:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/23/opinion/america-aging.html> (The News & Observer/New York Times, January 2020. Susan Jacoby)

### **The Alliance of Information and Referral Systems Releases Call for Proposals for 2020 Annual Information and Referral Training and Education Conference**

The Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) has released the call for proposals for the 2020 Annual Information and Referral (I&R) Training and Education Conference. The annual I&R conference is being held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 7-10, 2020. AIRS is seeking workshops addressing the breadth of I&R service delivery.

The Aging and Disability conference track offers a unique opportunity to share developments and effective practices in serving older adults, persons with disabilities, and caregivers with I&R colleagues across the country. This track is coordinated by ADvancing States' I&R Support Center, which strongly encourages aging and disability I&R agencies of all types to review the call for proposals and consider a submission. To see aging and disability presentation topics from past years, click [here](#).

The current call for proposals is available on the AIRS Learning system, click [here](#). General conference information is available on the AIRS website, [here](#). The deadline for proposal submissions is February 21, 2020. Proposals are to be submitted online through [AIRS Learning](#).

### **Home and Community-Based Services Conference Has Released its Call for Sessions**

The Call for Sessions for the 2020 Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Conference, held August 31- September 3, 2020 in Washington, DC. is now open. They are seeking original, thought-provoking, educational sessions that enable national attendees to learn about creative approaches, new ideas, innovative models, and emerging trends in the landscape of long-term services and supports programming and HCBS service delivery, as well as topics that address the pressing issues facing aging and disability programs.

[Submit your session proposal](#) by March 16.

Visit [hbsconference.org](https://hbsconference.org) for more information about the Conference and the Call for Sessions.

### **Question and Answer Session Available on Aging/Disability Services and the Opioid Epidemic**

ADvancing States Senior Director of LTSS Policy Damon Terzaghi recently sat down for a Q&A with one of its partner organizations, Allied Against Opioid Abuse (AAOA). During the interview, Damon discussed how the opioid epidemic impacts older Americans, as well as ways that ADvancing States is engaging state agencies to help address the opioid epidemic. This interview has now been published as a blog post on AAOA's website.

[Click here](#) to read Damon's interview about the intersection of aging/disability services and opioid issues. (Advancing States Friday Update, January 17, 2020)

### **Compassion Isn't Enough for Family Caregivers. They Need Training Too**

Family members and friends are the bedrock of our system of personal care for frail older adults and younger people with disabilities. Without their support, the nation's hospitals and nursing homes would be filled to the rafters with very sick, frail seniors. And many of those older adults would die before their time.

Those family caregivers often provide assistance with love and compassion, but no skills. That lack of training makes their lives more difficult and makes it more likely that those they are caring for will fall, get infections, or suffer from dehydration or malnutrition. And as [family members increasingly are](#)

[expected to provide](#) nurse-like wound care or complex medication management, their need for training is even greater.

Yet, a [new study published in JAMA Internal Medicine](#) (paywall) finds that 93 percent of family members caring for an older adult say they never have been taught how to do this difficult work. Click the link below to read more of the article from Forbes. (Forbes January 2020. Howard Gleckman) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/howardgleckman/2020/01/14/compassion-isnt-enough-for-family-caregivers-they-need-training-too/#7e415ffe46f7>

### **Cutting Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Will Harm Community- Level Public Transportation**

As has been discussed previously on the Health Affairs Blog ([here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)), Medicaid's non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) benefit is stuck in the crosscurrents of competing trends: On the one hand, the value of the benefit is increasingly apparent due to recent research and the increasing interest in NEMT as a tool to address [social determinants of health](#). On the other, actions have been taken (including a Request for Information scheduled for this year and a [regulation projected for 2021](#) that will have the effect of curtailing Medicaid NEMT. Click the link below to read the full article from Health Affairs about the correlation between Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation and community level public transportation. (Health Affairs Blog, January 14, 2020. Michael Adelberg, Scott Bogren, Alexandra King) <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20200108.737070/full/#.Xh3Jz2f>

### **The 2020 Census is Underway, and the First Person Counted was 90 Years Old**

The 2020 census is underway and the first person counted was a 90-year-old woman in Toksook Bay, Alaska. Every 10 years, when the census is conducted the United States starts in Alaska and conducts census counts in-person due to the weather and rural landscape of the area. Once they have completed this segment, they will begin in the rest of the US starting in March. To read this story click on the link below. <https://www.wral.com/at-90-native-alaska-woman-will-be-1st-counted-in-us-census/18900233/>

### **Job Openings**

#### **North Carolina Institute of Medicine with the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

The North Carolina Institute of Medicine, with The Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is recruiting for a full time Associate Director to assist with organizational administration and oversight of NCIOM project activities.

The position requires an ability to work with state policymakers, health care professionals and organizations, insurers, business/community leaders, and advocacy organizations to involve them in the health policy development process and garner their support to solve health and health care issues.

Candidates should have an understanding of health and health care issues, experience facilitating diverse groups, superior public speaking and writing ability, knowledge of the policy analysis process, excellent management skills, and quantitative, legal, or other analytic skills. The position will supervise four employees. Education requirements: completion of a doctoral or terminal degree or a master's degree and 10 years of experience in Health Policy, Public Policy, Health-Related Discipline, Medicine, Law, or other related fields

A full position description and application information is available online at <https://unc.peopleadmin.com/postings/175444>

### **North Carolina PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly Association)**

The North Carolina PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) Association is recruiting for an Executive Director. The Association was organized to provide advocacy, outreach, communication, training and education services for North Carolina based PACE programs ([www.npaonline.org](http://www.npaonline.org)) and other developing organizations interested in providing PACE services in North Carolina.

The ideal candidate will utilize leadership and communication skills to work collaboratively within a small non-profit organization and develop/maintain relationships with a variety of stakeholders at the regional, state and national level. The Executive Director of the PACE Association will be working with the Chair and Board of Directors on the following responsibilities:

Responsibilities:

1. Develop and maintain multiple key stakeholder relationships through steadfast diplomacy, social intelligence, and political acumen.
2. Execute the NCPA strategic plan by achieving the following goals:
  - a) Assure financial viability of the NC PACE association
  - b) Improve Operational effectiveness of the association
  - c) Advocate for effective regulatory and payment policies at the state level.
  - d) Support the growth, quality and awareness of PACE to both internal and external stakeholders.
3. Serve as the primary liaison in communicating with the State (particularly the Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Aging and Adult Services and the Division of Health Benefits), public, legislative liaison, other relevant trade groups, and the Association's membership.
4. Oversight of day to day operations of the association including staff and contractors

Qualifications:

- Master's degree (MBA or MHA) is preferred.
- Minimum ten years' experience in a healthcare or trade association setting.
- PACE experience preferred.
- Contextual knowledge of the regulatory, legislative, and healthcare landscape, as well as reimbursement models.
- Demonstrated leadership in strategic planning, partner/client engagement, business development, and organizational designs essential.
- Diplomacy; politically savvy and socially intelligent
- Provide general management of the association

Location: remote home office. The individual would need to be present for board meetings at various PACE sites throughout North Carolina and occasional state meetings in Raleigh NC.

Please submit cover letter with desired salary and resume to [gtuck@cdsrtp.com](mailto:gtuck@cdsrtp.com)

### Important Dates

- January 21: Retirement Finance Class (Part of the 2020 Cameron Commons Forum Series)
  - 7:00 to 8:30 PM in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Alexander Family YMCA, at 1603 Hillsborough Street.
  - Dr. David Strevel, Ph.D., Wharton School of Business and Member, American Association of Individual Investors This presentation is a condensed version of David's popular six-session set of classes that many Cameron Park residents have attended. Those who are retired and those who are proactively planning for retirement will benefit from this candid presentation in a relaxed environment. Whether your investing style is self-directed or managed by financial advisers, you won't want to miss David's presentation based on forty years of successful and proficient retirement investing.
- January 30: Advocacy 101 Webinar
  - 10:00am-11:00am
  - This webinar will explore what it means for a nonprofit to be an advocate and the differences between "advocacy," "lobbying," and "political activities." The four most common reasons nonprofits think they can't (or shouldn't) be advocates will be highlighted and debunked. What types of activities are and aren't permissible for 501(c)(3) nonprofits and their staff, board members, and volunteers, particularly in an election year with many highly polarizing contests on ballots in March and November will be explained. Presenter: David Heinen, North Carolina Center for Nonprofits
  - Link to register: <https://www.ncnonprofits.org/events/advocacy-101-what-nonprofits-can-and-can%E2%80%99t-do-election-years-and-every-day>
- February 6: Aging Decisions for Yourself or Loved Ones (Part of the 2020 Cameron Commons Forum Series)
  - 7:00 to 8:30 PM in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Alexander Family YMCA, at 1603 Hillsborough Street.
  - Lisa Ogburn came to the second career of elder consulting through the doorway of taking care of her in-laws in her home while also raising three young children and teaching at Duke. She wrote about her experiences for the New York Times, among other publications. In addition to her extensive client work, she has written over 200 columns on aging and also lectures widely. The great majority of us want to "age in place," to live at home until we die; however, few of us know the situations and circumstances that most often prevent that. While it's not possible for all of us to stay safely at home always, it is possible to extend the time we do so if we anticipate the most common barriers and put in place the tools and resources to counter them. Liisa will share some ways other communities have worked together to enable their senior neighbors to continue to live at home, as well as some useful tools and resources available now that may be of use.
- February 25: Protect Yourself from Cyber and Investment Fraud (Part of the 2020 Cameron Commons Forum Series)

- 7:00 to 8:30 PM in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Alexander Family YMCA, at 1603 Hillsborough Street.
- Fill Bowen and Helen Savage Experts from AARP's Fraud Watch Network will present tools, tips and resources that will help you be safe when on the Internet or considering making an investment. Fill Bowen teaches cyber security at the Cary Senior Center and Helen Savage specializes in consumer protection issues as an AARP volunteer and former staff member. Their information is applicable to consumers of all ages
- February 28: Let's Get Practical: A Positive Approach to Real Life Dementia Care with Teepa Snow (Caregiver Conference)
  - Burlington, NC
  - The conference will focus on the progression of dementia using GEMS states, and teach practical tips and skills for helping at each state and help caregivers improve their 'helping skills'. There will also be a special session for support group leaders and how they can support their group members throughout the dementia journey.
  - Keynote speaker Teepa Snow has developed a dementia care philosophy she calls a "Positive Approach"™ to care. She is a graduate of Duke University and received her Master's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As an Occupational Therapist, she has over 40 years of experience in the field of dementia.
  - More details and to register: [www.dementianc.org](http://www.dementianc.org)
- March 5: Brain Health (Part of the 2020 Cameron Commons Forum Series)
  - 7:00 to 8:30 PM in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Alexander Family YMCA, at 1603 Hillsborough Street.
  - Dr. Kim G. Johnson, Division Chief of Memory Disorders Duke University Dr. Johnson is affiliated with the Bryan Alzheimer's Disease Research Center and is interested in the development of medications and lifestyle strategies to prevent or delay the onset of mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease as well as MRI/PET imaging and biomarkers in dementia and neurodegenerative diseases. Presentation topics to include: typical aging versus onset of dementia, proactive measures, roles of exercise and nutrition, and risk factors.
- March 24: Aging in American Conference
  - Atlanta, GA
  - Nearly 3,000 attendees from across the nation and abroad attend the annual ASA Aging in America Conference to learn, network and participate in the largest multidisciplinary conference covering issues of aging and quality of life for older adults. The theme for the 2020 conference is Aging 2020: Examining the Needs of Today's Diverse Older Adults. The conference will focus on issues impacting our increasingly diverse and multicultural older adult population. ASA will examine current policies and explore challenges for the future. The 2020 conference will be held in Atlanta, Georgia from March 24-27.
  - To learn more: <https://www.asaging.org/general-info-aia>