

Minutes of North Carolina Coalition on Aging Meeting

Friday, May 29, 2020 (10:00 a.m.)

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

Records Indicated at Least 61 People Were On the Call Including:

Tracy Colvard – Board Chair, Association for Home and Hospice Care of NC

Allison Costanzo – Executive Director

Mary Bethel – Secretary, Board Member

Harold Barnette - Board Member, Institute for Family Caregiving

Martha Fowler – Board Member, State Employees Association of North Carolina

Ray Riordan – Board Member, NC Rural Health Leadership Alliance

Janice Tyler – Board Member, Orange County Dept. on Aging/NC Association on Aging

Aimee Kepler – Triangle J Area Agency on Aging

Alan Winstead – Meals on Wheels NC/Wake Meals on Wheels

Dr. Althea Taylor Jones – Senior Tar Heel Legislature

Ana Pardo – NC Justice Center

Ben Popkin – Friends of Residents in Long Term Care (Lobbyist)

Dr. Bob Konrad – Friends of Residents in Long Term Care

Carol Kelly – Rethink Guardianship/NC Guardianship Association

Corinna Miller – UnitedHealthcare

Chanelle Croxton – National Domestic Workers Alliance

Dick Chady – NC Continuing Care Residents Association/Carol Woods

Elaine Whitford – Center for Volunteer Caregiving

Ellen Schneider – UNC Center for Aging and Health

Gina Upchurch – Senior PharmAssist

Hank Bowers – NC Division of Aging and Adult Services

Heather Burkhardt – Resources for Seniors (Wake County)

Heather Hooper – Dementia Alliance of North Carolina

Jeff Horton – NC Senior Living Association

Jennifer Halloran – Everybody Needs a Nurse

Jillian Hardin – Brunswick County Senior Resources

Jo Paul – NC SHIIP

Julia Adams-Scheurich – Presenter, Oak City Government Relations

Karen Appert – Southern Gerontological Society

Kari Barsness – Barsness Policy Solutions

Kay Castillo – NASW-NC

Dr. Kezia Scales – PHI

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

Lauren Zingraff – Friends of Residents

Lee Campbell – NC Senior Living Association 1

Les Geller – SAGE Central NC/Resources for Seniors

Lisa Gwyther – Meeting Speaker, Duke Dementia Family Support Program

Lisa Riegel – AARP NC

Lisa Tyndall

Lizzie Jordan, Center for Volunteer Caregiving

Marianne Weant – NC Alliance for Health

Marty Lamb – Individual Member/Cameron Commons/Friends or Residents in LTC

Michael Gonzales – UnitedHealthcare

Nancy Ruffner – Navigate NC

Nancy Warren – NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse

Nicolle Miller – NC Center for Health and Wellness

Pam Palmer – NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse/Triangle J COG Area Agency on Aging

Pat Gillott – NC Division of Aging and Adult Services

Pat Martin - Community and Senior Services of Johnston County

Paola Learoyd – Randolph Cloud and Associates/We Work for Health

Rebecca Freeman – Presenter, NC Division of Aging and Adult Services

Roger Manus – Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging/Campbell Senior Law Clinic

Spencer Davis

Steve Hahn – AARP NC

Teresa Troup – Individual Member

Tommy Goldsmith – NC Health News

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

Wayne Campbell – NC Continuing Care Resident’s Association

Opening Remarks and Introductions – Tracy Colvard, Board Chair

Meeting started a few minutes after 10:00 a.m.

Approval of Minutes from April 24 Coaliton Meeting

It was noted that there are two additions to the list of attendees for the meeting: Jillian Hardin with Brunswick County Senior Resources and Lee Campbell with the NC Senior Living Association. A motion was made by Kay Castillo and seconded by Jo Paul to approve the minutes with the additions to the attendance list. They were approved by all voting.

Treasurer’s Report

In the absence of Chad Walker, Treasurer, the report was made by Allison Costanzo, Executive Director. There is a balance of \$53,691.68 in the bank. Expenses incurred include the monthly contract amount and the lobbyist registration fee. Income has come in from several membership

dues and a partnership payment. We also received \$169 in donations from a Giving Tuesday Now appeal. Everyone was reminded to pay their dues for this year if they are still outstanding.

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Activities and Updates Since April Meeting – Allison Costanzo, Executive Director

- A memo was sent to Rep. Donna White reiterating several of the Coalition’s COVID-19

recommendations.

- A letter was sent to Deputy Secretary of DHHS Tara Myers inquiring about funding for adult protective services from the funding approved by the General Assembly for COVID-19 relief.
- The NC Serious Illness Coalition has formed a workgroup on Caregiver Support. It will focus on seeking action on the recommendations coming from the NC Serious Illness Task Force including expanding support for home and community based services and developing a task force to address caregiver needs. Allison serves on this workgroup. If interested in being involved in this effort, let Allison know.
- The Coalition’s annual meeting will be on September 25. Suggestions for a keynote speaker should be given to Allison. A question was posed as to plans for the annual

meeting if this cannot take place in person. Allison noted that options will be explored.

- Carol Kelly remarked that she is impressed with Allison's leadership of the Coalition. She noted her concern about what is happening with COVID-19 and added that seniors are at high risk and this is an important time for the work of the Coalition.

Update from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) – Rebecca Freeman, Healthy Aging Specialist with DAAS and Hank Bowers, Deputy Director of DAAS.

Rebecca shared several things, including the following:

- The proposed **NC Institute of Medicine Task Force on Healthy Aging** that she had shared information with us about in January has been delayed.
- DAAS has formed an internal **workgroup on Social Isolation in response to COVID-19**. The mission of the workgroup is to establish a comprehensive person-centered plan to address social isolation and loneliness of seniors. The four main goals are to:
 - 1) Identify potential and existing programs and resources and evaluate the feasibility for doing.
 - 2) Incentivize virtual programs through senior center certification and establish a single point of entry for accessing virtual programs.
 - 3) Develop and provide training as well as a screening and referral system for socially isolated and lonely individuals.
 - 4) Develop strategic partnerships and sponsorships with the Office of Emergency Management Services, other DHHS Divisions, academic organizations, etc. to expand capacity.

Hank shared the following:

- **Joyce Massey-Smith**, DASS's Director, is doing well and is getting physical therapy three hours a day.
- The federal **CARES Act funding** has been distributed to Area Agencies on Aging and

details are being worked on to get this to local service providers. A lot of work has gone into setting up this new funding.

- The **availability of PPE** (personal protective equipment) is improving for local providers.
- Local providers are focusing on ensuring they spend the federal **Families First funding** first.
- Mary Bethel commented that with all the new federal money coming in, there needs to be a **plan for what happens when this money is gone**.

Update on Developments at the NC General Assembly – Julia Adams-Scheurich, Oak City Government Relations

- The General Assembly is back in session and is facing a projected budget deficit of \$4+ billion.
- There is a need to push the U.S. Senate to move forward on passing the HEROES (Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions) Act to get more money to our state.
- The General Assembly has not yet authorized \$2 billion of the funding the state received through the federal CARES Act.
- The General Assembly is in a protect and defend position, and it will be difficult to get any new state funding for programs.
- Budget bills are being taken up. The House has individual bills that are going through the committee process. The Senate has filed 19 appropriation bills and only one impacts health care and that pertains to moving forward with Medicaid transformation.
- The NC Department of Health and Human Services has just suspended the work on the Healthy Opportunities pilots.
- Aging advocates need to talk with members of the Senate (particularly Senate health leaders, minority leadership and Sen. Woodard) about our priorities.
- COVID-19 has further highlighted all the issues that had been there before the virus.

- COVID-19 testing is now covered for everyone.
- NC DHHS is very focused on COVID-19⁴ so it is hard to imagine that the Department will be able to move forward in implementing Medicaid transformation without a delay.

The provider network has also been upended by COVID-19.

- It is unlikely that Medicaid expansion will move forward. Gina Upchurch noted that since hospitals and other health care providers have been hurt by not having Medicaid expansion, COVID-19 could provide the General Assembly with “cover” for expansion.
- Gina also asked if there are plans to do more on addressing racial disparities. Julia noted that DHHS is doing outreach to minority populations and that is a first step.

Presentation by Speaker – Lisa Gwyther, MSW, LCSW with the Duke Dementia Family

Support Program: “ Duke Dementia Family Support Program: What’s New in Connecting Families to Help, Supports, and Resources”

A copy of the PowerPoint for Lisa’s presentation which was a very thorough overview of her remarks was sent to Coalition members.

It was noted that Lisa is a 2019 recipient of a Pioneer Award from the Coalition. Mary Bethel thanked Lisa for her four plus decades of groundbreaking work in supporting family caregivers.

Sharing by Coalition Members

- Wayne Campbell, State President for the NC Continuing Care Residents Association, reported on an issue that has surfaced pertaining to the taxation of services provided by Continuing Care Retirement Communities.
- Martha Fowler with the State Employees Association of North Carolina reported that they have cancelled their annual meeting due to COVID-19.
- Pam Palmer reported that Triangle J Area Agency on Aging has cancelled their World

No Meeting in July

September 25 (annual meeting)

December 4

Meeting Location, Time, and Call-In Number: Unless displaced by COVID-19, all meetings except for the September annual meeting will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in room 104 of the Brown Building on the Dix Campus (801 Biggs Drive) in Raleigh. The location of the September meeting, if it takes place in-person, is the NC State University Club.