

## **Minutes of North Carolina Coalition on Aging Meeting**

**Friday, April 24, 2020 (10:00 a.m.)**

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

### **Records Indicated 76 People Were On the Call Including:**

Tracy Colvard – Board Chair, Association for Home and Hospice Care of NC  
Allison Costanzo – Executive Director  
Chad Walker – Treasurer, Transition LifeCare  
Mary Bethel – Secretary, Board Member  
Harold Barnette - Board Member, Institute for Family Caregiving  
Ray Riordan – Board Member  
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  
Amanda Borer – Charles House  
Ames Simmons – Equality NC  
Ana Pardo – NC Justice Center  
Autumn Cox – Triangle J Area Agency on Aging  
Ben Popkin – Friends of Residents in Long Term Care (Lobbyist)  
Beth Reeves – 8 Keys to Thriving as You Age  
Bill Lamb – Friends of Residents in Long Term Care  
Carolyn Pennington – Triangle J Area Agency on Aging  
Corinna Miller - UnitedHealthcare  
David Rhew – NC Public Transportation Association  
Dick Chady – NC Continuing Care Residents Association/Carol Woods  
English Edwards  
Glenda Reed – Wake County Human Services – Adult Services  
Haley Williford – Community and Senior Services of Johnston Co./NC Senior Center Alliance  
Hank Bowers – NC Division of Aging and Adult Services  
Heather Burkhardt – Resources for Seniors (Wake County)  
Jamie Philyaw - UnitedHealthcare  
Jean Matthews – East Carolina University College of Nursing  
Jenn Weeks – All Good Things  
Jennifer Albright – Autumn’s Way Care Home  
Jo Paul – NC SHIP  
Joanne Otuonye – Wake County Human Services – Adult Services  
Joseph Libera – Individual Member  
Karen Appert – Southern Gerontological Society  
Kari Barsness – Barsness Policy Solutions  
Kay Castillo – NASW-NC  
Kenneth Johnson – Individual Member

Kristen Brannock – Resources for Seniors (Wake County)  
Dr. Kezia Scales – PHI  
Laura Martin – Individual Member  
Laura Schlabach – Individual Member/Medicaid Investigation Division, NC Dept. of Justice  
Lauren Zingraff – Friends of Residents  
Les Geller – SAGE Central NC/Resources for Seniors  
Lisa Riegel – AARP NC  
Marianne Weant – NC Alliance for Health  
Marisette Hasan – The Carolinas Center  
Marty Lamb – Individual Member/Cameron Commons/Friends or Residents in LTC  
Meike Weist – LifeLinks/Nurse Care of North Carolina  
Melinda Munden – NC SHIP  
Melissa Black – United Way of NC/ NC 2-1-1  
Nancy Ruffner – Navigate NC  
Nancy Warren – NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse  
Neal Davis - Community and Senior Services of Johnston Co  
Pam Palmer – NC Partnership to Address Adult Abuse/Triangle J COG Area Agency on Aging  
Nancy Ruffner – Navigate NC  
Paola Learoyd – Randolph Cloud and Associates/We Work for Health  
Preston Craddock – Greene County Dept. of Social Services  
Roger Manus – Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging/Campbell Senior Law Clinic  
Sandy Deutsch – Wake County CAC  
Steve Hahn – AARP NC  
Teresa Evans-Hunter – NC Retired School Personnel  
Teresa Troup – Individual Member  
Tom Akins – LeadingAge NC  
Tommy Goldsmith – NC Health News  
Willetha Barnette – Institute for Family Caregiving

**Opening Remarks and Introductions** – Tracy Colvard, Board Chair

Meeting started a few minutes last (10:10 a.m.) due to challenges in navigating the Zoom meeting.

**Approval of Minutes from March 27 Coaliton Meeting**

A typo in the minutes was noted and a motion was made by Harold Barnette and seconded by Pam Palmer to approve the minutes with the correction. They were approved by all voting.

**Treasurer’s Report** – Chad Walker, Treasurer

He reported that payments have been received from partner groups and several membership renewals have come in. He encouraged those who have not paid dues for this year to do so.

There are routine expenses plus a bill for help with redoing the Coalition's website. The current balance is \$45,875.62.

**Activities and Updates Since March Meeting** – Allison Costanzo, Executive Director

- Mary Bethel and Tracy Colvard made a presentation to the House Select Committee COVID-19 Health Care Working Group on April 9 on “The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Older North Carolinians and the Programs That Serve Them.” Copies of the Powerpoint of this presentation was shared with Coalition members. The presentation was well received.
- Allison, Mary, and Tracy did three interviews with TV stations following this presentation and NC Health News and several other print media highlighted their presentation.
- NC Health News continues to follow issues pertaining to COVID-19 and long term care facilities.
- The Coalition's new website is up and running. Allison asked that members send her pictures of Coalition activities that may be appropriate to post on the website.
- Members were reminded to pay membership dues for 2020 if not paid yet.

**Update from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS)** – Hank Bowers, Assistant Director

Hank covered a broad range of topics including:

- He shared that **Joyce Massey-Smith** is recovering from her injuries in a car wreck and is coming home from the hospital rehab center tomorrow.
- He noted that the Governor's **stay at home order** has been extended to May 8.
- **FL-2 Requirement for State/County Special Assistance Recipients in Assisted Living**  
Level of care evidence (FL-2) requirement has been waived by Executive Order # 130, Sec. 7; follow-up required within 90 days of the end date of Executive Order (June 7, 2020 – unless rescinded or replaced); (by 9/5/2020 unless Executive Order extended)
- **Families First Coronavirus Recovery Act Funding for North Carolina** (Received both NOAs on April 15; issued Allocations on April 17)
  - Title III-C-1 Congregate Meals                      \$ 2,463,141
  - Title III-C-2 HDM    \$ 4,926,281
  - \$ 7,389,422 Total
- **CARES Act Funding for North Carolina** (Received NOAs Tuesday, April 21)
  - Title III-B Supportive Services                      \$ 6,157,851

- Title III-C Nutrition Services	\$14,778,843
- Title III-E Family Caregiver Support	\$ 3,057,306
- Title VII Ombudsman Program	<u>\$ 615,785</u>
	\$24,609,785 Total

- **NC ADRC COVID-19 Relief Funding Program**

Applied for \$1.6 million to institute a system of virtual services, education and training for older adults, caregivers, persons with disabilities, and professionals to bring about relief, support, and increased capacity throughout the COVID-19 pandemic

There are 4 major areas covered under this 17-month grant:

- 1) **Virtual Management of ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Centers)**

**Access Functioning** – working with NC Assistive Technology Program (NCATP) to increase capacity for telerehabilitation and remote access to assistive technology services , and individual virtual and face to face needs assessments;

- 2) **Deployment of targeted care transition services** – working with Money

Follows the Person (MFP) to target populations most at risk of COVID-19 to assist people seeking transitional support from nursing home to home and provide the needed education and information for a rapid transition .

- 3) **Mitigation of social isolation** – working with NCATP to train long term care facility staff, social workers, and aging network professionals on an array of high/low tech devices to address functional limitations and ways to combat social isolation.

- 4) **Develop and/or enhance innovative services or service structures** – including expanding caregiver education and on demand skillset development through a digital multimedia platform accessible 24/7 in collaboration with the 16 NC Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs); DAAS will examine service gaps to provider emergency respite to caregivers through the current Lifespan Respite service delivery system and identified partners; and address increased fraudulent activities and scams., elder abuse, and options for completing end of life documents during interpersonal restrictions.

- **Social Isolation Workgroup**

Multiple groups internal and external to state government working on communication needs and isolation prevention efforts currently under way. (Friends of Residents/NC Technology Coalition in conjunction with nursing home trade association).

DAAS has formed a workgroup to focus on its own efforts in conjunction with the **ADRC Grant** and to coordinate with the various external efforts; have received guidance, input and advice from Greg Olsen, Dir. NY State Office on Aging and Laura Shannenhouse, Ph.D., of Georgia St. Univ., nationally recognized expert.

- **CDC Grant related to the Healthy Brain Initiative**

DAAS applying in partnership with Div. of Public Health

Will address dementia and will align with the national 2018-2023 Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map.

Has a strong public health approach to ADRD, including risk reduction (primary prevention), early diagnosis (secondary prevention), prevention and management of comorbidities, and avoidable hospitalization , using data for priority setting and action, and support for caregiving for persons with dementia , including addressing social determinants of health

\$600,000 over 3 years

- **DHHS State Budget Ask**

Final touches being made to submit to General Assembly next week hopefully

No information on content, but anticipate it will be significant

- **Long-Term Care**

CMS is in the process of finalizing more stringent requirements for nursing homes in the reporting of infection among staff and residents

In view of the restriction for in-person visits to residents, facilities must still facilitate resident communication (by phone or other format ) with the ombudsman program or any other entity

- **Legal Services**

Bills have been submitted to the General Assembly by the Healthcare COVID-19 Work Group to permit remote notarizations and temporarily waive the requirement for two witnesses when securing a Healthcare power of attorney (POA).

A large amount of information has been put out by legal service providers covering topics such as how to file unemployment, receive stimulus checks, and maintain or apply for administrative benefits.

Legal service providers are also beginning to collect data on the number of clients served, the number of older adult victims of fraud in the past years at the hands of a non-relative, and the number older adults expressing fear of losing their primary residence due to financial constraints or rapid changes in real estate growth and development

- He shared that **30,665 individuals were served 113,007 meals last week** through aging service providers. Mary Bethel noted that the DAAS and the aging network have done a great job of serving older adults during this challenging time. They were thanked for their service.
- A question was asked of Hank as to when CARES funding be available to providers. He responded it should be out within a couple of weeks. Inquiries were also relayed as to whether DAAS is working on guidance for safely opening senior centers and adult day care centers and about COVID-19 testing going forward.

#### **Update on Federal and State Developments** – Allison Costanzo, Executive Director

- North Carolina has been approved for a virtual SNAP program. Major vendors are Walmart and Amazon.
- Twenty six Senators, including Sen. Thom Tillis from our state, have sent a bipartisan letter to Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar asking that as HHS sets guidelines for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (PHSSEF), they not overlook certain health care providers. Specifically, their letter calls for HHS to not overlook the providers within nursing homes, skilled nursing centers, senior living communities, independent living, assisted living, memory care, and continuing care retirement communities who are caring for seniors, as well as those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- She noted that the National Council on Aging (NCOA) has several upcoming webinars that may be of interest. She also noted that updates from NCOA and Advancing States are good sources of what is going on related to aging issues.
- She shared that she has sent Coalition members a summary of the Coalition’s recommendations to the House COVID-19 Working Group which includes a summary of what action the Working Group is recommending.

#### **Presentation by Speaker – Dr. Kezia Scales, Director of Policy Research, PHI:** “It’s Time to Care About Direct Care Workers – During the Pandemic and Beyond”

A copy of the Powerpoint for Dr. Scales’ presentation which was a very thorough overview of her presentation was sent to Coalition members on April 23.

Dr. Scales's shared demographics on the direct care workforce, discussed the drivers of direct care workforce demand, looked at challenges of the direct care workforce, talked about direct care workers during COVID-19, and concluded by discussing what direct care workers need. She noted that the direct care workforce is a crisis within a crisis (COVID-19).

There were several questions from Coalition members at the conclusion of the presentation. Ana Pardo with the NC Justice Center inquired as to what can be done to ensure that increases in funding to providers results in better wages to direct care workers. Dr. Scales responded that trying to get accountability and commitment up front to pass through increases to workers is important. She also added that you have to look at what is feasible to do. Marisette Hasan with The Carolinas Center asked what can be done to get employers to better support direct care workers. Dr. Scales noted that if a provider relies on Medicaid reimbursement, they may not have funding to increase wages. She added that you have to look at what is politically feasible and at the picture of long term care financing overall and ask what might be a better model going forward in the future.

#### **Sharing by Coalition Members**

- Ana Pardo with the NC Justice Center reported that they have several new publications/products coming out including materials about the need for PPE for essential workers in the state. They are asking for people to share stories about their needs. She will send Allison the link for this site which can be shared with Coalition members.
- Mary Bethel shared that she is still collecting stories about the challenges older adults face in paying for their property taxes for our advocacy efforts related to increasing property tax relief for older and disabled adults in the state.

#### **Other Business - None**

**Adjourn** - There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Bethel, Secretary

Additional Coalition Meeting Dates for 2020 are as follows:

<b>May 29</b>	<b>August 28</b>	<b>October 23</b>
<b>June 26</b>	<b>September 25 (annual meeting)</b>	<b>December 4</b>

**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 is the NC State University Club.