

Senior Tar Heel Legislature
June 13-14, 2017
Sheraton Chapel Hill Hotel
1 Europa Drive, Chapel Hill

The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature (NCSTHL) convened for the second session of 2017 in Chapel Hill on June 13-14, 2017. Eighty-seven attendees focused on issues that affect our seniors statewide.

The overarching theme was apparent with each speaker. Seniors are an increasing part of our population and there is an obvious decline in supportive services, as well as caregivers.

Suzanne Merrill, Director of the Division of Aging and Adult Services, provided the latest update from the current legislative session. She reported that proposed budgets in the House and Senate are in need of reconciliation. Therefore, a special committee has been appointed.

Some of the main issues affecting seniors were reported as follows:

- Home and Community Care Block Grant; Governor Cooper proposes recurring funding and adding \$3 million to reduce the waiting list; The Legislature proposes restoring \$969,549 in non-recurring funds.
- Adult Protective Services and Guardianship; Governor Cooper proposes \$4.6 million for expanding staffing and services to guardianship corporations; The House proposes \$520,649 and the Senate proposes \$771,871 both to expand support for services to guardianship corporations.
- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day was June 15th with the theme of “Building Support for Elders. North Carolina observes World Elder Abuse Awareness between Mother’s Day and Father’s Day.
- The NC Alzheimer’s Coalition started on March 20, 2017 as an outgrowth of the NC Task Force on Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias. The major role is to advise and support the continued implementation of the 33 recommendations outlined in the 2016 NC Strategic Plan for Addressing Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias.
- Executive Order 8 “NC Interagency Council for Coordinating Homeless Programs” established a 26-member Council to advise the Governor and the Division of Health and Human Services Secretary Cohen, regarding issues related to housing stabilization and resources/programs for individuals and families who are, or at risk of being homeless.

The Federal Government is proposing elimination of the following programs:

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

A proposal has been made to reduce Supplemental Nutrition Assistance by \$8 Billion and Medicaid by \$600 Billion over ten years.

Mary Edwards provided an update regarding the North Carolina Partnership to Address Adult Abuse. She reported that the Annual Conference held in May, was very productive and that attendance has more than doubled. Several Senior Tar Heel Legislators are individual members of the Partnership. This organization is very timely given the increase in abuse and exploitation of our older adult population. For more information visit the website at www.ncp3a.org.

Brad Allen of the NC Senior Games informed attendees that the North Carolina Senior Games are the largest in the nation and has a variety of events for participants to engage with. Components include 53 games covering all counties, Silver Arts (Heritage, Visual, Performing), Literary and Cheerleading programs, Silver Striders walking program, and other events. For additional information, visit www.ncseniorgames.org.

Cooper Linton of Transitions Life Care informed attendees that “All Hospice is palliative; not all palliative care is Hospice.” In North Carolina, approximately 70 home based and 41 Hospice facilities serve 45,000 patients annually.

Lorrie Roth is an in-home aide program consultant with the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services. In home aide provides cost effective assistance to individuals who have functional, physical, or mental impairments sufficient to challenge the accomplishment of their activities of daily living. Funding sources include the Home and Community Care Block Grants, Medicaid, Vocational Rehabilitation, Social Services Block Grant, Veterans Benefits and Private Pay. Medicare does not cover custodial care.

Van Braxton Deputy Commissioner for the Senior Health Insurance Information Program advised that the Program is recommended for a total cut of all funds (*zero funding*). Volunteers within the North Carolina SHIIP served 105,078 persons and saved \$44 million last year.

Michael Boles presented information on behalf of the North Carolina Adult Day Services Association. North Carolina has 92 certified centers, in 47 counties, serving up to 24,918 participants. The waiting list continues to grow. The cost of services is equated to be about 36 % of the cost of assisted living.

Linda Shaw of the North Carolina PACE Association (Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly), reported that the program has been stalled or frozen in the central part of the state for the last five years. The program has proven to be cost effective. She encouraged attendees/advocates to voice concern regarding expanding the program into other counties/regions.

The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature promotes citizen involvement and advocacy concerning aging issues before the General Assembly, as well as assesses the legislative needs of older adults by convening a forum modeled after the North Carolina General Assembly. For additional information, please visit us on Face book at <https://www.facebook.com/North-Carolina-Senior-Tar-Heel-Legislature-309756065733168/> or visit our website at <http://ncsthl.org/>.

The next meeting of the NCSTHL will be held October 3-4, 2017 in Chapel Hill. During that session, new officers will be elected for the 2018-2019 term.