



NC Collaborative for Children, Youth and Families
DATE: January 22, 2021

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Legislative Update:

The NC General Assembly is in recess until January 27th. We received a glimpse of Governor Cooper's budget request when he announced that he will seek legislative approval to have North Carolinians vote on a \$4 billion infrastructure bond. The bond would include funding for public schools and housing and many other infrastructure needs for the State. In recent years, the Governor's budget request has not played a significant role in the budget process. This year will likely not be much different.

North Carolina Council on Health Care Coverage Wraps Up Work:

The Governor's Council that began work in December held their last meeting today. During the meeting, Council members agreed to [a set of recommended guiding principles](#) for the State. (See page 25 to view the recommended guiding principles.) What became evident in the meetings, is that the expansion of Medicaid eligibility is one key factor in increasing health care coverage to North Carolinians AND there are multiple other ways that we can improve access in our State. The guiding principles include increasing access to affordable health care coverage, expanding access to and coverage of behavioral health services, reducing disparities and supporting rural communities and the business community. They also noted that there are areas of the health care system that should be a priority including: lowering the cost of care • strengthening the telehealth infrastructure (including broadband access) • enhancing network adequacy • workforce development including provider incentive programs, pipeline programs, and loan repayment programs • supporting access to primary care • Social Determinants of Health • preventive services (including vision and dental). Governor Cooper ended this last meeting by noting that this was a bipartisan effort and the principles can be used as a roadmap to decrease the health care coverage gap. He indicated his hope that this discussion will continue in the legislature and that the principles offer multiple strategies to increase access to health care.

Medicaid Managed Care Update:

Michael Leighs, Deputy Director of Engagement at NC Medicaid presented to the NC Committee on Medicaid Transformation (NCOMet) on January 8th. His presentation can be found [at this link](#) and the questions and answers are in an attached pdf.

Ombudsman Contract Awarded to Legal Aid of North Carolina:

[NC DHHS announced](#) that they have awarded the Ombudsman contract for Medicaid managed care to Legal Aid of North Carolina. The Ombudsman role is a federally mandated component of the 1115 Medicaid waiver that gives NC the authority to move forward with integrated Medicaid managed care. [I2i wrote](#) about the ombudsman in 2018 as a role in managed care that is specifically positioned to provide the most objective assistance to Medicaid beneficiaries and their legal representatives in areas such as: obtaining information they need, getting answers to questions or problems resolved in a timely and efficient manner, and, when necessary, equipping Medicaid beneficiaries to effectively advocate for themselves through the grievance and appeals system. Legal Aid of NC will partner with Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy and Pisgah Legal Services to fulfill the Ombudsman responsibilities.

Resources:

- [“Kicking the Stigma”](#) is a campaign by the Indianapolis Colts to promote mental health awareness.