

**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Aging and Adult Services**

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Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor
Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary

Dennis W. Streets
Director

March 1, 2010

The Honorable Jean Farmer-Butterfield
Co-Chair
Study Commission on Aging
North Carolina General Assembly
Room 528, Legislative Office Bldg.
Raleigh, NC 27603

The Honorable A.B. Swindell
Co-Chair
Study Commission on Aging
North Carolina General Assembly
Room 629, Legislative Office Bldg.
Raleigh, NC 27603

Dear Representative Farmer-Butterfield and Senator Swindell:

Consistent with Senate Bill 195 (Session Law 2009-407), the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) and the University of North Carolina Institute on Aging (IOA) are working together to help the state prepare for the aging of the baby boomer population and the growing number of in-migrating retirees. As part of this effort, DAAS and IOA created a joint team of key staff and leadership in August 2009, to develop a series of strategies to support increased preparedness. Below is a summary of some of this work.

Key Activities and Progress to Date:

1. Since August, the DAAS/IOA team has contributed significant personnel resources and time. We have met frequently in full and subgroup work sessions, led by senior management from both DAAS and IOA. DAAS has worked closely with the Governor's Office and the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging in outlining and planning the roles and tasks. The IOA team members have contributed their expertise in survey design, sampling, and program planning and evaluation.
2. The DAAS/IOA Team has conferred with various stakeholders to obtain their views on how best to proceed. These stakeholders included faculty of the UNC School of Government known to have relevant interests and expertise, directors of the state's 17 Area Agencies on Aging, and staff of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. One of the challenges to our assigned mission of planning and undertaking activities to solicit input about priority issues from gerontologists, researchers, county representatives, service providers, and others has been the constraints created by limited local and state budgets.

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3. The DAAS/IOA Team built upon a previous report prepared by DAAS for the General Assembly that had recommended a survey of the readiness of North Carolina at the state and local levels (see www.dhhs.state.nc.us/aging/demographic/agingstudy.htm). This report also identified other states that had undertaken readiness surveys. The team reviewed the aging readiness studies conducted by these states including New York, Arizona, Indiana, and Texas. Key staff members in states identified as having the strongest approaches were interviewed to better understand processes used in planning and the impact planning had on state readiness. The IOA also created a list serve and website to enhance communication and to document the progress of this effort survey effort. The website is located at: <http://www.aging.unc.edu/infocenter/boomerprep/multi.html>.

The DAAS/IOA team is constructing a survey instrument, based on input from the other states and suggestions of state agency representatives who serve on the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. The instrument will assess the level of awareness and preparation for NC's aging population across state government agencies in several domains: 1) workforce, 2) built environment, 3) programs; and 4) services. The aging readiness survey should also help in gathering some information on efforts to foster retiree and volunteer civic or community involvement, models of local planning efforts, existing collaborations, and priority issues as identified by participating state agencies. The survey is being piloted and will likely be implemented in March 2010, with analysis finalized by mid-summer. The team has coordinated the plans for the state readiness assessment with the Governor's Office and her Advisory Council on Aging.

4. The DAAS/IOA Team has also partnered with the Governor's Office, area agencies on aging, local providers, and other organizations to plan six regional roundtables across the state. The primary purpose of the roundtables is identification by the participants of major issues and best practices in such topical areas as lifelong engagement and contributions; safe communities; homes and neighborhoods; health and aging; access and choice in services and supports; and the workforce and economics of aging. Under an overall theme of "Building a Livable and Senior-Friendly North Carolina," these regional roundtables—endorsed by Governor Perdue—will take place from April to June and will lead to a Governor's Policy Conference on Aging to be held October 13-15, 2010, in the Research Triangle Park. At the Governor's Conference, attendees will be invited to participate in a systematic process to further identify strategies to strengthen North Carolina's response to its aging population. The information generated by the survey assessment, regional roundtables, and conference will be used by DAAS in preparing the next State Aging Plan for 2011-2015, as required by NCGS 143B-181.1A. In addition, information obtained through the aging readiness survey and regional roundtables will be posted on the Internet.

5. As the above mentioned activities were underway, several other concurrent related activities occurred to help inform the assessment and planning process. First, in an effort to continue tracking the effect of the state's economic situation on local aging and adult services, DAAS repeated a web-based survey of local home and community service providers in September 2009, and produced an Issue Brief of the findings—see www.ncdhhs.gov/aging/IssueBrief_ImpactEconomicCrisis_HCCBG_Sept2009.pdf. This survey included a section on Adult Protective Services, from which DAAS produced a companion Issue Brief on the status of this important program provided through County Departments of Social Services—see www.ncdhhs.gov/aging/IssueBrief_ImpactEconomicCrisis_APS_Sept2009.pdf. Further, the

Governor's reestablishment of the North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service has provided an excellent opportunity to reexamine the importance of volunteerism and community and civic engagement connected to seniors and aging programs. In addition, the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research continued its research and policy analysis vis-à-vis the implications of North Carolina's aging population. The DAAS/IOA Team is using this analysis to help prepare for these roundtables and the Governor's Conference.

The DAAS/IOA Team looks forward to sharing the results of these efforts in its final Senate Bill 195 report, due by November 1, 2010. Should you have any questions regarding the progress of our work, please contact Joyce Massey-Smith, Budget, Planning and System Support Chief of the Division of Aging and Adult Services at 733-8400 (Joyce.Massey-Smith@dhhs.nc.gov), and Bill Lamb, Associate Director for Public Services at the UNC Institute on Aging at 966-9444 (bill_lamb@unc.edu).

Sincerely,



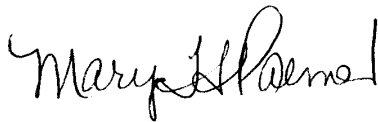
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