

## THE NORTH CAROLINA SENIOR TAR HEEL LEGISLATURE

The Senior Tar Heel Legislature (STHL) met June 26-27, 2019 in Raleigh. Members listened to numerous presentations of interest to older adults and interacted with many experts in the field of aging.

The group had an excellent line-up of speakers including Karen Brinson Bell, Executive Director of the NC State Board of Elections, who presented information about voting in North Carolina. Joyce Massey-Smith, Director of the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services, spoke to the group and updated them on current legislation and activity at the General Assembly, as well as progress on the State's Aging Plan.

Bill Lamb, Executive Director with Friends of Residents in Long Term Care, shared information about his group's efforts to increase the personal needs allowance for adult care home residents, as well as other issues related to improving care in long-term care facilities. Dr. Mary Anne Salmon, with UNC CARES, discussed the benefits of senior center participation for adults and the need for additional funding for senior centers across the state. Rebecca Freeman, with the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services, described in further detail the many benefits of senior centers, particularly with respect to combatting social isolation among older adults.

Dr. Ed Rosenberg, a sociology professor at Appalachian State University, shared his thoughts about the field of aging and an aging population, as well as his own impending retirement. The group also heard from Misty Piekaar-McWilliams, JD, an attorney with the Division of Aging and Adult Services, who shared information about critical legal documents and terms.

Officers for the Senior Tar Heel Legislature serve two-year terms. Their terms come to an end this October at which time elections will be held for new officers including Speaker, Speaker Pro-Tempore, Deputy Speaker Pro-Tempore and Secretary.

Members of the STHL continue to advocate for the STHL's top five priorities including:

1. Increase funding for North Carolina Home and Community Care Block Grant.
2. Maintain and Increase funding for Senior Centers.
3. Increase funding for Project CARE (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty).
4. Strengthen and fund North Carolina's Adult Protective Program (APS).
5. Improve Staff-to-Patient Ratios in Nursing Homes.

The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature promotes citizen involvement and advocacy concerning aging issues in the State by convening a forum modeled after the North Carolina General Assembly. For more information please visit us on Facebook or visit our website at: <http://www.ncsthl.org>.