



**THE
BUNCOMBE COUNTY
AGING PLAN
(2013-2017)**

**2015
PROGRESS
REPORT**

**PREPARED BY
Rebecca Chaplin**

JANUARY 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction..... 3

ACC Planning Committee Membership..... 3

Project Update..... 4

 Service and Support Coordination..... 4

 Safety and Security..... 10

 Financial Wellbeing..... 12

 Health and Wellness..... 14

 Social Engagement..... 19

 Living Environments..... 22

Appendix A) 2015 ACC Meeting Topics..... 26

Appendix B) Buncombe County Aging Plan, 2016 Focus Areas.....27

INTRODUCTION

This update summarizes the progress and community engagement during calendar year 2015 resulting from the six categories and fourteen goals of the Buncombe County Aging Plan (2013-2017) presented by the Planning Committee of the Buncombe County Aging Coordinating Consortium (ACC). The ACC Planning Committee views the 2013-2017 Aging Plan as a starting point for their work over five years and the goals of the plan having been selected to help move the bar, and not merely maintain the status quo, in Buncombe County. The current plan builds on the goals and achievements of the 2008-2012 Aging Plan in multiple quantifiable ways.

The ACC Planning Committee remains committed to the vision of a livable, aging-friendly Buncombe County, and believes that the focused strategies of the 2013-2017 Aging Plan continue to move the group forward in meeting this goal. Below are the members of the 2015 ACC Planning Committee.

Leadership Team:

Linda Kendall-Fields.....Area Agency on Aging, Land of Sky Regional Council
Rebecca Chaplin..... Area Agency on Aging, Land of Sky Regional Council
Bob Tomasulo.....Consumer, Elder Advocate, Chair of the ACC Planning Committee

ACC Planning Committee Members For 2015

Alma Atkins.....Buncombe County Department of Health and Human Services
Alyson Johnson-Sawyer.....CarePartners Adult Day Health Care
Anne Whisenhunt Volunteer Corp., Land of Sky
Bob TomasuloConsumer, Elder Advocate
Celeste Collins..... OnTrack Financial Education and Counseling
Christina StenhouseBuncombe County Department of Health and Human Services
Diane Saccone.....YMCA of WNC
Je'wana Grier-McEachin.....Asheville Buncombe Institute for Parity Achievement
LeeAnne Tucker.....Area Agency on Aging & Volunteer Corp., Land of Sky
Linda Kendall-Fields.....Area Agency on Aging, Land of Sky Regional Council
Phil Gale.....Council on Aging of Buncombe County, Inc.
Rebecca Chaplin..... Area Agency on Aging, Land of Sky Regional Council
Stephanie Stewart.....Area Agency on Aging, Land of Sky Regional Council
Susan KettranYWCA of Asheville
Vicki JenningsMountain Mobility, Land of Sky Regional Council

In 2015, through the leadership of Linda Kendall Fields, Rebecca Chaplin & Bob Tomasulo, leadership team for the ACC Planning Committee, the ACC has focused on an alignment and integration of the Aging Plan with the work of the various committees represented by the ACC and broader community. This work is outlined through the following six areas: service and support coordination; safety and security; financial wellbeing; health and wellness; social engagement; and living environments; and is framed in the Aging Plan.

PROJECT UPDATE

This report summarizes progress made from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015. The plan's six sections include goals (14 total), strategies and anticipated outcomes that are currently being addressed by the Buncombe County ACC. In 2015, ACC Planning Committee chose to focus on 4 goals with the greatest likelihood of success through maximizing existing collaborative efforts. The four focus areas have been marked with asterisks (*) throughout the remainder of this report.

SERVICE AND SUPPORT COORDINATION

Goal 1: Advocate for increasing Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) and County Supplemental funding to adequately meet the needs of the growing population of older adults and caregivers.

Anticipated Outcome:

1a) Increased funding for HCCBG and county supplemental services (or at minimum, maintain current levels)

The HCCBG allows local groups to make decisions about what services are most needed by older adults in their county, how much money needs to be allocated to the services, and what agency will provide the service. The HCCBG Grant is administered through the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services (NCDAAS) and the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and combines federal and state funds with a local match and gives counties discretion in budgeting and administering aging funds.

The Advocacy and Awareness committee has been active in 2015, meeting with elected officials at state and local levels. Members of the Advocacy and Awareness Committee used these meetings as an opportunity to build rapport with elected officials, inform them about the current status of HCCBG funding, and share information about relevant waitlists due to insufficient funding.

Goal 2: Improve understanding of the challenges faced by the county's rural older adult population.

Anticipated Outcome:

2a) Identify current and anticipated (future) special needs of, and focused solutions for, rural older adults

Building on the learning in 2014 the ACC, ACC Planning sub-committees and community partners made gains in understanding issues around rural aging in North Carolina.

ACC Team Progress

As indicated in the 2014 Progress Report, the focus of the ACC shifted to figuring out the delivery of services rather than the needs; this shift was due to the difficulty of creating useable measurements. To this end, the ACC monthly meetings consisted of topics relevant to the needs all older adults (Appendix A) with representatives from relevant topics from our network of aging providers. These meetings included discussion on how to best connect resources with rural older adults.

ACC Planning Sub-Committee Progress

Sub-committees formed to address the 2015 focus areas. Sub-committees integrated an understanding of the needs of rural older adults into their progress and development. For example, the sub-committee that worked on addressing healthy habits in 2015 recognized that the need to gather specific information on the meaning of healthy habits in rural areas. This objective is underway for

development in 2016.

Community Partners

Members of the ACC Planning team found great success in understanding the challenges faced by the county's rural older adults through partnership with and support for existing initiatives.

- Members of the ACC Planning team participated in Community Health Improvement Process (CHIP) sub-committees and now have access to more understanding of the resources available for rural older adults through the *Healthy Living Opportunities Map*.
- Employees with the Buncombe County Health and Human Services (HHS) including Nelle Gregory, Alma Atkins, and Rasheeda McDaniels attended 2015 ACC Planning meetings. Their attendance and expertise helped the ACC Planning Team to build bridges between the work of Buncombe County HHS initiatives and the Buncombe County Aging Plan including: (1) the Community Health Assessment; (2) Community Navigator Program; and the (3) Buncombe County Resiliency Project.
- The ACC Planning team learned from community partners such as the NC Center for Healthy Aging and their work in rural areas such as Enka / Candler to develop community messages around heart health.

Goal 3: Increase coordination of multiple systems (i.e. home & community-based services, facility-based care, self-directed care initiatives, medical, mental health, Community Resource Connections) to ensure the needs of older adults and family caregivers are more fully met.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- 3a) Older adults, families and service providers navigate services and systems with greater ease
- 3b) Increased participation in ACC meetings, including those representing health care/LTC/consumers
- 3c) Increased use of best practice models as referenced in funding applications.

The AAA at the Land of Sky Regional Council (LOS) and community partners facilitated multiple initiatives to cultivate connectivity and coordination among multiple systems in 2015.

Community Resource Connections (CRC)

In 2015, community partners built on the success of the Community Resource Connections (CRC) infrastructure. To this end, United Way's 2-1-1 and the Council on Aging of Buncombe County continued to serve as the main points for resource and service coordination. Federal and state funds formerly supporting CRCs shifted to sustain Local Contact Agency (LCA) activities. Fortunately, Buncombe County was in a good position to make this change as (1) United Way's 2-1-1 and the Council on Aging of Buncombe County were promoted as main access points to supports and services for older adults in Buncombe County; and (2) the leadership team for the CRC and LCA have merged to one entity with a common purpose.

Local Contact Agency (LCA)

The Local Contact Agency is a single or a collection of local organizations that have been designated by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Medical Assistance in collaboration with the Division of Health Services Regulation (DHSR) and the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) / Office of Long Term Services and Supports (LTS) to be responsible for working with the resident and Nursing Home Staff to discuss options for transitioning to the community and offering contact information that may facilitate a transition once a resident indicates interest in learning more about transitioning to home during their assessment (MDS 3.0 Section Q).

In 2015, the LCA leadership team created and disseminated pens with the MDS 3.0 Section Q referral line number: 1-866-271-4894. This single point of entry

helps older adults, families and services providers to navigate services and systems with greater ease.

The LCA and CRC shared a common goal of connecting people to resources to help them age in the community of their choice. The LCA and CRC merged in 2015 to create greater coordination in helping older adults, families and service providers navigate services and systems with greater ease.

The Land of Sky LCA/CRC held their Regional Meeting in Buncombe County in April of 2015 entitled *Get Into The Act: Make Transitions Into Community Living a Reality*. The meeting was hosted at LOS with over 50 people in attendance. Presentations for the event included an overview of the relationship between the former CRC, current LCA, and Money Follows the Person (MFP) programs; real stories from people who have transitioned; and examples of the community supports necessary for a successful transition. This event exemplified the value of CRC and LCA as an integrated entity. United Way's 2-1-1 and the Council on Aging of Buncombe County were promoted as main access points for resource and service coordination at this event.

By the end of June 2015, reports to the NCDAAS showed that the Land of Sky LCA Options Counselors had provided the required visits to skilled nursing facilities in all four counties, and exceeded their goals of nursing home in-reach and outreach activities. The statewide program directors acknowledged the 2015 successes in Region B and featured partners in our region on a panel discussion at the MFP Institute in May of 2015.

Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA)

The North Carolina Department of Insurance, Division of SHIIP (Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program) is another initiative which represents the coordination between multiple systems. This program has been developed in order to refer individuals who are likely eligible for Low Income Subsidy (LIS)

and the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) through the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA). This program assisted qualified Medicare recipients with limited income and assets to pay for their Medicare prescription drug program costs, such as premiums, deductibles and coinsurance. Eligibility guidelines for LIS are based on income and assets, and change from year to year. The Medicare Savings Program (MSP) assists individuals with limited income and resources pay some or all of their Medicare premiums and may pay Medicare deductibles and coinsurance for those who qualify.

As part of its contract with SHIIP, Land of Sky oversaw a total of 25 LIS/MSP outreach efforts in Buncombe County from January - September 2015, far exceeding the goal of 2 outreach efforts. Outreach goals for this program included coordination with local SHIIP sites to refer individuals who are likely eligible for LIS and MSP, with events targeting areas with the greatest number of potential LIS/MSP enrollees. Activities were coordinated through partnerships between the Council on Aging of Buncombe County; local SHIIP offices; Disability Partners; Smoky Mountain LME/MCO; the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI); local libraries, churches; and other health and human service organizations. Outreach efforts included events in more rural areas such as Leicester and Weaverville in an effort meet the aim of Goal 2, which is to: Improve understanding of the challenges faced by the county's rural older adult population.

WNC Resource Network

The WNC Resource Network is a network of for-profit service providers who coordinate to better serve older adults in our region. Representatives from this group presented at the ACC meeting in April, 2015. The presentation and discussion built a bridge between the non-profit and for-profit service networks which collectively meet the needs of older adults in Buncombe County.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Goal 4: Improve safety and security for community-dwelling older adults.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- 4a) Increase awareness of threats to safety/security, as evidenced through TRIAD and Summit participation
- 4b) Increase awareness of services available, as evidenced through TRIAD and Summit participation and surveys
- 4c) Increase self-reported safety and security, measured through TRIAD

TRIAD is a national partnership among law enforcement, older adults, and those providing services to seniors. TRIAD's focus is to reduce the criminal victimization of older citizens. They work to decrease unwarranted fear of crime and improve the safety and quality of life for seniors. In 2015, Buncombe County TRIAD partners continued to work towards these goals through initiatives:

- Materials about avoiding scams and identify theft were distributed at Asheville Walgreens through Senior Discount Days, and reached approximately 500 older adults.
- Presentations about financial fraud and exploitation offered at retirement communities and support groups reached approximately 250 older adults.

A sub-committee of the ACC Planning Committee planned and facilitated the Sixth Annual Summit entitled *Elder Financial Exploitation: Your Role in Preventing and Reporting* at Land of Sky in June of 2015. The event was attended by over 60 bankers, financial advisors, retail managers with wire capability, and long term care providers who are in the first line of defense against elder fraud. Attendees were encouraged by the president of the North Carolina Bankers Association, Peter Gwaltney, and learned how to recognize elder exploitation and acquire the available tools to protect them, by Caroline Farmer with the North Carolina Department of Justice.

Goal 5: Improve safety and security for older adult residents of adult care homes (ACH).

Anticipated Outcomes:

5a) Decrease rate/numbers of emergency response to ACHs

5b) Improve report cards on ACH monitoring by DSS staff

An adult care home (ACH) provides room and board and 24-hour supervision and services for people needing assistance with activities of daily living and some health care needs due to normal aging or a disability. Adult care homes bridge the gap between independent living and nursing facility care. Currently, in Buncombe County, there are 85 licensed adult care homes that are monitored by Buncombe Health and Human Services, as agents of the Division of Health Service Regulation. There were no ACH closures in 2015.

Challenges continue in the context of providing care to both people with severe and persistent behavioral health needs, and older adults in one residence. This challenge is exacerbated when older adults also have dementia. Although this challenge has presented itself for several years, there remains a gap in service for those without an adequate alternative.

One way in which this gap is being addressed is through the *Transition to Community Living Initiative*, which provides both (1) in-reach services to targeted adults living in adult care homes, with behavioral health needs who might be able to live independently with community-based supportive housing, and (2) diverting targeted individuals from being admitted to adult care homes from psychiatric hospitals.

For many facilities, low staff wages, long hours, and poor staff training continue to be issues related to quality care provision and best practice. In 2015, Buncombe County HHS continued to provide monthly local training for staff and administrators on topics to improve the safety and security of residents.

In addition, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman with the AAA at LOS worked with volunteer teams known as the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and provided high quality education to staff at ACH in Buncombe County.

The chart below illustrates progress made by Buncombe County HHS to address concerns about safety and security among ACH residents. The information in the chart reflects fewer substantiated findings for complaints; increased accountability; and partnering with facilities to improve practice through Corrective Action Reports (CARs).

Adult Care Home Data (FY13-15)

	FY13	FY14	FY15
Substantiations	148	119	83
Complaint Visits	245	240	212
CARS	109	165	245
Penalties Submitted	2	3	3

Source: Monthly Management Reports

FINANCIAL WELLBEING

Goal 6: Increase financial planning & management among older adults.

Anticipate Outcomes:

- 6a) Increase number of local payees available
- 6b) Increase number of older adults who participate in financial education opportunities

OnTrack Financial Education and Counseling conducted a round table discussion to understand how their organization can meet the needs of older adults at the ACC meeting in May of 2015. This discussion yielded the following priorities:

- Payee Service
- Scams and Frauds which Victimize Older Adults
- Education for those who are new at money management and loved ones
- Social Security Income and understanding benefits

The chart below reflects OnTrack’s efforts to address these challenges in 2015.

ACC Meeting Input	
Topic / Need	Action / Plan
Payee Service	<p>1. After an exploratory trip to an agency in Winston Salem to assess the feasibility of OnTrack providing a Payee Service, the agency determined that it is cost prohibitive to offer the service and is investigating other ways to increase the payee services options in Buncombe County."</p> <p>2. August: Participating in a virtual training on managing payee accounts through our client management system</p> <p>3. Underway: Updating the Payee Services information for existing businesses and organizations serving our community</p>
Scams & Frauds which victimize older adults	<p>1. July: Created an Identity Theft Class focused on issues facing seniors, including a new handout</p> <p>2. August 15th Money Matters – radio guests Roxann Sizemore (APS) and John Cabe (BC Sheriff’s Office) follow-up to Fraud/Scam Summit</p> <p>3. September: Offering the seminar as part of the Catholic Social Services regional conference in Brevard (pilot)</p> <p>4. Fall 2015: Begin to market this class to agencies and organizations that work with older adults</p>
New at money management (<i>e.g. death of spouse, medical issues, children</i>) AND preparing loved ones (if you die tomorrow)	<p>OnTrack is reviewing its services to focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing documents – Confidential Family Record (tool) • What to do when, planning for incapacity, • Understanding transfer of assets (the myth of having to get rid of assets) • Advanced care planning
Social Security Income and understanding benefits	<p>July 18th Money Matters – radio guest John Wingerter Medicare 50th anniversary</p> <p>Fall 2015: Exploring training resources and opportunities to build counselor/educators’ knowledge base to offer guidance to older adults on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors to consider to know when to begin drawing SS • Understanding marital spouse benefits • Maximize benefits • Impact of income and assets

In addition to those activities mentioned “Action / Plan” column above, the *Elder Financial Exploitation: Your Role in Preventing and Reporting* was conducted in June of

2015 (as outlined in Goal 4 above). The event was coordinated by representatives from OnTrack Financial Education and Counseling, the AAA at LOS, Buncombe County HHS, the Better Business Bureau, the Buncombe County Sheriff's Department and concerned citizens.

Goal 7: Establish Basic Needs Case Conferencing process.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- 7a) Increase understanding of pathways to financial crises for older adults in order to inform and target outreach and education efforts
- 7b) Increase effectiveness of crisis resolution through collaboration

Basic Needs Case Conferencing and related outcomes are tightly woven with Goal 3: "Increase coordination of multiple systems (i.e. home & community-based services, facility-based care, self-directed care initiatives, medical, mental health, Community Resource Connections) to ensure the needs of older adults and family caregivers are more fully met" and Goal 6: "Increase financial planning & management among older adults."

In addition to the activities in goals 3 and 6, this goal was met in 2015 through transition updates discussed at monthly LCA Leadership Team meetings, Ontrack Financial Education and Counseling collaborative efforts, and focused presentations and discussion at ACC meetings.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Goal 8: Identify and address depression among older adults. *

Anticipated Outcomes:

- 8a) Achieve Healthy IDEAS outcomes for participants
- 8b) Increase awareness of the problem of depression among older adults
- 8c) Increase screening for depression through Healthy IDEAS

Healthy IDEAS (Identifying Depression, Empowering Activities for Seniors) is an evidence-based program that integrates depression awareness and management into

existing case management services provided to older adults. In 2015, staff members at Jewish Family Services (JFS) of WNC and the Council on Aging of Buncombe County were trained and/or updated in Healthy IDEAS.

The Council on Aging of Buncombe County screened 175 older adults with 36 eligible to participate in Healthy IDEAS and 14 successfully completing the program. Staff members at JFS will be initiating Healthy IDEAS in 2016. In 2015, JFS used the PHQ-9 (a common screening tool to assess for depression) with all senior clients, accepted Medicare for mental health services with 57% of mental health clients being over age 60 in 2015. These efforts reflected an expansion in services available to identify and address depression among older adults.

Smoky Mountain LME/MCO's Geriatric and Adult Mental Health Specialty Team has been another important partner in meeting this goal. In 2015, Smoky Mountain provided a voluminous amount of trainings that have had the goals of increasing awareness about many mental health disorders, including depression; mental health symptomology; psychiatric medications used in treatment; how to interact; and where people can turn to get help in Buncombe County and many other counties in western NC. The Geriatric and Adult Mental Health Specialty Team worked collaboratively with the AAA at LOS and other partners to host a well attended training on Caregivers and Depression (see goal 9).

Goal 9: Identify and address depression among family caregivers.*

Anticipated Outcomes:

- 9a) Increase identification of caregivers at risk of depression
- 9b) Increase mental health and support service use by family caregivers
- 9c) Decrease levels of stress/depression among caregivers served

Several groups in Buncombe County have been focusing on the identification of family caregivers at risk of depression, in order to increase mental health and support services use by these individuals. As a culmination of these efforts, a sub-committee of the ACC Planning Team created a summit in November of 2015 entitled *Caregivers and*

Depression: A Silent Health Crisis. The summit included presentations and interactive activities on identifying caregivers; the problem of depression; and regional resources in the following categories: behavioral health, education, support and respite. Over 70 health and human services professionals attended the summit and evaluations included comments such as :

- *This was very helpful and I would like more events like this.*
- *Wonderful!*
- *Continue to have training on elder issues. Great information on caregivers. Training was great!*

The planning committee of this summit included representatives from Smoky Mountain LME/MCO, Community Care of Western North Carolina (CCWNC), The Council on Aging of Buncombe County, JFS of WNC, CarePartners, the Charles George Veterans Administration Medical Center, and the AAA at LOS.

Goal 10: Increase physical activity and consumption of fruit and vegetable among older adults.*

Anticipated Outcomes:

10a) Establish baseline of physical activity and consumption of fruit & vegetables

10b) assess barriers

10c) develop an action plan to address barriers

The ACC Planning Team created a sub-committee to address outcomes 10a & 10b (stated above). This sub-committee includes representatives from MAHEC 's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), Terri March; the Council on Aging of Buncombe County, Phil Gale; YMCA of WNC, Diane Saccone; ABIPA, Je'wana Grier-McEachin; Buncombe County HHS, Alma Atkins; and AAA at LOS, Stephanie Stewart and Rebecca Chaplin.

In an effort to collect baseline data, a 15-question survey "Tell Us About Your Healthy Habits" was generated and disseminated between April of 2014 – December of 2015.

There were 341 respondents, ages 48-92, from the following racial and ethnic backgrounds:

RACE:

Black or African-American	0	22.3%
Asian		0.8%
American Indian or Alaskan Native		0.3%
White	67	74.6%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander		0.8%
Unknown		0%
Other		2%

ETHNICITY:

Not Hispanic or Latino Unreported	13	9 4.2%
Hispanic Puerto Rican Hispanic Cuban		0. 4%
Hispanic Mexican American Hispanic		0. 4%
Other	1	4. 9%

The sample of respondents was drawn from Buncombe County dining sites, the Osher Life Long Learning Institute (OLLI), ABIPA clients, Volunteer Corp. Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents, and random respondents generated through traffic on the LOS website.

The sub-committee recognized limitations in data collection, including (1) an under-sampling older adults who don't speak English (i.e. members of Latino and Hispanic communities); (2) lack of zip code data. The sub-committee created a plan to address gaps in data collection in 2016 including focused discussions in zip codes with a particularly high incidence of chronic diseases.

Information gathered through the survey was analyzed and integrated with regional Community Health Assessment (CHA) data. As a result of this analysis, the planning team selected the following topics to address in 2016 and 2017:

- Strength training as a strategy to reduce the risk of falling
- Staying physically active while living with a chronic health condition

Cost and transportation were indicated by survey respondents to be the top two barriers preventing older adults from accessing fresh foods. This barrier was addressed in 2015 through the work of Rasheeda McDaniels, Community Outreach and Development Manager and Community Navigators with Buncombe County HHS through “Pop Up Markets.” Pop Up Markets is an initiative with Buncombe County HHS and Manna Food Bank to bring perishable and non-perishable foods to public housing. In addition to providing access to fresh foods, Pop Up Markets build community, trust and create an opportunity to for education and the dissemination of resources.

Goal 11: Increase health equity among Buncombe County’s older adult populations

Anticipated Outcomes:

11a) Establish health benchmarks for marginalized groups in 2013-14

11b) Identify key strategies for improving health disparities in 2017

A sub-committee of the ACC Planning Team joined efforts with the work of the CHA, led by Nelle Gregory and the Minority Health Equity Project, led by Alma Atkins, to establish health benchmarks and identify strategies for improving health disparities. Both collaborating efforts are with Buncombe County HHS. In alignment with federal and state data, “Healthy People 2020” benchmarks, CHA data, and local initiatives the sub-committee decided to focus on the following benchmarks:

- Increase the proportion of older adults with one or more chronic health conditions that report confidence in managing their conditions.
- Increase the proportion of older adults who receive diabetes self-management education.
- Increase access to community supports that increase self-management of chronic health conditions.

Participation in the following chronic disease self-management supports was identified to assess these benchmarks:

- **Asheville Buncombe Institute for Parity Achievement (ABIPA):** Ladies Night Out, Prostate Cancer Screenings and Know Your Numbers
- **YWCA of Asheville:** Diabetes Wellness Program
- **YMCA of WNC:** Diabetes Prevention Program, Live Strong and Moving for Better Balance
- **Area Agency on Aging, Land of Sky:** Chronic Disease Self Management Programs
- **Council on Aging of Buncombe County:** Dining site participation

The sub-committee recognized that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) older adults are another marginalized group experiencing health disparities. Unfortunately gender-identify and sexual orientation data are not consistently collected by medical providers or community self-management supports in Buncombe County. The sub-committee plans work with the LGBT Elder Advocates of WNC and the Campaign for Southern Equality to provide education, build awareness and increase sensitivity among health and human service providers in 2016.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Goal 12: Increase social engagement and employment among older adults.

Anticipated Outcomes:

12a) Organizations are satisfied with the level and quality of older adult volunteer engagement

12b) Older adults have greater access to social engagement through volunteerism and employment and transportation

Through volunteerism, employment and transportation, older adults are allowed access to social engagement, resulting in empowerment and enrichment. Volunteer Corp., a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the Volunteer Services Department of LOS administers three volunteer programs for older adults in

Buncombe County including: RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program), the Senior Companion Program, and the Foster Grandparent Program. These programs at LOS connect adults 55 years and older with the people and organizations with the greatest needs. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) continued it's "Call to Action" program in 2015 in which OLLI members were given opportunities for meaningful volunteer services in Buncombe and neighboring counties.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), a job training program through the AAA at LOS, works with unemployed adults aged 55+ to gain job skills that lead to regular employment. The primary means of providing this training is through placement in non-profit Host Agencies. The SCSEP participant receives job skill training and the Host Agency receives the benefit of the person's time and abilities. The program emphasizes working with Veterans, those over age 65, individuals with disabilities, limited English proficiency, low literacy skills and those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness as participants. At any given time, up to 13 Buncombe County residents may be in job training through Land of Sky's SCSEP. In 2016 and coming years SCSEP will be looking to expand the base of Host Agencies available, so that Participants can have a better range of training opportunities more suited to their job goals.

Jeralie Andrews, lead RSVP Coordinator, joined RSVP in 2015. The RSVP is a national service program of the Corporation of National and Community Service. RSVP's purpose is to connect people over age 55 with the people and organizations that need them most. The contribution of their skills, knowledge, and experience make a difference to individuals, nonprofits, and faith-based and other community organizations. In 2015, RSVP provided volunteer opportunities to 190 volunteers and 40 volunteer stations in Buncombe County. In 2015, Ms. Andrews developed the foundation for the 50+ Job Club in partnership with LOS Work Force development Boards and the YMCA of WNC. The Job Club will utilize the vast professional skills of volunteers who have backgrounds in human resources, marketing, retail, computer and business. These volunteer coaches will assist persons of low income who are 50 years of age and older on a one-on-one

basis. They will provide assistance with job search strategies, interviewing skills, resume-writing, job referrals, networking, computer tutoring and a variety of other services intended to assist clients become as competitive and effective as possible in today's job market. The initiative is ready to launch in 2016.

Anne Whisenhunt, Senior Companions Program Manager, joined LOS in 2015. Senior Companions are volunteers age 55 and over who provide assistance and friendship to adults who have difficulty with daily living tasks. In 2015, thirty-three Senior Companions volunteered in Buncombe County and provided 27,787 hours of direct service including companionship, transportation, light meal preparation and light house keeping. They provided over 37,724 miles of transportation services in Buncombe County to individuals assisting with medical appointments, grocery store, drug store, bank and other shopping trips. Over 78 individuals benefited from the volunteer service of Senior Companions to assist them in remaining independent in their own homes. The Senior Companion program partnered with 7 community agencies in Buncombe County for referrals of clients needing Senior Companion services. There are over 35 clients currently on waiting list in Buncombe County for assignment of a Senior Companion volunteer.

Stacy Friesland, Foster Grandparents Program Manager, assumed this role in 2003. Foster Grandparents are volunteers age 55 and over who thrive on direct interaction with children and believe they can make a difference in their lives. They serve as a mentor, tutor, and loving caregiver to children and youth with special needs. In 2015, fifty-four Foster Grandparents volunteered in Buncombe County working one-on-one with children that have at-risk, have special or exceptional needs, or who are economically disadvantaged. There were 127 children in Buncombe County who benefited from the direct, one-on-one, volunteer service of Foster Grandparents to assist them in meeting their personal and academic goals in 2015. In 2015, Foster Grandparents provided services at 22 Elementary schools, Head Start programs, or non-profit daycare facilities in Buncombe County.

LIVING ENVIRONMENTS

Goal 13: Expand housing and community living options for older adults

Anticipated Outcome:

13a) Increase housing choices for older adults

The Culture Change in Aging Network (CCAN) was formed to explore alternatives in community living for older adults. In 2015, this network continued to be vigilant about educating the community about fundamental changes in values and practices to create a culture of aging that is life-affirming, satisfying, and meaningful. Outreach and awareness activities in 2013 and 2014 led one community, Pine Brook Farms, to become organized as a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) in 2015.

The CCAN continued to educate and generate awareness in 2015 through (1) monthly blog articles written by local community members; (2) an article published in March, 2015 in Mtn. Express entitled “The modern elder: Reclaiming what’s sacred in life’s later years;” and, an 8-week course delivered to participants at OLLI entitled, “Aging in Community: Exploring Options.” The course was attended by an average of 30 students for 8 weeks to explore the options and create personal empowerment plans for aging in community.

Goal 14: Improve mobility by expanding transportation options.

Anticipated Outcomes:

14a) Transportation options are fully utilized (e.g., Mountain Mobility, the RIDE Program, Call-a-Ride Plus, etc.).

14b) Increase use of transportation options by older adults

Transportation options accessible for people of all ages, from safer sidewalks to bus service to paratransit, are necessary for an aging-friendly community. Several transportation options are available for older adults in Buncombe County including personally-owned vehicles, walking, bicycling, Mountain Mobility, the RIDE Voucher Program, Call-A-Ride, and Asheville City Transit.

Mountain Mobility

In 2015, LOS continued its management of administrative duties for the Mountain Mobility program, in order to increase use of transportation options to older adults trying to get organizations assigned to certain activities (e.g. adult day care).

Buncombe County applied for and secured an Appalachian Development Transit Program grant to install an automated passenger notification system. The new technology upgrade was implemented in 2015 and provided an automated phone call reminder the day prior to everyone who has a trip scheduled with Mountain Mobility. This development allowed passengers to cancel and reschedule their trips more readily, reduced no-shows, and freed-up capacity on Mountain Mobility vans which could benefit other potential passengers.

The French Broad River MPO (FBRMPO) held a call for 5310 grant funding in the fall of 2015. The applications were submitted, and if approved for funding (pending FBRMPO Board vote on January 28, 2016), will allow Buncombe County Mountain Mobility to expand the number of medical and general-purpose trips provided for seniors and adults with disabilities. If this occurs, Buncombe County Council on Aging will be able to expand their volunteer driver program, Call-A-Ride, and the City of Asheville will continue to provide ADA Paratransit services beyond the minimum service area required.

RIDE Voucher Program

The RIDE Program, through Mountain Mobility, is a curb-to-curb subsidized transportation program that allows disabled residents to purchase private transportation provider services at a significant discount. The goal of the RIDE Program is to increase independence, freedom of choice, and transportation options for individuals with disabilities. In 2015, the RIDE Voucher program continued to expand, reflected by the following accomplishments:

- There were 3780 coupons sold and 3465 coupons redeemed, for a total of \$34,650 in passenger trip costs offset through RIDE vouchers, as

compared with 2800 coupons sold and 2408 coupons redeemed, or approximately \$24,080 in trip costs offset in FY 2014.

- There was a 44% increase in RIDE vouchers redeemed from Fiscal Year 2014 to Fiscal Year 2015.
- A policy was implemented in July, 2015 for the RIDE Voucher program which allowed clients to utilize up to five vouchers (worth \$50) for a one-way trip, in place of only one voucher for a one-way trip previously (\$10 value). The anticipated outcome of this policy was to (1) allow RIDE clients to make longer trips more easily; (2) and, for additional RIDE transportation providers to participate in the program.

Asheville City Transit

The City of Asheville started operating Sunday service on nine transit routes in January 2015—previously, this was one of the most-requested potential service expansions. In addition, modifications were made to the ART “C” route to allow riders from Emma Community to connect directly to downtown via a new route, W5. Fixed route service on Sundays also opened up an opportunity for ADA Paratransit service on Sundays (contracted out to Mountain Mobility) for passengers who live within the ADA Paratransit service area and are not able to utilize the regular bus service due to a disability.

SUMMARY AND LOOKING AHEAD TO 2016

The Buncombe County ACC is pleased with the ongoing progress that is being made towards the goals of the 2013 – 2017 Buncombe County Aging Plan and is looking forward to another year of community engagement and activity. In late 2015, leadership for the implementation the ACC Planning Committee shifted from Linda Kendall-Fields to Rebecca Chaplin. Ms. Kendall-Fields has moved into a position at UNC Chapel Hill, Jordan Institute. Ms. Chaplin assisted Ms. Kendall-Fields with implementation of the Aging Plan in 2015 and is well connected with the network of aging service providers in Buncombe County. The ACC Planning Committee is grateful for the professionalism,

care, and guidance of Ms. Kendall-Fields and will build on the successful developments resulting from her leadership.

The ACC Planning Committee will use both a broad and narrow lens in 2016. The Committee will use a broad lens as they nurture and track progress in all goals; concurrently, the Committee will apply focus to four specific areas to ensure substantial progress in all 14 goals by 2017. A summary chart with goals, current status, and 2016 focus is in Appendix B.

APPENDIX A) 2015 ACC MEETING TOPICS

The following topics, generally following the focus of the ACC Planning Committee, were presented to the entire 70-member Buncombe County Aging Coordinating Consortium during 2015.

January 2015	"Safety Practices for Community Professionals" Presented by Helen Hall, Buncombe County Sheriff's Office
February 2015	Meeting Cancelled due to icy driving conditions
March 2015	"Dementia Friendly Community Resources" with Chad Conaty, MemoryCare; Nancy Smith-Hunnicut, <i>LTC Ombudsman, LOS</i> ; Nancy Hogan, <i>Project Care</i> ; Pat Hilgendorf, <i>Family Caregiver Support Associate, LOS</i>
April 2015	"WNC Senior Resource Network" with a panel: Cynthia Alleman, <i>Alleman Law Firm</i> ; Vivian Bolanos, <i>Asheville Saving Bank</i> ; Gabrielle Corey, <i>SimplyHome</i> ; Jennie Pressley, <i>Seniors Helping Seniors</i> ; Denise Bellefeuil-Jenkins, <i>Interim Healthcare</i> .
May 2015	" Addressing the Financial Needs of Older Adults – A Round Table Discussion with Sarah Brown and Suzanne Ellison, <i>OnTrack Financial Education and Counseling</i>
June 2015	"CarePartners PACE in Action!" presentation and tour with Laura Baker-Seseika, <i>PACE Program</i>
August 2015	"Medicare 1, 2, 3: A Brief Overview of the Medicare Benefits, Pitfalls, and Resources for Lower Income Beneficiaries" presentation by John Wingerter, Director of Health Insurance Information Services at the Council on Aging of Buncombe County
September 2015	"Accessing Medicaid & Special Assistance for Older Adults in Buncombe County" presentation by Connie Halford & Debbie Ogle, Buncombe County DHHS
October 2015	"Creating a Dementia Capable County: Part 1" presentation by Allen Ray (Simply Home), Chad Conaty (Memory Care) & Linda Kendall Fields
November/December 2015	"Creating a Dementia Capable County: Part 2" with Nancy Smith-Hunnicut, <i>LOS</i> And Linda Kendall Fields, <i>UNC Chapel Hill</i>

APPENDIX B) BUNCOMBE COUNTY AGING PLAN, 2016 FOCUS AREAS

Goal	Current Status	2015 Focus
<p>Goal 4: Improve safety and security for community-dwelling older adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRIAD education and outreach • 6th Annual Financial Fraud and Exploitation Summit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the “Dementia Friendly Community” Initiative • Initiate system change to cultivate greater safety and security for people with dementia and caregivers
<p>Goal 6: Increase financial planning & management among older adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6th Annual Financial Fraud and Exploitation Summit • Research on payee services by OnTrack • Money management education by OnTrack • Radio show on “Money Matters” on Medicare and related benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to explore options to expand payee services • 7th Annual Financial Fraud and Exploitation Summit • Continue to outreach and educate older adults about Social Security benefits & financial management
<p>Goal 12: Increase social engagement and employment among older adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of RSVP to develop job club • Success of SCEP, RSVP, Senior Companions & Foster Grandparents • Continuation of OLLI’s “Call to Action Program” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support and integrate current opportunities for social engagement • Outreach to employers about the value of older workers • Integrate existing and support the development of new transportation options for social engagement and employment
<p>Goal 14: Improve mobility by expanding transportation options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to Mountain Mobility including automated passenger notification system • Expansion of Asheville Regional Transit bus options • Development of the RIDE Voucher Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate existing and explore new transportation options for social engagement and employment • Generate awareness and support the integration of existing transportation options