



Governor's Policy Roundtables—Preliminary Report

1. Executive Summary

A series of six Governor's policy roundtables on ***Building a Livable and Senior Friendly North Carolina*** were held across the state. These roundtables were produced through a collaborative effort from the Office of the Governor, the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services, the UNC Institute on Aging and the state's Area Agencies on Aging.

The roundtables engaged a diverse and informed group of stakeholders to help identify major issues facing North Carolina's aging population that will require effective policy and programmatic responses. The more than 600 participants included older adults, aging boomers, caregivers, leaders from NC's aging and adult services network, government officials, representatives from local businesses and organizations, educators and researchers—among others.

The many issues and ideas shared at these roundtables will help lay the groundwork for the Governor's Conference on Aging on October 13-15, 2010 in the Research Triangle Park, and will also be reflected in the 2011-2015 State Aging Plan.

Here are the **top 3 issues** identified at the six policy roundtables:

Greenville: Health and Aging [April 22, 2010]

- **Need to strengthen link between healthcare and community service providers** – integrating aging and medical services, enhancing communications, developing holistic approach, expanding support and resources for family caregivers
- **Shortage of trained health and allied health professionals** who support an interdisciplinary approach (geriatricians, nurse practitioners, physical and occupational therapists, mental health clinicians, social workers, etc.)
- **Lack of support for prevention** – including immunizations, screenings, evidence-based health promotion, wellness education, nutrition, etc.

Greensboro: Economics of Aging [April 28, 2010]

- **Inadequate response to wide range of workforce issues** – including skills training and job options for older workers, succession planning, job flexibility and supports for working caregivers, incentives for entrepreneurs and small businesses responding to aging population, shortage of healthcare workers, etc.
- **Concern about healthcare provision and cost** – paying for medications, healthcare cost/fraud/abuse, lack of primary care doctors for Medicare patients, end-of-life issues, support for aging-in-place, fragmentation of services, etc.
- **Insufficient opportunities for education and engagement** – including opportunities for older adults to start businesses, education of employers on value of older workers, training at community colleges, financial and life/retirement planning, volunteerism, etc.

Asheville: Access and Choice in Services and Supports [May 10, 2010]

- **Inadequate funding to support aging-in-place** – for community-based services, in-home services, and family caregiver supports
- **Lack of awareness and understanding among people about their choices in care and about possibilities for aging-in-place** – difficulties in navigating a complex and fragmented system, inadequate information and assistance, etc.
- **Lack of transportation** – rural areas, eligibility, inflexible options, affordability, inadequate linkage between housing and transportation, etc.

Boone: Life Engagement and Contributions [May19, 2010]

- **Lack of funding to support lifelong learning and engagement** – including programs for engagement, financial aid for continuing education, inadequate infrastructure for volunteerism, etc.
- **Fragmentation among agencies and lack of cohesive network** – confusion about how to connect with system, duplication of effort, missed opportunities and inefficiencies, etc.
- **Need for new terminology and approaches for volunteering given changing nature of the volunteers** – boomers are different than current pool of older volunteers

Charlotte: Homes and Neighborhoods [May 25, 2010]

- **Inadequate options for transportation and mobility** – availability and accessibility of transit, lack of routes in rural areas, road design and signage, driver and pedestrian safety, funding, need for greater public and private collaborations
- **Accessibility of housing** – universal design, affordable and accessible housing, wheelchair access, care of home and property, zoning codes
- **Inadequate personal education and preparedness (planning before a crisis)** – awareness of continuum of options/services, life/aging education and preparation, consumer counseling, redesigning homes before a crisis, education of builders on universal design, etc.

Wilmington: Safe Communities [June 2, 2010]

- **Insufficient training and support for family caregivers** – importance of respite care, including caregivers of persons with dementia and grandparents raising grandchildren, stress relief, access to resources
- **Growing concerns about abuse, neglect and exploitation** – identification and reporting of self-neglect, need to train and use public service employees as first-line of defense for adult protective service reporting, address resistance to reporting, etc.
- **Lack of affordable housing and need to support proven services** – value of services connected to affordable housing to support community living, lack of in-home support services and affordable home health care, reward accountability, etc.