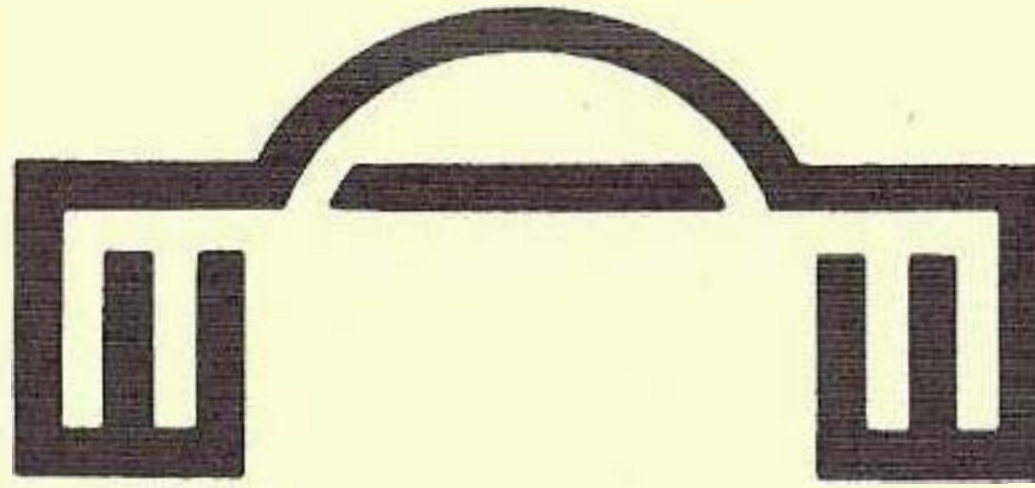




NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH INC.

News Release

October 23, 1986

For Immediate Release

To: News Editors and Reporters

From: Bill Finger, Coordinator, Forums on Policies Affecting the Aging and Editor, North Carolina Insight, 832-2839

Re: Raleigh Forum on Policies Affecting the Elderly in North Carolina on Friday October 24, 1986
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 pm.
McKimmon Center
Western Boulevard
Raleigh, NC

The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research is sponsoring a day-long forum on "Policies Affecting the Aging" on Friday, October 24. To be held at the McKimmon Center on Western Boulevard from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., this is the fourth of four state forums featuring discussions between policymakers and the older adult community.

John Denning of Clinton, N.C., current president of the 23 million-member American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) will be the keynote speaker. Other featured speakers are Melanie Modlin, deputy staff director of the Subcommittee on Health and Long-Term Care, U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Aging, and Barbara Matula, director of the N.C. Division of Medical Assistance.

Panel members and discussion leaders include:

- ° Candace Tongue, mayor of Wendell and chair of the Triangle J Advisory Council on Aging;
- ° Ann Johnson, executive director of the Durham Coordinating Council for Senior Citizens;
- ° Andrew Dobelstein, a professor in the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill;
- ° John Tanner, N.C. Division of Social Services;
- ° Noel List, of the Duke University Center on the Study of Aging and Human Development; and
- ° Clarence Brown, a professor at N.C. Central University.

"The N.C. Center is sponsoring a forum in Raleigh because Wake County ranks 4th among the 100 counties in the number of persons over age 60, and 4th in the number of persons in poverty," says Bill Finger, who is coordinating the four forums across the state and who is editor of the N.C. Center's magazine, North Carolina Insight.

The forums on policies affecting the elderly are funded through a special grant to the Center from The Ford Foundation as part of a three-year project designed to examine social welfare policies in the U.S. The Ford Foundation is sponsoring a variety of programs across the country to learn what citizens and policymakers think about meeting human needs, in this case those of the elderly. The forums are based on the Center's special issue of North Carolina Insight on policies affecting the aging.

"Today, one in nine Americans is over 65," says Finger. "In just 45 years, one in five persons will be over 65 -- a whopping 20 percent of the population. And by 2030, there will be three retired persons for every one working person in America," Finger continued.

The Center's research, published earlier in Insight magazine, found that some \$21.1 million in programs for the elderly are administered in North Carolina by the state Division of Aging under provisions of the federal Older Americans Act. But an even larger amount -- \$23.6 million -- is funneled through county departments of social services.

"For the last 50 years, the government has gradually poured more resources into caring and providing for the elderly population," says Finger. "A crossroads is fast approaching when federal and state policymakers may have to make some tough choices in defining the role of government in providing for the elderly."

In a group of workshops, the forum concentrates on three major policy questions that will affect older citizens of the state in future years:

- * Should federal policy encourage older workers to retire after age 65, or to continue working and making economic contributions? Because of the huge impact of Social Security, federal policy is now heavily weighted towards encouraging the elderly to retire.
- * Should the elderly person's right to government services be based solely on age or, in a time of massive federal deficits and dwindling resources, should such benefits be based on need? Medicare and Social Security benefits, for example, go automatically to persons reaching a certain age, whereas Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) also available only to recipients who have limited incomes.
- * Should North Carolina, already one of the most attractive places in the U.S. for out-of-state retirees, attempt to recruit more elderly Americans to North Carolina through tax breaks -- or will the elderly ultimately become a burden on state and local resources? North Carolina now offers four major tax breaks designed to benefit the elderly. These tax breaks represent \$41.1 million in foregone revenues annually.

Another major section of the forum deals with the question uppermost in the minds of the elderly and the soon-to-be elderly: What types of health care are available, and what will be available in the future? The Center for Public Policy Research found that a broad-based continuum of care -- from health care in the home to long-term care in nursing facilities to hospital care -- exists to serve those elders with health problems. But the Center also found that the type of reimbursement system -- not what's best for the patient -- often determines where elderly patients are placed within that continuum. "The question of 'Who pays?' may well be the deciding factor in the location and quality of health care many of our aging persons receive," concludes Finger.

The cost of the forum is \$12 per person, which includes lunch, coffee breaks, and the 92-page issue of Insight on aging policies. The fee may be waived based on economic need.

The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research is an independent nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation based in Raleigh. It was founded in 1977 to examine significant public policy issues in North Carolina. The Center receives general operational support from the Mary Reynolds Babcock and Z. Smith Reynolds Foundations, 95 corporate contributors, and 600 individual members. Past research by the Center includes a study of all the boards and commissions in the executive branch of state government, a guide to the legislature, and an examination of for-profit hospitals.

For more information, call the Center at (919) 832-2839.