



The North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research

Objective Research, Informed Decisions

2014 Report

This year brought many changes to North Carolina and to the Center. On September 2nd, after a nationwide search, the Center welcomed a new Executive Director, Dr. Linda Struyk Millsaps. Millsaps has served in a number of roles in government, the private sector, and education fields.

She is a former Assistant Secretary and Chief Operating Officer for the North Carolina Department of Revenue, and previously spent eight years as nonpartisan legislative staff in the areas of tax and revenue forecasting.



“Dr. Millsaps is the right person to fulfill the Center’s vision of providing rigorous, nonpartisan research that makes a difference in North Carolina,” said Gregg Thompson, North Carolina State Director for the National Federation of Independent Business and chair of the Center’s search committee.

Building on more than three decades of research and recommendations to better our state, Dr. Millsaps will have the opportunity to move in new directions of communication and engagement, help our leaders become even better decisionmakers by providing them with actionable, well-informed analysis, and creating a space for meaningful dialogue in the nonpartisan policy center.



We bid a fond farewell to Ran Coble, who retired as Executive Director in September after 33 years of service. Under Coble’s leadership, the Center’s research and testimony before policymakers helped achieve many changes in public policy. “Ran Coble is a leader whose work has made a difference for so many North Carolinians for more than three decades,” said Leslie Walden, Fidelity Investments Vice President for Public Affairs and Chair of the Center’s 23-member Board. “He has foreseen challenges emerging in our state, turned those challenges into neutral questions to research, and has helped the Center turn its research and recommendations into policy.”

Issues Affecting the Aging Population in NC



Donna Futoransky never expected to be looking for a part-time job. She never expected to be personally caring for her elderly parents well into her own retirement. She never expected the day would come that she had to move her mother and father into her own 869-square-foot home.

But that's what happened when her parents' life-long savings and thoughtful planning became another victim of the Great Recession.

Nationally, the first wave of Baby Boomers are entering retirement at a time when their parents are living longer and both generations have witnessed an erosion in their savings due to the Great Recession. It has been described as a "Silver Tsunami," a demographic shift that will swell the ranks of those 65 years old and over, with a Baby Boomer turning 65 every eight seconds in this country.

Over the next two decades, the state of North Carolina will be faced with a growing cohort of older residents, many of whom will need assistance with activities of daily living and more intense long-term care services. The increasing demand on state resources will inevitably strain the state's Medicaid system and place demands on other governmental agencies that provide economic supports and human services. Our research takes a look at the financial impact of long term care, and identifies programs and initiatives underway to provide more community-based long-term care options for those individuals who want to stay in their homes.

Thanks to advancements in medicine, public health, and socioeconomic conditions, Baby Boomers are poised to enter the last third of their lives enjoying degrees of health and independence far surpassing those experienced by prior generations. The Center examines the public considerations for an aging population, including retirement support and pension plans, health insurance, and community life.

Look for this research in our latest issue of *North Carolina Insight*, to be released in early 2015.

Mental Health Reform



He was known as the “scary guy” on the island. No one wanted to go near him. “I was plum crazy,” says Mr. T. “I’d forget to take my medicine and didn’t sleep much. I stayed away from people, had no friends, and was always angry. I worried about everything and got angry when the Ocracoke tourists walked in the middle of the street. I messed things up with too much drinking. I just wanted some help to get better.”

Over a six-month period, Mr. T actively participated in Ocracoke’s RHA Behavioral Health Services telepsychiatry service and was involved with medication management. He has been active in counseling, had his medication changed, and has implemented a routine so he is less forgetful and more focused. He is now involved with his family and grandchildren and welcomed with delight in the community and at the health clinic.

As evidenced by the pictures above, mental health issues affect all ages, races, and families. Telepsychiatry is part of a growing national trend called telemedicine, in which physicians can see patients from remote locations using secure video and audio-streaming technology. In July, we released a special issue of *North Carolina Insight*, “Evaluating Mental Health Reform in North Carolina.” This journal included an evaluation of the use of telepsychiatry to deliver mental health services in rural areas of North Carolina. Twenty-eight counties across the state do not have a psychiatrist, leading many people to seek treatment in their local hospital emergency rooms.

Our research found that telepsychiatry patients spend less time waiting in hospital emergency rooms and are less likely to return for treatment. Our study also found fewer involuntary commitments to state psychiatric hospitals and high satisfaction levels for telepsychiatry patients. The N.C. General Assembly appropriated \$2 million in both 2013 and 2014 to expand the telepsychiatry program statewide to all 108 hospitals in North Carolina. An analysis of the mental health workforce in North Carolina, stories about families facing mental health challenges, and regulations affecting psychiatric treatment for children and adolescents completed this edition. Go to <http://bit.ly/EvalMHR> to see the full issue.

Education



Jeremy Jackson, a former member of the Minority Student Leadership Academy at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, enrolled in 2010 at the community college. Identified as a special education student in high school, he tested into developmental courses at AB Tech. A first generation college student, he explained that "he didn't know how to be a student" when he got to college. He joined the Academy soon after he started classes, which helped him concentrate his classes and decide on physical therapy as a profession. Jeremy graduated with two associate degrees in May 2013 and was working toward a third in the therapeutic massage program at AB Tech when we met him. In summing up the importance of the Academy personally, Jeremy explained that he didn't have a father growing up and the program acted like a father to "bring him up in the college realm." "It really changed my life," he said.

From Education to Completion to Employment In North Carolina

In a recent annual report examining U.S. Census data, the Lumina Foundation found that 39.4 percent of Americans (aged 25-64) held a two- or four-year college, or advanced degree in 2012. This rate is an increase of 0.7 percentage points over the 2011 rate of 38.7 percent.

The attainment rate in North Carolina for 25-64 year olds increased 0.2 percentage points to 38.4 percent in 2012. Like the national rate, attainment levels in North Carolina are rising slowly, but not enough to meet projected job requirements in the future. The Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce estimates that 65 percent of all jobs by 2020 will require post-secondary education

There is an additional gap of educational attainment among underrepresented groups in North Carolina. According to Census data and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, educational attainment rates differ by race in the state: 41 percent of whites have an associate's degree or higher, compared to 25 percent of blacks, 16 percent of Hispanics, and 18 percent of American Indians. And the post-secondary attainment rate falls below 25 percent in 29 of the state's 100 counties, all in rural areas.

The Center is examining strategies and initiatives that seek to increase the enrollment, retention, and completion rates among several important groups of students. These groups include first-generation students, minority students, students from rural areas, students with learning differences, and veterans. We will also focus on the connection between educational



attainment and preparing students for the state’s workforce needs, with the goal of communicating these strategies and pathways to individuals, institutions, policymakers, and community partners to expand the impact.

A View of the Revenue Picture from the Schoolhouse

Dr. Millsaps, the Center’s new Executive Director, spoke to public school superintendents and finance officers from across the state about the recent tax law changes. As a former Assistant Secretary and Chief Operating Officer for the N.C. Department of Revenue, she drew upon working knowledge of tax policy and the budget process to examine and address questions about the state’s revenue base, the impact of the tax law changes on education funding, and options local school districts have going forward.

Improving Public Policy

Need-Based Scholarships For North Carolina Students

The North Carolina Constitution requires the investment income from the Escheat Fund, which contains unclaimed and abandoned property, to fund scholarships for worthy and needy students enrolled in public N.C. institutions. In past years, the state legislature used not only the interest but also part of the principal for student aid. And, the Center has cautioned legislators that continuing to use additional principal from the Fund would quickly deplete funding available for need-based scholarships.

House Bill 27 (Session Law 2014-93), which passed the legislature unanimously this year, takes an important step toward growing the available aid for these scholarships by authorizing the State Treasurer to dedicate the interest from unclaimed U.S. Savings Bonds to a new trust fund to be used for need-based scholarships. The Center worked with the State Treasurer’s office and other stakeholders on the legislation and contacted legislators to encourage their support.

Award-Winning Research



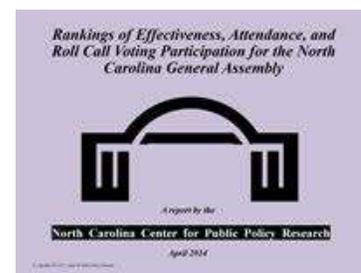
For the 10th consecutive year, the Center won prestigious national awards from the Governmental Research Association (GRA), a nonpartisan group of 33 public policy nonprofits from 22 states. GRA organizations promote transparency in state and local budgets and provide information to citizens about the performance of government programs. The Center won the top awards for **Most Distinguished Research** and **Outstanding Policy Achievement**, and former Center Director Ran Coble won the **Gruenberg Award** for lifetime achievement.

Promoting Civic Engagement



As part of our efforts to promote civic engagement and citizen education, the Center provided objective reports each week during the 2014 legislative session. Our weekly blog, tweets, and Facebook posts provided a look at the activities of the N.C. General Assembly and gave citizens an independent source of information on their state government.

In 2014, we released rankings of effectiveness, attendance, and roll call voting participation for the members of the 2013-2014 N.C. Legislature. The Center's effectiveness rankings are based on surveys completed by the legislators themselves, by registered lobbyists who are based in North Carolina and who regularly work in the General Assembly, and by capital news reporters.



The Center will continue our mission to promote civic engagement and citizen education by creating the 20th edition of our *Citizens' Guide to the N.C. Legislature* and offer this important product as a mobile app for the first time. The app will contain the contact and biographical information for state legislators, significant bills from the previous session, legislative effectiveness, attendance, and voting participation rankings, and other content from this well-established product.

A New Way to Support the Center

The Center has been the go-to resource for nonpartisan, fact-based research on the most important issues facing North Carolina. We've worked hard to educate policymakers, the media, and the public. We are proud that our research has improved state policies and the lives of the people of North Carolina. Through the life of the Center, we have been lucky to have the support of an incredible group of individuals and we thank you for your gifts of time, talent, and treasure.



Now, we are excited to announce another way that you can continue to invest your support for the future work of the Center. We are launching a new Planned Giving Initiative. As part of this effort, we are also creating a new legacy society. We would be honored to know that you have decided to support our work in this way. With your

permission, we would recognize you by including your name as a member of the Center's legacy society. You will not need to tell us the amount of your gift, but if you are willing to do that, it would be helpful for our planning. We would be pleased to discuss the Center's work and future and our legacy society with you in more detail. If you would like more information, please call us at (919) 832-2839 or email Nancy Rose, our Director of Finance and Operations, at rosebud@nccppr.org. Thanks so much for your support over the years, and thank you for considering supporting us in this way.

Ways To Give

- Securities
- You can use securities – stocks, bonds, or mutual fund shares – to make a gift to the Center.
- Life Insurance Policy
- A life insurance policy – perhaps one that you no longer need – can also provide support for our vital work.
- Retirement Plan
- Your retirement plan can likewise provide the means to make a future gift to the Center.
- Bequest

Please consider making one of these special gifts to perpetuate your commitment to the mission of the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research. You should consult with your attorney, accountant, or financial planner to assure that your gift fits your unique situation and to review any specific tax rules that apply to you and your situation. Because we are a Section 501(c)(3) charity, gifts to the Center are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Looking Ahead to 2015

As we prepare and plan for 2015, we invite you to be part of the process. We want to know what you think are the most important policy issues where our research and information can make a difference.

Please take the time to help us and share your input by taking a short survey at

<http://bit.ly/nccpprsurvey>

1. How familiar are you with the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research?

Extremely familiar
 Very familiar
 Moderately familiar
 Slightly familiar
 Not at all familiar

2. What are the most important public policy issues facing North Carolina?

3. What are the important policy issues facing your industry?

4. How do you prefer hearing about the Center's activities? (Select all that apply.)

Email
 Phone
 Mail
 Social media
 Website
 Other (please specify)

5. Please share any additional comments here.



We Are Moving!

But not very far! Same building, new floor. As of December 12th, the Center will move from the 7th to the 11th floor of the Raleigh Building. Our phone number and post office box remain the same. Our new address is 5 W. Hargett Street, Suite 1110, Raleigh NC 27601. Come visit us in our new space!

About Us

The North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research is a 501(c)(3) independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the goals of a better-informed public and a more effective, accountable, and responsive government. The Center identifies public policy issues facing North Carolina and enriches the dialogue among citizens, the media, and policymakers. Based on its research, the Center makes recommendations for improving the way government serves the people of this state. In all its efforts, the Center values reliable and objective research as a basis for analyzing public policy, independence from partisan bias and political ideology, the richness of the state's diverse population, and a belief in the importance of citizen involvement in public life.

Our Board of Directors is designed to mirror the state's population in its proportions of males and females; Caucasians, African-Americans, Asians, and Hispanics; Democrats, Republicans, and Independents; from the East, West, and Piedmont.