



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH
SECRETARY

April 17, 2019

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honorable Josh Dobson, Chair
Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on
Health and Human Services
Room 307B, Legislative Office Building
Raleigh, NC 27603

The Honorable Joyce Krawiec, Chair
Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on
Health and Human Services
Room 308, Legislative Office Building
Raleigh, NC 27603

The Honorable Donny Lambeth, Chair
Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on
Health and Human Services
Room 303, Legislative Office Building
Raleigh, NC 27603

Dear Chairmen:

Session Law 2017-57, Section 11.C.8.(b), requires the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services (DSS), to submit a report on its progress in the pilot program to increase access to public benefits for seniors aged 65 and older who are dually enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid. This report is due to the Office of the Governor and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services. Pursuant to the provisions of law, the Department is pleased to submit the attached report.

Should you have any questions concerning this report, please contact Michael Becketts, Senior Director, Policy and Planning, at (919) 527-6335.

Sincerely,

Mandy Cohen, MD, MPH
Secretary

cc:	Matt Gross	LT McCrimmon	Rob Kindsvatter	Dave Richard	Joyce Jones
	Kody Kinsley	Deborah Landry	Marjorie Donaldson	Steve Owen	Lisa Wilks
	Theresa Matula	Denise Thomas	Katherine Restrepo	Erin Matteson	Mark Benton
	Zack Wortman	Susan Perry-Manning	reports@ncleg.net	Mark Collins	Jessica Meed



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Governor Roy Cooper
NC Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699

Dear Governor Cooper:

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

**Pilot Program Increase Access to Public Benefits
For Older Dual Eligible Seniors**

Session Law 2017-57, Section 11.C.8.(b)



Report to the

**Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on
Health and Human Services**

and

Office of the Governor

By

**North Carolina Department of
Health and Human Services**

April 17, 2019

Background

Session Law 2016-94, states that the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services (Division), shall establish an evidence-based pilot program to increase access to public benefits for seniors 65 and older who are dually enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid to (i) improve the health and independence of seniors and (ii) reduce health care costs. The Division shall partner with a non-profit firm for the purpose of engaging in a data-driven campaign to help seniors aged 65 and older enrolled who are dually enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid meet their basic social needs. The not-for-profit firm shall have demonstrated experience in assisting with these types of services and the partnership shall accomplish each of the following:

- (1) Identify through data sharing, dual eligible seniors aged 65 and older who qualify For Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP) but not currently enrolled.
- (2) Conduct an outreach program towards those seniors for the purpose of enrolling them into SNAP.
- (3) Provide comprehensive application assistance through outreach specialists to complete public benefits application processes.
- (4) Evaluate project effectiveness and explore how data can be utilized to achieve optimal outcomes.
- (5) Make recommendations regarding policy options available to the State to streamline access to benefits.

The law states the Division of Social Services shall report to the Office of the Governor and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services on its progress in the pilot program by February 1 following each year the pilot program is in place. The report shall, at a minimum, include the following:

- (1) The number of seniors age 65 and older who are dual Eligible but are not enrolled in SNAP.
- (2) the number of those identified that would be included in the sample population.
- (3) Methods of outreach toward those seniors in the sample population
- (4) Number of to date enrollments in SNAP as a direct result of outreach during the pilot program.
- (5) Participation rate to date in SNAP of those seniors in the sample population.
- (6) Any other findings the Division deems relevant.

Benefits Data Trust (BDT) was awarded the Pilot Project for Dual-Eligibles Not Receiving SNAP/FNS project on March 7, 2017. To ensure provisions in the law as well as NC Department of Health and Human Services privacy and security policies were met, the project launched in December 2017 and was extended to September 30, 2018.

This report identifies the outcomes for BDT beginning December 2017 through September 30, 2018 as well as SFY 2018-19 plan.

Overview of Grant Implementation and BDT Dual Eligible Pilot Project

The North Carolina Benefits Center is operated by BDT to provide application assistance to NC residents. The Division of Social Services identified approximately 60,000 dually eligible seniors during FY 2017-18. The North Carolina Benefits Center contacted 51,733 dual eligibles not yet enrolled in SNAP resulting in the submission of 5,207 SNAP applications. Of those applications, 3,905 were enrolled in SNAP between December 2017 and September 30, 2018.

In BDT's efforts to assist North Carolina attain its goal of helping older North Carolinians access much needed food assistance, and therefore lower their Medicaid healthcare costs, many interesting facts were revealed that include:

- Older adults in North Carolina who are receiving Medicaid are likely eligible for SNAP.
- Other states that BDT provides application assistance for experienced a 1% to 3% response rate when reaching out to seniors with information mailed to them, while North Carolina's rate was up to 25%.
- Seniors needing additional support may elect document assistance with BDT, which enables them to effectively complete the application process. Approximately 89% percent of seniors elected to have document assistance.
- 75% of seniors for whom BDT submits an application are eligible to receive benefits compared to a 65% average in other states.
- The annual average benefit amount for this population is \$597, which increased their annual income by 5.9% on average generating almost \$2 million in SNAP benefits.

During the 2017 legislative session, Session Law 2017-57 required The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services to continue implementing an evidence-based pilot program to increase access to public benefits for seniors aged 65 and older who are dually enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid to (i) improve the health and independence of seniors and (ii) reduce health care costs.

The Division shall continue to partner with a not-for-profit firm for the purposes of engaging in a data-driven campaign to help seniors aged 65 and older who are dually enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid meet their basic social needs. Appropriation was granted in the amount of \$420,000 for the Dual Eligible Project for SFY 2018-19. BDT was successful in their efforts of reaching eligible seniors and enrollments in SFY 2017-18 and will continue the pilot for SFY 2018-19.

Given this success, it is BDT's goal to assist 5,700 seniors and submit 5,500 applications during SFY 2018-19. As of the first three months (October through December), **1,616** seniors have been screened and **1,182** applications submitted. Of those applications, **967** were approved and 324 were denied for SNAP.

Project Plan of Action State Contract Year 2018- 2019

Activity	Description	Performance Measure
<i>Targeted Identification</i>	Use data-driven strategies to identify and target outreach to seniors enrolled in Medicaid but not yet enrolled in SNAP	DHHS will identify approximately 80,000 dual eligible seniors for SNAP outreach; BDT will contact the senior via mail to provide application assistance
<i>Comprehensive Application Assistance</i>	Offer eligibility pre-screenings. If the household is found to be likely eligible, BDT will provide comprehensive application assistance	Submit 5,500 SNAP/FNS applications on behalf of dual eligible seniors
<i>Successful Enrollment</i>	Confirm enrollment outcomes through analysis of data provided by NC	Enroll 4,000 dual eligibles in SNAP over 12 months