

# Request for Remote Public Input for House Select Committee on COVID-19 Public Comments Report - LINC

Date Submitted	Category	Name	Comments
04/09/2020 03:03 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mrs. Sue Burke	During this pandemic it is urgent that voting be accessible by mail and that mail sent in to be counted be postage free. Sue Burke
04/09/2020 03:09 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mrs. Sue Burke	I urge you to support Medicaid expansion for those suffering from COVID-19. It is urgent that people now more than ever get the health care they can't afford on their own.
04/09/2020 03:22 PM	Economic Support Working Group	Mrs. Kristie Sluder	Small mom and pop landlord operations need to be considered as vulnerable populations. They are a large player in the rental market and rely on rent monies to pay their own Bill's. Relief for renters and or landlords should be considered so that stressed housing markets are put under more pressure.
04/09/2020 03:43 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Sophia Durant	I understand the fear associated with remote voting. At the same time, given the COVID 19 situation, I believe that expanding voting by mail or by a secure web portal needs to be seriously considered for the November 2020 elections.
04/09/2020 05:08 PM	Health Care Working Group	Ms. Anne Hummel	Right now many sick North Carolinians are depending upon the federal govt to cover their uncompensated care in this Covid-19 crisis. And right now there are 500,000 North Carolinians without health insurance coverage because they are not poor enough to qualify for Medicaid but too poor to qualify for the Affordable Care Act coverage. Most of these people are the poor people working for hourly wages who cannot pay for acute medical care in this crisis. We should enact Medicaid expansion to take care of them permanently. Doing so will expand access to affordable health care for 500,000 North Carolinians, both now and in the future. And secondly, doing so will offer permanent healthcare-related jobs to more doctors and nurses and will allow many closed rural hospitals to reopen.
04/09/2020 05:24 PM	Economic Support Working Group	Ms. Anne Hummel	This current Covid-19 crisis puts a bright light on many economic problems facing North Carolina's families right now, as they face rising debts and no financial relief from job loss. The State of NC should be providing direct economic relief to ALL workers whose jobs have been adversely impacted by COVID-19, including self-employed workers who are not currently eligible to collect unemployment benefits. In addition, all workers need AND DESERVE paid sick days, family leave time, and full unemployment benefits. Unequal treatment in the provision of these basic employment benefits for men and women who are working full-time is punitive, disrespectful, unfair, and discriminatory.
04/09/2020 05:28 PM	Health Care Working Group	Ms Eileen McCorry	i support Medicaid expansion that would allow more than 500,000 North Carolinians to get healthcare coverage.
04/09/2020 05:32 PM	Economic Support Working Group	Ms. Eileen McCorry	Protect all North Carolina workers and communities. Specifically, provide: 1) paid sick days, family leave and full unemployment benefits for all 2) economic relief to those most impacted by COVID-19

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04/09/2020 05:33 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms. Iris Weiss	Please do whatever is necessary to allow people to vote without jeopardizing their health, including expanding early voting and greatly increasing access to voting by mail (return postage paid to make sure cost is not an issue). Thank you!
04/09/2020 05:34 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms. Anne Hummel	Because there is no assurance that we will no longer have to protect ourselves from this viral pandemic during the general election period leading up to and including Election Day ini November, I urge legislators to enact legislation to make absentee voting more accessible. This can be accomplished by appropriating state funds to promote publicly the vote-by-mail option and to ensure free return mail postage on absentee ballots.
04/09/2020 05:36 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms. Eileen McCorry	I am asking that you make voting more accessible to all voters by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making voting by mail more accessible</li> <li>• increasing public promotion of absentee vote-by-mail option</li> <li>• ensuring free return mail postage on absentee ballots</li> </ul>
04/09/2020 05:47 PM	Health Care Working Group	Dr. Rosalie Dominik	As a public health professional and citizen of North Carolina, I urge you to expand Medicaid to the full extent possible under federal law as soon as possible. Now more than ever we need to ensure that everyone has access to healthcare. Too many North Carolinians have fallen through the cracks because they make too little money to qualify for insurance provided under the Affordable Care Act and they make too much money to qualify for Medicaid under the current NC restrictions. Everyone should have access to good quality healthcare. Expanding Medicaid would help everyone because the federal funds provided through the expansion would help support our rural hospitals. Do the right thing, provide coverage to more people by expanding Medicaid.
04/09/2020 07:47 PM	Health Care Working Group	Ms. Tamara Sanders	I support Medicaid expansion, which would allow over 500,000 North Carolinians to get health coverage.
04/09/2020 07:52 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms. Tamara Sanders	I'd like to see voting more accessible to all voters by making voting by mail more accessible, increasing public promotion of absentee vote-by-mail option, and ensuring free return mail postage on absentee ballots.
04/09/2020 08:06 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms. Shieterrick Melton	I am an individual that falls in the cracks. I have no income, nor stable housing; how will someone like myself benefit for a "stimulus package" that doesn't account for me? As I have not file for taxes- no income for the last 7 year's, and no means of support for myself.
04/09/2020 09:48 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mrs. Nancy Hirsch	It's very important to have everything in place for mail-in voting in November. I can't urge the State enough to do everything to make voting by mail available to all citizens. I voted for years by mail in Colorado. I felt like it was handled very well and that my votes were counted. I wouldn't want citizens of North Carolina to have to put their lives on the line to vote the way it was forced on the citizens of Wisconsin. Far better to prepare this now and to have it in place and working well by November.
04/09/2020 10:03 PM	Education Working Group	Mrs. Caroline Kolbet	We live in High Point, NC in the Guilford County School (GCS) District. We wanted to reach out to share our experience & thoughts with what we've encountered since March 16. We

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			<p>have two 11th graders at High Point Central; one is in dual enrollment at Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC). We had both of them reach out via email to all of their teachers; basically asking what they could be doing &amp; if those teachers needed any assistance. They began their online schooling the week of March 16. The work load has been extremely high. They both feel like they are doing way more work online versus a typical week at school. They are starting their days around 930am. They stop work for lunch, a brain break in the afternoon, &amp; for dinner. They are completing their online school day around 9p.</p> <p>Now we learn that March 13 is a pivotal moment in the life of grades. Meaning that we were all set for online learning, that they have worked tirelessly online, &amp; now it's going to show for nothing? Rest assured, they have submitted all of their assignments via Canvas prior to Spring Break. As of March 13, my son has a D in 2 classes. Never would we think that he would not have an opportunity to raise those grades. Historically, anytime he's been in this position, he's had time to turn it around &amp; get a B. He has an interest in the Guilford Apprenticeship Program &amp; has applied. We are concerned that if he's given the March 13 grades, it will hurt his chances to move forward with this program, or if he would want to apply for dual enrollment at GTCC. Our daughter is a straight A student with aspirations of attending college. Her current grades could hurt her potentially on school choice &amp; scholarship opportunities. She is still completing assignments at GTCC, submitting them, &amp; receiving grades.</p> <p>I'm sure you've already seen this article; here's a link: <a href="https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/education/article241710191.html?fbclid=IwAR1bZgIj9r5ZDbfhW6nBSqZR6NODC_ydDAc8mhtKTMEpfxWdo1YXrczJYrk">https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/education/article241710191.html?fbclid=IwAR1bZgIj9r5ZDbfhW6nBSqZR6NODC_ydDAc8mhtKTMEpfxWdo1YXrczJYrk</a></p> <p>From my perspective, this article states that the students should be given credit for the work they are doing during this time they are out of school; given grades based on the guidance from the state board. We shouldn't punish the students that are working hard by not giving them the opportunity to improve their grades when a small fraction of the students don't care &amp; are seeing this as a vacation. Those students that don't have access to a device &amp;/or internet, don't lower their grades...give them their March 13 grade. But please don't punish those students who are completing the online assignments by not allowing them to get credit for the work they're doing &amp; improve their grade.</p> <p>I have spoken to some of my children's teachers. They say they have been instructed by GCS to only provide a complete/incomplete for online assignments. That seems to be in conflict with the state board. Please, immediately, give the grades based on the work they're doing. If you give actual grades for the online work, your options are more open in the future, as far as grading is concerned. But if you assign the completes/incompletes now &amp; change your mind to needing the actual grade, the teachers won't be able to give credit to the students that have been working.</p> <p>As juniors in high school, they will be moving into their final year of high school, then on to college or career, along with being an adult. It is extremely important for them to have a good work ethic. The message that is being conveyed to these students is that when the going gets tough, it doesn't matter; you either have 'completes or incompletes'.</p>

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			<p>In my opinion, there is conflict between the state board &amp; all NC school districts. Please begin giving grades to those students who are continuing &amp; completing their online assignments. Realistically, there's nothing you can do about COVID-19, but you can make the right decision for the students that have been working nonstop.</p> <p>Thanks for taking the time to read our letter.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Caroline &amp; Gary Kolbet</p>
04/09/2020 10:38 PM	Health Care Working Group	Mrs Cassandra Brooks	Medicaid Expansion needs to move swiftly as some essential workers don't have health insurance such as childcare workers.
04/10/2020 07:17 AM	Health Care Working Group	Dr Brigid Hogan	I urge you to support Medicaid expansion in the State. This would enable hundreds of thousand North Carolinians to have health insurance
04/10/2020 07:21 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Dr Brigid Hogan	I urge you to allow voting by mail (with prepaid envelopes). Not allowing or expanding this option will disenfranchise thousands people who are at risk for covid-19 and need to stay indoors until a vaccine is developed. There is no evidence that it will lead to voting fraud if properly done -this country /state surely has the technological know-how to enable this option
04/10/2020 07:24 AM	Economic Support Working Group	Dr Brigid Hogan	I urge you to enable paid sick leave and family leave. There is strong evidence that over the long run this leads to increased economic productivity
04/10/2020 07:47 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mrs. Jill Cozzi	Please make it a priority to have a mail-in voting plan in place for the November election, with the count overseen by a nonpartisan committee (i.e. not the current legislature, which has already shown that fair elections are not a priority for the current majority.
04/10/2020 08:22 AM	Health Care Working Group	Sharon Bushnell	Please authorize Medicaid expansion. The lack of health insurance for so many North Carolinians, many of whom are essential workers in supermarkets and other low wage jobs, jeopardizes the health of all of us.
04/10/2020 08:26 AM	Education Working Group	Sharon Bushnell	I strongly support pre-paid mail-in ballots. As a person in the highest risk category for contracting Covid-19, I anticipate staying home for many more months, well past the upcoming election dates.
04/10/2020 08:36 AM	Economic Support Working Group	Sharon Bushnell	According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Summary of Unemployment Insurance Statistics for the last quarter available, 4th Quarter of 2019, North Carolina's UI system provides too little in payments to too few jobless workers for too short a duration. The Trust Fund is solvent, and the state must put together plans to prepare for an economic downturn. It's time to restore the program to adequate levels for workers like we see in other states. This is critical to do given that the state's \$4 billion is more than double the reserve ratio recommended by the US DOL.
04/10/2020 10:14 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections &	Mr. Marshall Montgomery	NC needs a blended approach between in person voting and mail in voting. Mail in voting should be made available to those who are uncomfortable voting in person due to the risk of contracting Coronavirus. This will likely impact the elderly more than any other age

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	Public Safety) Working Group		group. Use of mail in voting should be promoted. Additionally, early in person voting should be extended especially during week-ends, polling places should be evaluated for safety minimizing long lines and maintaining proper distancing, younger poll workers should be recruited. Our leaders need to take all action possible to see that our citizens are able to exercise their franchise in the important November election. This action is essential for the continuation of our democracy of the people!!
04/10/2020 10:16 AM	Health Care Working Group	Brian Perkins	<p>On behalf of North Carolina's Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organizations (LME/MCOs), we thank you for convening the House Select Committee on COVID-19 and appreciate the opportunity to provide input. Identified by the Governor as a COVID-19 Essential Business, LME/MCOs are responsible for managing Medicaid and other public behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disability (IDD) funds for millions of North Carolinians in all 100 counties. Because of your foresight, North Carolina's network of public LME/MCOs are uniquely positioned to quickly respond to community needs in this crisis. We are working 24/7 to support providers, ensure access to care, and meet the extraordinary behavioral health challenges faced by our communities as a result of this unprecedented State of Emergency.</p> <p>Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in children and adults. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations, and this rapidly unfolding emergency has disrupted most aspects of modern life. This stress, uncertainty, and isolation can lead people to experience new behavioral health conditions or exacerbate existing conditions. To assist those who are suffering, it is critical that North Carolina's public behavioral health and IDD system be sustained and bolstered during the COVID-19 emergency.</p> <p>LME/MCOs have long been responsible for supporting people with the most complex needs, who often have multiple diagnoses and may also be challenged by lack of transportation, unstable housing, and economic insecurity. We are working with the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to implement emergency flexibilities to best serve our members and support our providers. Now more than ever our state needs to fully utilize this behavioral health infrastructure to reach those in need. Our responsibilities always include coordinating member care to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and visits to the emergency department (ED). This frees up hospital resources, beds, and personnel for those impacted by COVID-19. In order to continue performing our responsibilities and meet community needs in the short- and long-term, we offer the following four suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop the cuts to State Single-Stream Funding to meet the demand for behavioral health services and tremendous burdens for providers that will extend throughout this crisis and beyond</li> <li>• Increase Innovations Waiver slots to meet the needs of over 12,000 North Carolina citizens on the waiting list for IDD services</li> <li>• Pursue the new crisis response resources and regulatory flexibilities made available by recent federal legislation</li> <li>• Grant LME/MCO clinicians access to the NC Controlled Substances Reporting System (CSRS) for real-time prescription data</li> </ul>

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			<p>Making sure that the public behavioral health and IDD system can continue to meet community needs is crucial now and in the months and years ahead as we deal with the immediate and longer-term impacts of this public health emergency. Considering this urgency, funding for the following appropriations are now more important than ever:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Single-Stream Funding</b> – This is the state funding to provide access to behavioral health services for North Carolinians who are uninsured/underinsured and do not qualify for Medicaid. This resource enables LME/MCOs to cover things that Medicaid does not, such as housing, vocational programs, jail diversion activities, and transportation. Single-stream funding has been cut for more than five consecutive years, diverting more than half a billion dollars from the state's public behavioral health system. With a large influx of North Carolinians suddenly facing unemployment or furlough due to the crisis, this funding stream is critical to serving the behavioral health needs of many individuals and families during a very challenging time. We know that people can and do recover from mental illness and substance use disorders (SUDs) provided they have access to the right treatment. However, when people cannot get the behavioral healthcare they need, their conditions often manifest into severe crises resulting in avoidable ED visits, police involvement, and homelessness – scenarios that are traumatic and expensive for our families and that will exact more of an economic toll as our state struggles to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.</li> <li>• <b>Innovations Waiver Program</b> – Slots in this program enable individuals with disabilities, who would otherwise face institutionalization, to receive support services in their homes and communities. Currently, the waiting list across the state for this program is more than 12,000 people. The total number of slots is determined and funded in the state budget. Keeping individuals stable in the home and community of their choice is integral to positive health outcomes, especially during this emergency when we all should be at home to the fullest possible extent to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We are grateful that DHHS pursued, and the federal government approved, options to assist people who are already on the Innovations Waiver through an Appendix K Waiver that allows additional hours of service, alternatives for service delivery, and other flexibilities during the pandemic. Please note that, depending on how long the impact of the pandemic lasts, LME/MCO capitation rates may need to be adjusted to recognize the cost of those flexibilities.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to increased funding for behavioral health, we ask that you also consider making the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue the new crisis response resources and regulatory flexibilities made available by recent federal legislation. The COVID-19 stimulus package and other response measures recently passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by the President include unprecedented new funding for healthcare providers and policy changes designed to support healthcare organizations and expand access to care throughout the crisis. We encourage the General Assembly and the Governor to actively pursue these newly available resources for the benefit of North Carolinians and we stand ready to assist in obtaining them.</li> </ul>



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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant LME/MCO clinicians access to the NC Controlled Substances Reporting System (CSRS) for real-time prescription data. Access to real-time pharmacy data is crucial for quality healthcare, especially in emergency situations. Current state law does not allow for managed care medical directors to access real-time pharmacy data through the CSRS for population health purposes. In many states, such as Virginia, the controlled substance database can be accessed by health plan medical directors. Even outside of natural disasters and pandemics, health plan medical directors utilize these databases to identify members who may need urgent care coordination, particularly with patients experiencing SUDs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for health plan medical directors and clinicians to access real-time pharmacy data is even more critical. The LME/MCOs currently do not have a mechanism to receive real time pharmacy data and, therefore, do not have a way to reliably triage which of our members being treated for Opioid Use Disorder are in danger of running out of medications. We need to ensure that our members can access lifesaving medications at any time, particularly during a pandemic.</li> </ul> <p>Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this input. We are grateful for your consideration of these important issues and look forward to working together to effectively respond to this unprecedented healthcare emergency. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or would like to discuss any issues.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Rob Robinson, CEO, Alliance Health  Trey Suttan, CEO, Cardinal Innovations Healthcare  Sarah N. Stroud, CEO, Eastpointe  Rhett Melton, CEO, Partners Behavioral Health Management  Victoria Whitt, CEO, Sandhills Center  Leza Wainwright, CEO, Trillium Health Resources  Brian Ingraham, CEO, Vaya Health</p>
04/10/2020 11:32 AM	Health Care Working Group	Mrs. Bonnie McCarthy	I urge you to support Medicaid expansion in North Carolina. This would allow over 500,000 North Carolinians to get health coverage. It is of particular importance in this crisis of coronavirus that we are now facing. By expanding Medicaid, North Carolina would qualify for additional Federal assistance. To leave so many of our state's citizens exposed to fighting this crisis alone is something we should avoid.
04/10/2020 11:38 AM	Economic Support Working Group	Mrs. Bonnie McCarthy	I urge the House Select Committee on COVID-19 (Economic Support Working Group) to protect North Carolina workers and communities. You can do this by providing paid sick days, family leave and full unemployment benefits for all. In addition you can provide economic relief to those most impacted by COVID-19. It is essential to act quickly to get workers and communities the relief they need in this most difficult time in our country. Thank you.
04/10/2020 11:40 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	carol wilson	It is essential to allow and expand voting by mail, extended early voting, and use of absentee voting. trump has stated "it doesn't work for republicans." Voting is open to all parties, and accurate accounting for the votes gives everyone a voice - both parties. We are all Americans.

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04/10/2020 11:43 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mrs. Bonnie McCarthy	I urge the House Select Committee on COVID-19 (Continuity of State Operations working group) to make voting more accessible to all voters. This basic right can be protected by making voting by mail more accessible as well as increase the public promotion of absentee vote-by-mail option. In addition it would be important to ensure free return mail postage on absentee ballots. Especially in these difficult times, I urge you to do all you can to protect this basic right. Thank you.
04/10/2020 12:18 PM	Economic Support Working Group	Mr Taylor Saxe	Absolutely no support for small businesses that don't have a bank that do SBA loans for PPP. My 2 businesses will close for good due to this. Less tax revenue for government now! And I'll just draw unemployment.
04/10/2020 12:21 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Kathleen Fennig	We are Seniors and staying at home following guidelines by our local authorities and CDC. We have existing medical conditions being elderly and cannot go to a public facility, let them get in our car so that we can get our vehicle inspection by the due date. We will not risk our lives for this and Action 9 news Charlotte has investigated this. Many are asking the NC State to waive the or put a hold on the due dates for vehicle inspections NOW. PLEASE WORK WITH US THE DMV WILL NOT! Thank you.
04/10/2020 12:43 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mr. Craig Jacobs	I would like to see our State enact a "Vote by Mail" requirement for our 11/4/20 election. Five States in our Country have been doing this successfully. No need to experiment. We can learn from them. Hurry; we'll need millions of postage paid ballots by Labor Day. Does the Governor have the authority to declare November 4th a State Holiday? We have no assurance the pandemic will be over by election time. The Republicans will do whatever they can to minimize voter turnout. The Democrats need to take collective action NOW.
04/10/2020 01:07 PM	Health Care Working Group	Mrs. Catherine Jordan	Good afternoon! Thank you for all of your hard work during this constantly evolving time! I'd like to let you know of a retirement facility in Greensboro, WhiteStone who is using a loophole to require that their non-essential employees continue to go into work. Because retirement facilities are understandably deemed essential, unfortunately non-essential employees at WhiteStone, such as sales and marketing and others are not allowed to work remotely. This is potentially putting residents, as well as essential employees at risk. Other retirement facilities in NC may be using the same loophole to keep employees going into the workplace, but I only know of this location.
04/10/2020 01:36 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms Julie Wells	We must adopt policies that will allow North Carolinians to VOTE BY MAIL in the upcoming elections as a way to ensure that everyone, no matter what future limitations we have, are able to VOTE and make their voice heard.
04/10/2020 01:53 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Aaron Johnson	All NC residents should be able to vote in the next election, even if there are social restrictions in place. Support everyone's right to vote by supporting a comprehensive vote-by-mail system and early drive through voting.
04/10/2020 02:25 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency	Caroline Weaver	All NC residents should be able to vote in the next election, even if there are social restrictions in place. Support everyone's right to vote by supporting a comprehensive vote-



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	Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group		by-mail system.
04/10/2020 03:00 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mark Mathison	All North Carolina citizens should have the right to vote under emergency circumstances. Please ensure a mail in voting is in place.