

Aging and Senior Abuse: Subjects of STHL Meeting

By Jillian Hardin

At this year's first meeting of the North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature (STHL), Governor Beverly Perdue encouraged members to make a difference in North Carolina by becoming familiar with aging issues and by becoming advocates for vulnerable individuals.

Governor Perdue stated that while ageism does exist, "We are seeing less of this stereotype in the media and recognizing that older adults are more active, involved, engaged and ambitious than previous generations." She reminded the group that by 2030, more than 80 counties in our state are expected to have more people age 60 and older than 17 and younger. Perdue added that now is the time to educate state legislators about the importance of aging services and the need to maintain funding for vital programs. She specifically identified elder abuse as a developing problem in North Carolina. Newly appointed Secretary of North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Al Delia, added to the challenge. He advised the group to "become familiar with aging policy initiatives in order to effectively advocate to lawmakers about the significance of Adult Protective Services."

According to Dennis Streets, Director of the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS), the number of Adult Protective Service reports to county departments of social services increased from more than 14,000 in 2006-07 to nearly 20,000 in 2010-11. He added that research shows "Victims of even the modest forms of abuse have dramatically higher morbidity and mortality rates than non-abused older people." Currently, DAAS is working with the North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys to improve access to justice for victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Mr. Streets explained that some barriers to the justice system include a lack of knowledge and understanding of elder abuse on the part of the judicial system and a lack of understanding of the justice system on the part of the victims. Other obstacles include environmental barriers such as building design, long wait periods for the case to be heard, the inability to accept recorded or distance testimony, inadequate transportation resources for older adults and the difficulty in offering flexible court scheduling times for older adults with disabilities. An Elder Abuse Awareness Campaign begins on Mother's Day, May 13, and ends on Father's Day, June 17. Everyone is encouraged to wear purple ribbons to offer support for this campaign.

During the two-day meeting, Senior Tar Heels learned about other aging initiatives such as a new project through Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC). Currently, our state is one of 15 in the process of developing an Integrated Delivery Model for beneficiaries of both Medicare and Medicaid services or dual-eligibles. Elise Bolda, Ph.D., Project Director for the Dual Eligibles Planning Grant, expressed to the group that North Carolina stands to save additional health care dollars when this plan is implemented. Dr. Bolda stated, "We believe the Integrated Delivery Model will work in North Carolina because we will work through CCNC, a model that produces improved quality of care and is shown to be a cost effective way to spend Medicaid dollars." She went on to say, "We plan to expand and build on this statewide model by establishing a medical home, which is a partnership between the primary care physician and beneficiary working together as they define and refine goals for the delivery of health services." The three objectives for the Dual Eligibles Project are to be more responsive to the Medicare/Medicaid beneficiary, improve quality of care for the individual and use public funds more wisely.

The final speaker during the meeting offered an interesting perspective on the course of aging throughout history. Jim Mitchell, Ph.D., East Carolina University, shared various theories about how the human race survived migrating to new regions and encountering infectious disease such as smallpox. This set the stage for chronic illness and degenerative disease. Currently, individuals are living longer with chronic conditions such as heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes. In addition, the population, in general, is aging because more people live through child-

birth due to the decline of infectious disease. Dr. Mitchell stated, "Access to sugars and fat that make us unhealthy coupled with changes in lifestyle, culture and environment have led to harmful lifestyle choices regarding our health." He added, "We are spending time and resources fixing what is broken, but we must focus more on preventing individuals from being broken."

The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature (STHL) promotes citizen involvement and advocacy concerning aging issues before the General Assembly and assesses the legislative needs of older adults by convening a forum modeled after the North Carolina General Assembly. It is during these forums that the STHL establishes priorities for the upcoming years. The 2012 legislative priorities for the STHL include: 1) Restore funding to sustain Project C.A.R.E.; 2) Maintain funding for the Home and Community Care Block Grant; 3) Maintain funding for senior centers; 4) Provide dental care for North Carolina's Adult Special Care Population; and 5) Mandate pre-employment and random drug testing for employees of nursing, assisted living facilities and adult care homes.

One delegate and one alternate represent every older adult in the state's 100 counties. Please feel free to contact your local delegate or the regional area Agency on Aging. For more information, contact Delegate John Thompson in Carteret County, at 726-7221 or e-mail johnth@ec.rr.com or contact your area Agency on Aging Director, Tonya Cedars at 638-3185, ext. 3009. Also visit the STHL website at <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/aging/sthl.htm>. The next STHL meeting will be June 2012.

Steps to Sudoku Success

By Mike Smith, Yahoo@Games

Love playing with numbers? Then we're betting you're a fan of Sudoku.

A staple of in-flight magazines, the pen-and-paper puzzler has become one of the most popular logic games in the world. Requiring no specialized know-how to play, it's a simply designed but tremendously challenging game. Yes, it involves digits, but it requires absolutely no math (and properly done, it requires absolutely no guesswork, either.)

It's a game of pure, cold, applied logic. Follow these tips, and your Sudoku career—not to mention your brain—will live long and prosper.

The Rules

You're not going to get far if you don't understand the rules. Luckily, there are only three of them and they are pretty straightforward.

- Imagine the puzzle divided into nine horizontal rows. Each row has nine squares in it, and each number from one to nine should appear once—and only once—in that row.
- Now picture the puzzle split into nine vertical columns. Again, each column has nine squares, and each one should contain all the numbers from one to nine.
- Finally, you'll notice the puzzle is cut into nine three-by-three squares. Each of these larger squares contains nine small squares—and each has to contain the numbers from one to nine.

Easy, right? All those blank spaces might look daunting, but with just a few simple techniques you'll be equipped to handle just about anything those sneaky Sudoku masters throw at you. Read on.

The Basics

Sherlock Holmes was fond of saying, "Once you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth." He wasn't talking about Sudoku (though we suspect he would have enjoyed the game), but Holmes's principle works for Sudoku as well as it works for finding crooks.

There are only nine possible answers (or "candidates") for each blank square, and the answers already on the grid will eliminate some of them. Once you've eliminated eight, you can be sure the one that remains is correct.

So for the first step, grab your pencil—you are using a pencil, right?—and mark each cell with its possible answers. Just look across the cell's column and row, and

(Continued on page 21)