



Jolanda Ware speaks out about her health coverage woes.

Submitted Photo

Triad residents join call for expanded Medicaid

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The NC Left Me Out Coalition, a group of health care advocates supporting expanded Medicaid coverage in the state, continued its statewide tour in Greensboro on Friday, Feb. 6 to share the stories of some of the 500,000 North Carolinians who fall into the health insurance coverage gap caused by Republican lawmakers' refusal to expand Medicaid.

Jolonda Ware, a Greensboro single mother and full-time student who also works multiple jobs, joined coalition members at Triad Adult and Pediatric Medicine in Greensboro to share her story.

Ware said she often has to go without necessary medical care that an expanded Medicaid program would allow her to afford.

"I'm doing everything I can and more to support my son," she said.

"But apparently that's still not enough, because lawmakers have decided to play politics instead of helping people like me afford the care we need. The longer they wait, the deeper people like me fall into debt as we struggle to pay for treatment."

The tour and NCLeftMeOut.org website come on the heels of a December report that found about 30,000 people in Guilford and Forsyth counties fall into this gap. The Cone Health Foundation study also found that expanding Medicaid to cover these people would create over 5,000 jobs, \$3 billion in economic activity and nearly \$20 million in tax revenue for Guilford and Forsyth counties by 2020.

North Carolina lawmakers have already cost the state nearly \$2 billion in lost economic activity and the chance to create 43,000 jobs across the state by refusing to expand

Medicaid," said Adam Linker, codirector of the Health Access Coalition and a member of the NC Left Me Out Coalition. "Even worse, about 20 North Carolinians die every week because they lack access to affordable health care. The clock is ticking, and this NCLeftMeOut.org website allows lawmakers and their voters back home to see personal stories from the 500,000 people who are being denied coverage."

Lee Storrow, executive director of NC AIDS Action, added, "Some of our state leaders claim there is 'no good case' for expanding Medicaid. I guess they must not be paying attention, because the reasons for expansion are crystal clear. Just ask

Republican governors like Chris Christie and John Kasich who have decided to expand Medicaid in their states, recognizing the need to put people over politics."

Health Briefs

Telestroke Network turns 5

Five years ago the Comprehensive Stroke Center at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center launched its Telestroke Network to help patients in rural communities receive timely state-of-the-art stroke therapies. Since then, the Network's stroke neurologists have provided service to more than 1,000 patients.

One of the first of its kind in the state, the Telestroke Network partners with community hospitals to ensure that they have 24-hour access to Wake Forest Baptist stroke neurologists through telemedicine devices that have video teleconferencing and image-sharing capabilities.

"Wake Forest Baptist leads the state in the number of vascular neurology faculty who specialize in advanced stroke care," said Bobbi Carbone, M.D., M.B.A., president and chief operating officer of Wake Forest Baptist Health. "This cutting-edge technology allows us to share our expertise, add to the capabilities of community hospitals across the state, and provide the best possible outcomes to patients in the best possible environment, either at the network hospital or, if necessary, by transfer to Wake Forest Baptist."

Utilizing these specialized devices, Wake Forest Baptist stroke specialists can evaluate a patient at a member hospital and consult with emergency department doctors there in real time.

"Minutes can make all the difference in the outcome of an acute stroke patient," said Charles Tegeler, M.D., professor of neurology at Wake Forest Baptist and medical director of the Telestroke Network. "This system saves precious time and helps to avoid delays in access to potentially life-saving treatment."

So far, the network has helped treat more than 1,400 patients from Sparta to Morehead City. More than 60 percent of those cases required a remote-presence consultation with a Wake Forest Baptist neurologist via a telemedicine device while the rest could be handled by phone.

Wyrick co-signs pills warning

David Wyrick, Ph.D., director of the UNCG Institute to Promote Athlete Health & Wellness, urges athletes to "put down that pill" in the wake of the New York State Office of the Attorney General's call for four major retailers to stop selling dietary supplement products alleged to contain fraudulent and potentially dangerous herbal ingredients.

"Dietary supplements, some of which are used by athletes in an effort to improve performance, are unregulated by the Food and Drug Administration and products can be contaminated or adulterated," says Wyrick.

The attorney general's office announced the cease and desist letters Tuesday, Feb. 3. GNC, Target, Walmart and Walgreens were asked to stop selling herbal supplements alleged to contain ingredients not listed on the label or that could not be verified to contain the substance listed on the label.

"This puts the population, including athletes, at risk for adverse and possibly severe allergic reactions, unwittingly testing positive for banned substances, and even worse," says Wyrick, who is also an associate professor of Public Health Education at UNCG. "One of the cornerstones of our work at the institute is to educate our athlete population about the risks of dietary supplement use and give them the tools to make wise, healthful decisions."

Health checks offered at church

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Residents living in and around the Winston-Salem can learn about their risk for cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes and other chronic, serious conditions by taking advantage of affordable screenings being offered by Life Line Screening.

Bethany Baptist Church, 600 Old Hollow Road, will host screenings all day on Thursday, March 5.

Screenings offered can check for the following:

- The level of plaque buildup in your arteries, related to risk for heart disease, stroke and overall vascular health

- HDL and LDL Cholesterol levels

- Diabetes risk

- Bone density as a risk for possible osteoporosis

- Kidney and thyroid function, and more

Servio Manderchio of Holly Springs, N.C. attended a Life Line Screening and said, "I can't begin to thank you enough. The screening you performed saved my life."

Screening packages start at \$149, but consultants will work with everyone to create a package that is right for you based on your age and risk factors. They are convenient and accessible to those in wheelchairs and who have trouble walking. Free parking is also available.

Call 1-877-237-1287 or visit our www.lifeline-screening.com for more information or to pre-register, which is required.

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