

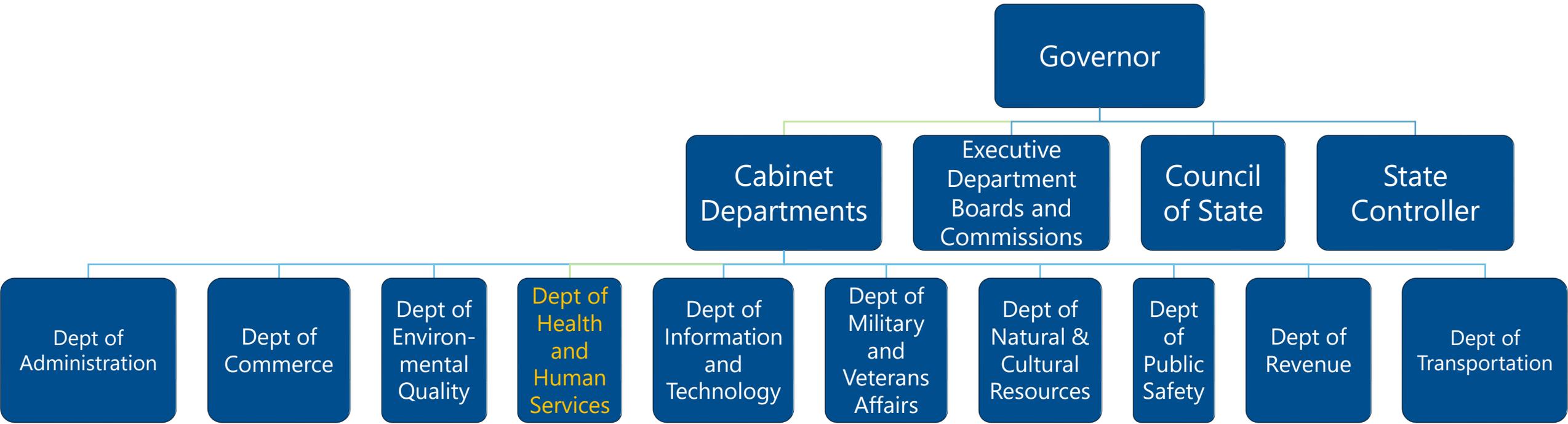
The State of Aging and the Road Ahead

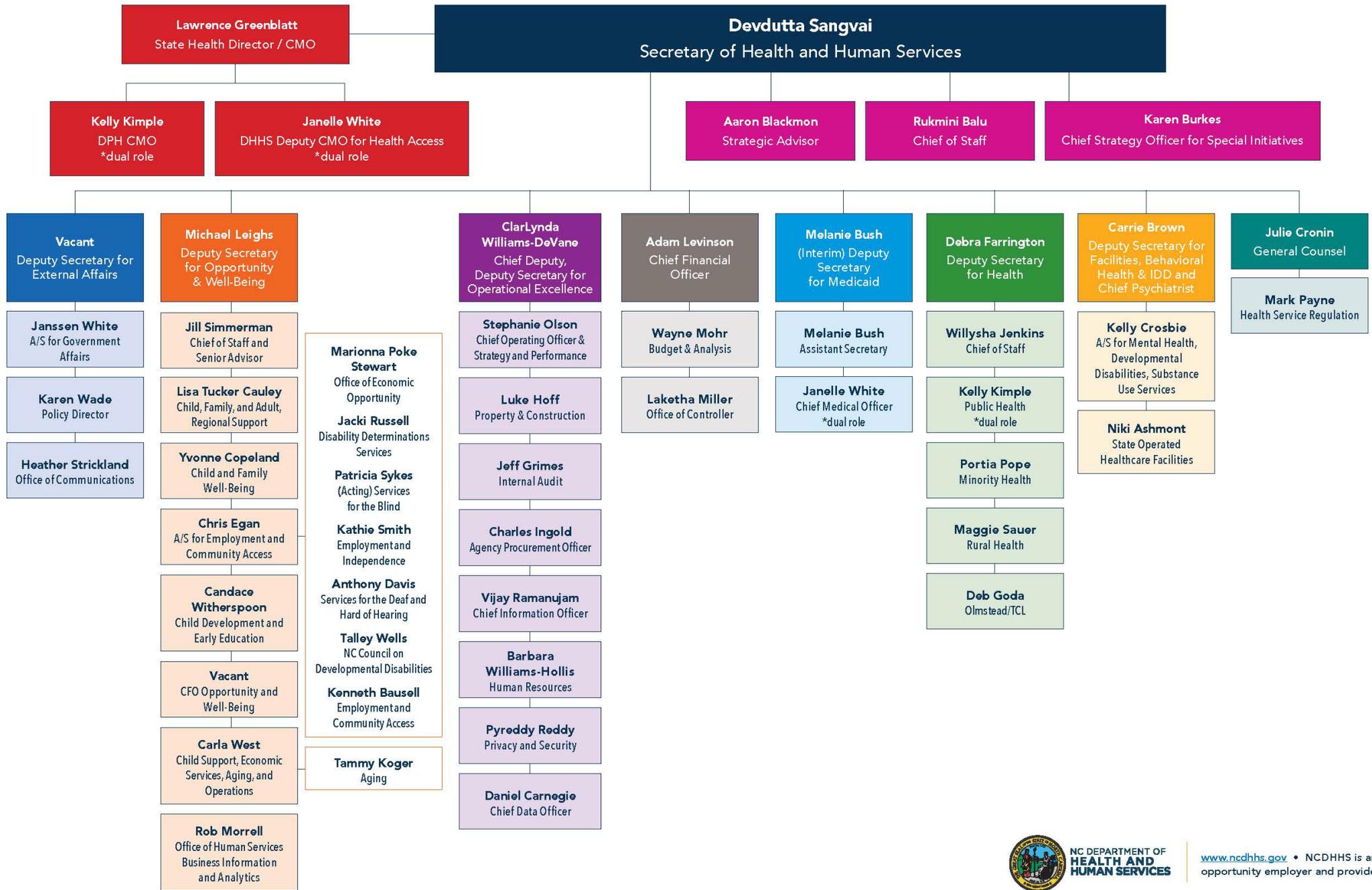
March 2026

Carla West
NC Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Aging

The state of aging shows us where we are; the road ahead shows us who we can become.

When we strengthen community care, we create a future where every person can age with dignity, joy, and connection.



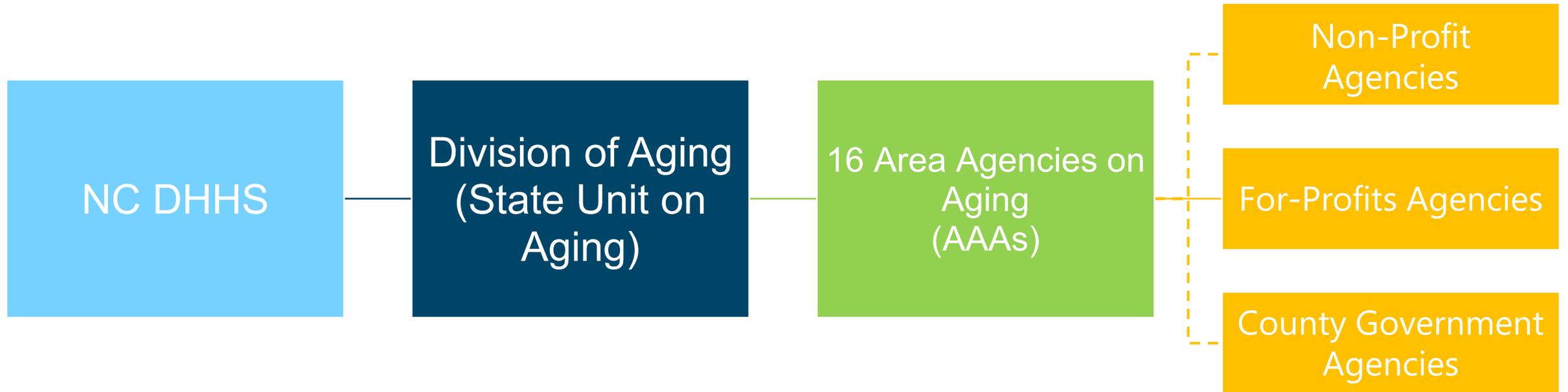




NC Department of Health and Human Services Division of Aging

The Division of Aging works to promote the independence and enhance the dignity of North Carolina's older adults, persons with disabilities and their families through a community-based system of opportunities, services, benefits, and protections.

Service Delivery System



Adult Day Care	Adult and Family Services	Mental Health Counseling	Adult Day Health Care	Home-Delivered Meals
Senior Center Operations	Care Management	Housing & Home Improvement	Senior Companion	Congregate Nutrition
Information and Assistance	Skilled Home Health Care	Group and Overnight Respite	In-Home Aide	Transportation
Health Promotion & Disease Prevention	Institutional Respite Care	Volunteer Development	Health Promotion	Family Caregiver Supports

Key Rental Assistance

Emergency Solutions Grant

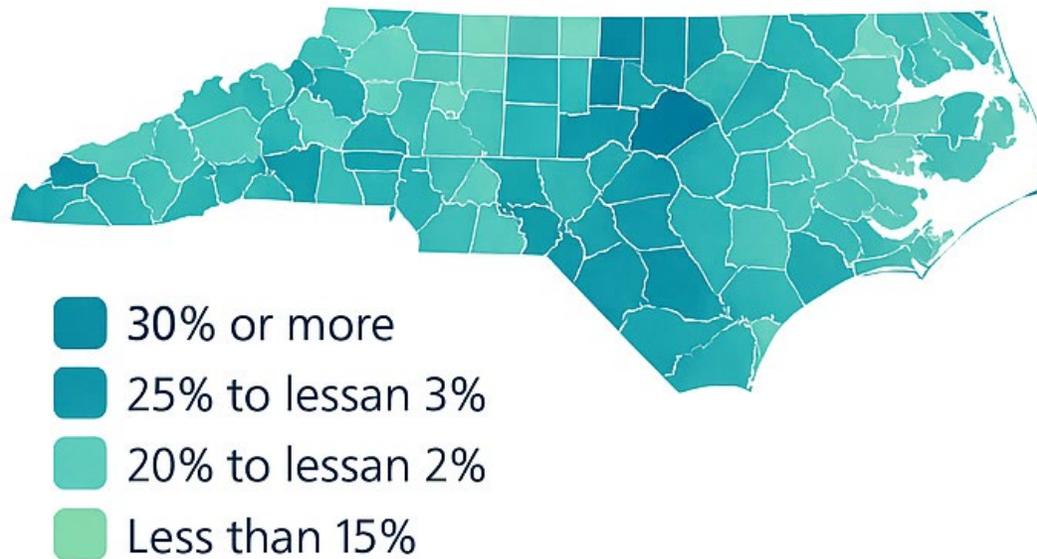
Senior Community Service Employment Program

Long Term Care Ombudsman

**Demographic Reality:
NC is Aging Faster
Than the Nation**



North Carolina Population Age 65 and Older



Rural Communities are aging faster than urban ones creating increased pressure on LTSS, transportation, and health systems.

North Carolina's
Aging
Population is
facing multiple
challenges

Workforce + Caregiver Shortages

Health, Functional Needs & Chronic Disease
Trends

Economic Vulnerability & Food Security

Housing & Transportation Gaps

APS Pressures

NC Medicaid & the Impact on Older Adults

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Reduced Reimbursement Rates

Severe Workforce Shortages

Limited Access to Services

Administrative Barriers

Risk of Institutionalization

IMPACT ON OLDER ADULTS

Fewer in-home supports

More caregiver burden

Higher ER/hospital Use

Greater risk of nursing home placement

Unequal access within rural and lower-income areas



Reimagining
Aging in
North Carolina

Building communities where every
older adult can thrive

**All Ages,
All Stages NC** 
A Roadmap for Aging and Living Well

Rural Health Transformation: What Aging Providers Need to Know



Strengthening rural primary care and community health teams



Expanding telehealth and remote monitoring



Increasing home- and community-based service capacity



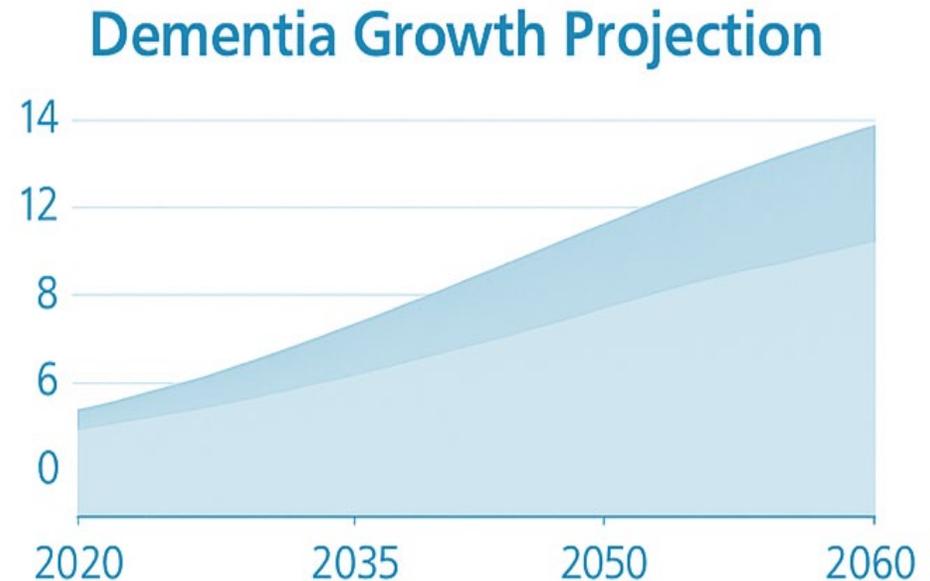
Supporting dementia-capable training for rural providers



Improving care transitions between hospitals, DSS, and community programs

Mental Health & Dementia-Focused Initiatives: Critical for Aging NC

NC is expected to experience a 40-50% increase in adults living with Alzheimer's or related dementias in the next 10-15 years.



Mental Health & Dementia-Focused Initiatives: Critical for Aging NC

Behavioral health redesign includes aging and dementia priorities

Crisis System
Modernization

Increased
training for
first
responders
and frontline
workers

Statewide
Care
Coordination
Models



Better Days With Practical Caregiving Support

On-demand answers for caregiving challenges precisely when you need them most. Explore our online lessons and events to get help today and every day.

NC's Support for Caregivers

Family Caregiver Support Program: Counseling, training, support groups, and short-term respite for unpaid caregivers across all NC regions.

Lifespan Respite Program: Annual reimbursement to help caregivers access temporary relief and reduce burnout.

Project C.A.R.E.: Dementia-specific training, care consultations, and limited respite funding for families supporting someone with Alzheimer's or related dementias.

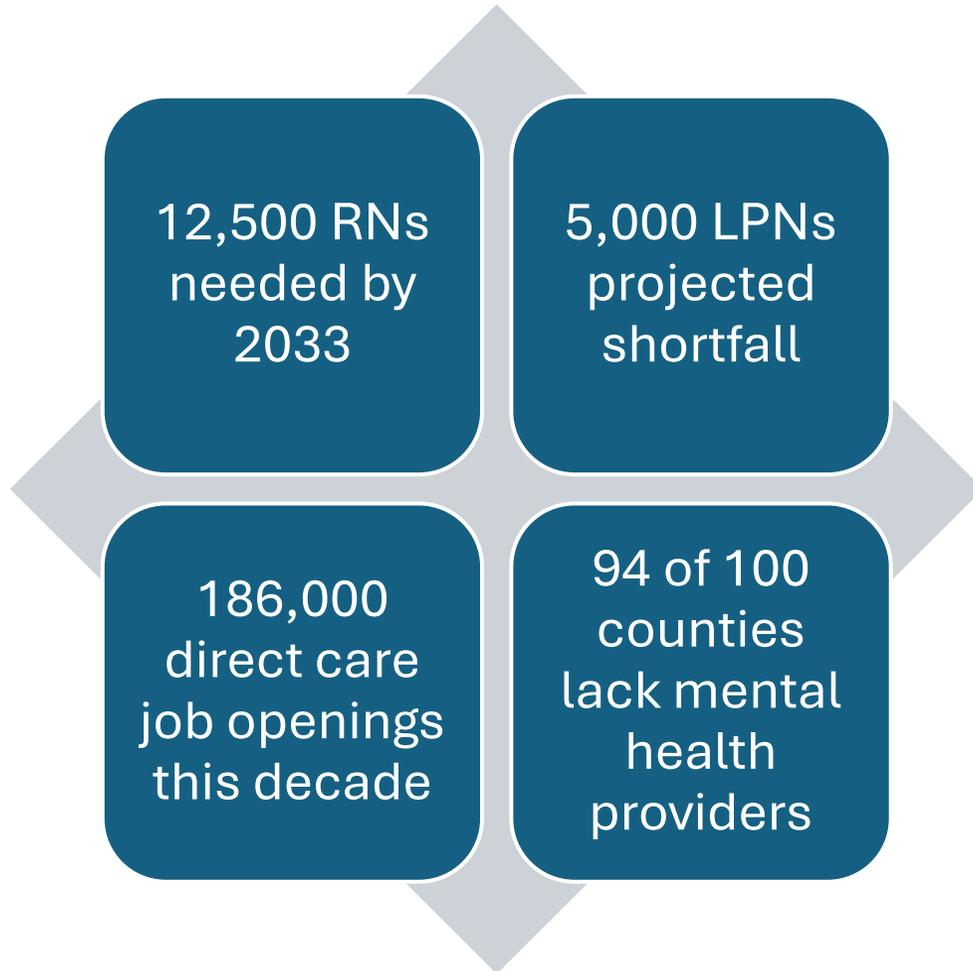
Dementia-Capable NC: Tools, education, and guidance to help caregivers navigate resources more easily.

Legislative Investments: Increased state funding and new initiatives aimed at expanding respite services and strengthening caregiver supports statewide.

North Carolina Caregiver Portal : Digital platform to help caregivers locate resources, training and support from home.

[NC Caregiver Portal](#)

NC Workforce Initiatives & Critical Shortages



What NC is Doing

- 🎓 Pipeline Expansion
- ⤴️ Retention & Career Ladders
- 📖 Rural Health Workforce
- 👥 Caregiving Workforce Council

Adult Day Care Programs and PACE Centers

YOU play a key role in preventing crisis



Reduced ED visits



Supports caregiver
respite



Delays or prevents
nursing home
placement



Provides structure,
dementia-capable
environments



What we choose to build
together will shape the future of
aging in North Carolina.

And that future starts now.