

**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**

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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 June 30, 2019.

This report identifies the outcomes for BDT beginning October 2018 through June 30, 2019 as well as SFY 2019-20 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 2018-19. The North Carolina Benefits Center contacted 46,050 dual eligibles not yet enrolled in SNAP resulting in the submission of 5,756 SNAP applications. Of those applications, 3,208 were enrolled in SNAP between October 2018 and September 30, 2019.

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.
- 73% of seniors for whom BDT submits an application are eligible to receive benefits compared to a 62% average in other states.
- The annual average benefit amount for this population is \$542, which increased their annual income by 5.6% on average from \$10,000 to \$10542 generating over \$4 million in SNAP/FNS benefits received.

During the 2018 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 2018-19 and will continue the pilot for SFY 2019-20 using private funding through the Walmart Foundation.

Given this success, it is BDT's goal to assist 5,500 seniors and submit 4,000 applications during SFY 2019-20. Due to the current budget status (HB 398), the BDT SFY 2019-20 contract is in the finalization process.

Project Plan of Action State Contract Year 2019- 2020

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/FNS 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