

For Immediate Release



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Greetings:

At the General Assembly *For the Week*

December is here and we are closing out 2023. I worked in the district last week and will do so this week. Make the most of the final weeks of the year and once again, my office will remain open.

I filed for reelection at the Board of Elections. I am looking forward to serving my 6th term as your Senator representing District 40.

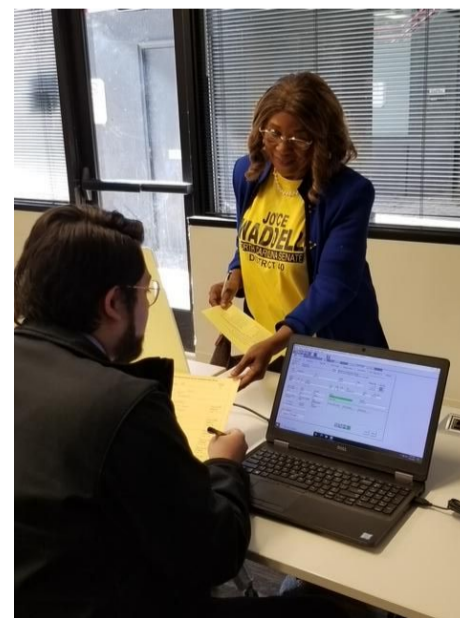
Joyce Waddell



Filing for Office

Senator Waddell filed to represent Mecklenburg County's 40th Senatorial District at the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections.

Senator Waddell was joined in filing for office with other members of the Mecklenburg Legislative Delegation.



Flu Death

Five adult flu-associated deaths have been reported in North Carolina this season, according to the NCDHHS. North Carolina flu cases have increased in recent weeks, alongside RSV and continued COVID-19 activity, according to the news release.

According to a Nov. 11 flu activity map published by the CDC, North Carolina has most recently had “moderate” flu activity, while other Southern states, like South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama have all seen “high” flu activity.

It seems clear that all children aged 6 months and older receive a seasonal flu vaccine. The CDC also recommends everyone age 5 years and older should get one dose of an updated COVID-19 vaccine. Children age 6 months to 4 years old need multiple doses of COVID-19 vaccines to be up to date, including at least one dose of an updated vaccine.

Jail Health Care

More than 20,000 people cycle in and out of North Carolina’s county jails every year. These individuals are more likely than the general population to have substance use disorders, mental health problems, chronic diseases and infectious diseases, according to years of research. Despite the large health care needs of this population, there is limited information on how that care is delivered and by whom.

Researchers conducted 45-minute phone surveys with jail personnel from 254 of the 346 jails identified in the four states from October 2020 to May 2021; North Carolina’s 109 jails had the highest response rate at 90 percent.

The survey, which was published last month, found that nearly 30 percent of jails routinely lacked on-site providers, and 50 percent lacked registered nurses. Additionally, in about half of the jails surveyed, neither a provider nor a registered nurse worked on site for more than two days per week — even as jails operate around the clock, every day.

Due to the infrequent on-site hours of health care staff, researchers found that many jails relied heavily on licensed practical nurses and detention officers to perform various medical responsibilities — even performing tasks that may exceed their training. Licensed practical nurses train for one year and are often skilled in taking vital signs and following nursing care plans. But they are not trained in independent nursing assessments and creating care plans.

Detention officers have even less training. In North Carolina, the state training program required to become a detention officer includes less than four days of health-related instruction. Despite this minimal training, detention officers can have a wide range of medical responsibilities. Among surveyed jails, 67 percent reported that detention officers determine if an arrested person is healthy enough to be jailed, 83 percent conduct a medical questionnaire at intake and 58 percent assess the urgency of medical requests. Findings showed officer responsibilities decreased when there were greater nursing coverage hours in a week.

It was acknowledged that it is complex to provide health care for this continuously rotating population, and she has spoken with many jail staff who recognize the limitations to the available health care.

To increase health care staffing, jails should consider using telemedicine more frequently. The survey found relatively low telemedicine use, with 3 percent of jails using it for primary care and 55 percent for mental health care.

Vaccines

According to the NC Department of Health and Human Services, respiratory issues and viruses are rising. Please be careful when moving about the community.

Vaccines are a necessity for good health. Getting vaccinated is vital for keeping North Carolinians healthy. Get vaccinated as soon as possible.



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