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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**COUNCIL ON AGING FOR HENDERSON COUNTY JOINS IN MONTH-LONG
MARCH FOR MEALS CELEBRATION WITH COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE**

*ELECTED OFFICIALS VOICE SUPPORT IN FIGHT AGAINST SENIOR HUNGER AND ISOLATION
IN HENDERSON COUNTY AMID THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND*

[Hendersonville, NC] – March 19, 2021 – Local elected officials gathered at the Council on Aging for Henderson County today in recognition of the 19th Annual March for Meals – a month-long and nationwide celebration of Meal on Wheels and our senior neighbors who rely on this essential service to remain healthy and independent at home—now even more acute amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

“While there is certainly good news with respect to the availability of vaccines to area residents, we are not yet in the clear and many of our homebound aging adults still battle hunger and food insecurity. In the last year, we experienced a 40% increase in the demand for our services in Henderson County,” said Keith Logan, Executive Director of the Council on Aging. “We have been gratified with the outpouring of support this community has offered, and yet there is still more we can do to ensure the nutritional security of our elderly neighbors.”

The Council on Aging serves 400+ clients each week in all parts of Henderson County. In addition, they host congregate meals at the Sammy Williams Center, provide liquid nutrition to seniors who cannot get sufficient nutrition from solid food (many of whom are getting cancer treatment), and counsel aging adults and their families on helpful resources to navigate the aging process.

The annual March for Meals celebration commemorates the historic day in March of 1972 when President Nixon signed into law a measure that amended the Older Americans Act of 1965 to include a national nutrition program for seniors 60 years and older. Since 2002, community-based Meals on Wheels programs from across the country have joined forces for the annual awareness campaign to celebrate this successful public-private partnership and garner the support needed to fill the gap between the seniors served and those still in need.

“The pandemic has introduced many of us to the harsh realities of food insecurity and social isolation – something that far too many seniors experience as their daily norm. More than ever, we must rally around our essential community-based programs that serve as lifelines to a growing number of people in need, to enable their own long-term vitality,” said Ellie Hollander, President and CEO of Meals on Wheels America. “Even when we make it through this unprecedented time in our nation's history, there will still be millions of vulnerable older adults who will rely on that familiar knock on the door that provides peace of mind and hope beyond the meal itself.”

For more information on how you can volunteer, contribute, or speak out for the seniors in Henderson County this March, visit coahc.org.

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