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NEWS

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Illinois Department of Insurance Announces Free, One-on-One Medicare Counseling Services

***Volunteers provide help with Medicare options in
Crawford County; pre-registration required***

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Pat Quinn and the Illinois Department of Insurance announce free, one-on-one counseling services in Robinson to help educate Medicare-eligible individuals and their caregivers about available insurance options. The Department's Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) is conducting a series of counseling sessions statewide to assist Medicare-eligible individuals with the Medicare open enrollment season, which runs this year from November 15th through December 31st.

Earlier this month, Governor Pat Quinn proclaimed the week of November 2 through November 6 as SHIP week to recognize the program's volunteers and the nearly 300,000 hours of free counseling provided to Illinois' Medicare beneficiaries.

Pre-registration for appointments is required for all sessions by calling the Crawford County Senior Citizens at (618) 544-8811. SHIP volunteers are also available year-round to answer Medicare questions. For a list of SHIP volunteers in your area please visit the [SHIP Web site](#) or call SHIP toll-free at (800) 548-9034.

The next SHIP session in Crawford County is scheduled as follows:

**December 16
9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Robinson Community Center
300 South Lincoln Street**

Through its staff and a network of approximately 900 trained volunteers in more than 150 sites throughout the State, SHIP assists Illinoisans who have questions about or problems with:

- Medicare
- Medicare supplemental insurance

- Medicare Advantage Plans (HMO, PPO, and PFFS)
- Medicare claims and appeals
- Prescription drug coverage through Medicare and other sources
- Long term care insurance

Every SHIP office is volunteer-based and supported by local sponsoring organizations. In 2008 alone, SHIP volunteers provided over 35,000 hours of counseling, responded to more than 31,000 telephone calls, and saved Medicare beneficiaries an estimated \$11.8 million.

For more information about SHIP, including information about SHIP volunteers in your area, please visit the SHIP [website](#) or call the SHIP toll-free hotline at (800) 548-9034. You can also visit the Department of Insurance's Web site at www.insurance.illinois.gov or call our toll-free hotline at (866) 445-5364.

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