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# NEWS

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## Illinois Department of Insurance Announces Free, One-on-One Medicare Counseling Services in Downtown Chicago

*Volunteers to provide help with Medicare options;  
pre-registration is encouraged*

CHICAGO—December 14, 2010. Governor Pat Quinn's administration and the Illinois Department of Insurance announce free, one-on-one counseling services in downtown Chicago to inform 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 from November 15th through December 31st.

Governor Pat Quinn recently proclaimed the week of November 15 through November 19 as SHIP week to recognize the program's volunteers and the nearly 300,000 hours of free counseling provided to Illinois' Medicare beneficiaries.

**The downtown Chicago event will take place at:** *Chicago Cultural Center (CCC)  
78 East Washington Street  
Chicago, IL 60602*

**The event will occur in two distinct phases:**

### **Phase 1**

*What: Orientation (opportunity to schedule appointments for next day)  
When: 11 a.m. – 12 noon, Monday, December 20<sup>th</sup>  
Where: CCC's Studio Theater*

### **Phase 2**

*What: Enrollment (open to those with appointments and also walk-ins)  
When: 9 a.m. – 12 noon, Tuesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>  
Where: The Gallery at the CCC*

- Pre-registration for appointments is strongly encouraged; walk-ins are welcome but will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis.

SHIP volunteers are also available year-round to answer Medicare questions. For more information about SHIP and to find SHIP volunteers in your area please visit the [SHIP Web site](http://insurance.illinois.gov/SHIP), <http://insurance.illinois.gov/SHIP>, or call the SHIP toll-free hotline at (800) 548-9034. You can also visit the Illinois Department of Insurance's Web site at [www.insurance.illinois.gov](http://www.insurance.illinois.gov) or call its toll-free hotline at (866) 445-5364.

Through its staff and a network of hundreds of trained volunteers in more than 180 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 2009 alone, SHIP volunteers provided over 54,000 hours of counseling, responded to more than 37,000 telephone calls, and saved Medicare beneficiaries an estimated \$16.2 million.

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