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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
Springfield; pre-registration is required*

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Pat Quinn and the Illinois Department of Insurance announce free, one-on-one counseling services in Springfield 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 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.

Pre-registration for appointments is required by calling the Lincolnland Community College in Springfield at (217) 787-9234. SHIP volunteers are also available year-round to answer Medicare questions. For a list of SHIP volunteers in your area please visit the SHIP website at <http://insurance.illinois.gov/SHIP> or call SHIP toll-free at (800) 548-9034.

SHIP sessions in Springfield are scheduled as follows:

**November 19 & December 13
8 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Lincolnland Community College
1507 East Cook Street
Springfield, IL 62703**

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.

For more information about SHIP, including information about SHIP volunteers in your area, please visit the [SHIP Web site](#) 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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