PAT QUINN
Governor
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Acting Director

NEWS

Illinois Department of Insurance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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State Announces Free, One-on-One Medicare Counseling Services in Springfield

Illinois Department of Insurance SHIP Counselors to Provide Help with Medicare Options During Open-Enrollment Season; Pre-Registration Required

SPRINGFIELD – October 27, 2011. 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 earlier than past years from October 15th through December 7th.

Governor Quinn proclaimed the week of October 10-15 as SHIP Week to recognize the program's hundreds of volunteers and remind Medicare-eligible residents that open enrollment begins sooner this year. **Pre-registration for appointments is required by calling the Springfield Senior Center 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.

Counseling sessions in Springfield are scheduled as follows:

Friday, October 28
Thursday, November 10
Thursday, December 5
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Springfield Senior Center
701 W. Mason
Springfield, IL

Through its staff and a network of hundreds of trained volunteers in more than 204 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. Since SHIP's inception, volunteers have provided nearly 700,000 hours of counseling, assisted more than 900,000 clients, and saved Medicare beneficiaries an estimated $75 million in customer service costs. More information is available at www.insurance.illinois.gov or through the Department's toll-free hotline at (866) 445-5364.

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