



PAT QUINN
Governor
ANDREW STOLFI
Acting Director

NEWS

Illinois Department of Insurance

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CONTACTS:
Anjali Julka: (312) 814-0093
Milly Santiago:(312) 814-0908

State Reminding Residents of Medicare Open-Enrollment Period Ending Dec 7

Senior Health Insurance (SHIP) Counselors Available to Assist Seniors, People with Disabilities with Prescription Drug and Medicare Advantage Options, Enrollment Process

SPRINGFIELD– December 2, 2011. The Illinois Department of Insurance is reminding seniors, people with disabilities and caregivers that the open-enrollment period to review and change Medicare insurance benefits will end on Wednesday, December 7th. The Department's Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) volunteers are available to provide free information about health insurance benefits available through Medicare and guide eligible residents toward obtaining coverage that best meets the individual's needs.

"As the Medicare open-enrollment period winds down, Medicare enrollees who have not yet reviewed and compared available prescription drug and Medicare Advantage plans should call the Department's toll-free SHIP hotline or the 24-hour Medicare hotline to help make sure they continue to have the most appropriate coverage," said Andrew R. Stolfi, Acting Director of the Department. "As always, the Department's dedicated SHIP volunteers also provide information and assistance to Medicare beneficiaries and caregivers year round."

To learn more about Medicare insurance benefits before the open-enrollment period ends or for general information call SHIP's toll-free hotline at 1-800-548-9034, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm Monday through Friday or visit the Department's website at <https://insurance.illinois.gov>. To view and compare your current drug plan and make enrollment elections, log on to www.Medicare.gov or call the Medicare hotline 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, at 1-800-MEDICARE 1-800-633-4227.

SHIP volunteers have offered free, one-on-one enrollment workshops at more than 25 locations throughout the state since the open-enrollment season started on October 15th. All of SHIP's 204 locations continue to offer enrollment assistance to Illinois residents and help with questions about or problems with:

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

Throughout the year, hundreds of trained SHIP volunteers at 204 sites in every county are available to help people with Medicare learn more about available Medicare insurance options. Since SHIP's inception in 1988, volunteers have saved Medicare beneficiaries an estimated \$75 million in customer service costs by providing nearly 700,000 hours of counseling and assisting more than 900,000 clients. Governor Pat Quinn proclaimed October 10 – 15, 2011, as "SHIP Week" in Illinois to applaud the volunteer effort.

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