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Dept of Insurance Recognized for Exemplary Performance of its Senior Health Insurance Program

State ranks #1 nationwide on most improved overall performance

SPRINGFIELD – April 17, 2012. The Illinois Department of Insurance (DOI) has received recognition from the U. S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that Illinois excels in several areas related to exemplary performance for its Senior Health Insurance Program. The Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) is a free statewide health insurance counseling service for Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers. SHIP is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Insurance. CMS notified DOI earlier this month and commended the department for the high ranking received on its National Performance Reporting (NPR) stats.

“We appreciate the federal government’s recognition. Our dedicated Senior Health Insurance Program staff work hard to educate people about Medicare and available insurance options. Seniors and people with disabilities on Medicare face some unprecedented challenges. Our SHIP staff assists by suggesting choices that can save them money. I am proud of our staff for excelling in their performance and outreach strategies,” said Andrew Boron, Director of the Illinois Department of Insurance.

The department will receive formal recognition in June during the upcoming SHIP Directors’ Conference in Atlanta when conference organizers highlight the state’s exemplary performance. DOI staff will also share tips, strategies, and practices used that resulted in higher performance in various areas of SHIP activity.

“Our program has worked continuously with SHIP coordinators and counselors in the field to make sure the hard work that they do every day is being accounted for. We have also enhanced our call center reporting to include the specific demographics as required by CMS. Obviously, both efforts have made a world of difference,” said Sandy Leith, Director of the Senior Health Insurance Program.

Coincidentally at the same time DOI received notification of its high ranking for SHIP, CMS also announced more than \$46 million dollars in basic grants to be distributed to SHIP programs nationwide to help people with Medicare get more information about their health benefits and choices. The \$1.6 million dollar grant Illinois received will support outreach and education efforts, training new counselors and for staffing the 800 line. The SHIP phone number is (800) 548-9034.

The Department’s mission is to protect consumers by providing assistance and information, by efficiently regulating the insurance industry’s market behavior and financial solvency, and by fostering a competitive insurance marketplace. The Department assists consumers with all insurance complaints, including health, auto, life, and homeowner. For more information or assistance, visit the Department’s web site at insurance.illinois.gov or call our toll-free hotline at (866) 445-5364.