



PRESS RELEASE

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Medicare Open Enrollment Period Is Here October 15 through December 7

*Illinois Department on Aging Offers Free Counseling on Medicare Options;
Call 1-800-252-8966 or visit the website at <http://www.illinois.gov/aging>*

SPRINGFIELD – October 19, 2015. To mark the beginning of the Medicare Open Enrollment period, the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) offers free counseling assistance to help educate Medicare-eligible individuals and their caregivers about their Medicare insurance options. Medicare Open Enrollment started on October 15 and runs through December 7. During this time, people can shop for a Medicare Advantage (MA) plan or a Prescription Drug Plan (PDP) for 2016.

“There are over 1,000 hardworking SHIP certified counselors assisting Medicare beneficiaries every day. If you need help making sense of your Medicare choices, please call and make an appointment with a counselor,” said SHIP Director Sandy Leith. “It is very important to make sure that your Medicare is working properly for you and that you have the most cost effective option available where you live. “

SHIP counselors work through the Medicare.gov plan finder to help seniors and people with disabilities make the best choices for their individual situation. To contact SHIP, call 1-800-252-8966 on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. For more information about SHIP, including a list of SHIP locations, view the website at <http://www.illinois.gov/aging/ship/Pages/default.aspx>.

SHIP is a year round program, not affiliated with any insurance company, and counselors do not sell or solicit any type of insurance. SHIP counselors in the field make sure seniors and people with disabilities on Medicare are aware of options that can save them money. Counselors educate and answer questions about Medicare, Part A, B, and D, Medicare Supplement insurance, and Medicare Advantage plans.

To compare 2016 drug and health plans on your own and to find out more about Medicare, including preventive services now covered, visit the federal website at www.medicare.gov or review your 2016 Medicare & You handbook. You can also call 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227) Medicare phone lines are open 24/7.

About the Illinois Department on Aging

The Department's mission is to serve and advocate for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity and quality of life. For more information, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (or TTY for the hearing impaired at 1-888-206-1327), or log on to the website at www.illinois.gov/aging

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