



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Nearly 150,000 Seniors Get Help from State's HelpLine

*Department on Aging staff links seniors with program and services,
including important prescription benefits*

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) assisted more than 147, 900 seniors and their caregivers through its Senior HelpLine during fiscal year 2008 (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008). Senior HelpLine staff works with callers to HELP: Help you locate services in your community; Evaluate your needs and answer questions; Link you to local case management services; and Provide information and assistance.

“The Illinois Department on Aging is pleased to offer programs and services to help older adults and their families”, said IDoA Director Charles D. Johnson. “Each year, we’ve been able to offer assistance to more and more seniors with the purpose of helping them live quality lives while remaining in their homes and communities.”

Breakdown of the number of calls the Senior HelpLine received:

- FY05 (July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005) = 104,168
- FY06 (July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006) = 118,966
- FY07 (July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007) = 132,226
- FY08 (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008) = 147,915

Many of the calls the Senior HelpLine receives from older adults and their caregivers concern prescription assistance benefits. Senior HelpLine provides information regarding the state’s pharmaceutical assistance program, Illinois Cares Rx, and helps individuals better understand how it coordinates with federal Medicare Part D. For example, on Tuesday the federal government announced an increase for Medicare drug plan premiums in 2009. Seniors enrolled in Medicare’s drug benefit will pay about average monthly premiums of \$28 next year. That is an approximate 12 percent increase. But, Illinois Cares Rx provides wrap-around coverage to fill in the gaps created by Medicare Part D and offers drug coverage for people who do not have Medicare.

Earlier this summer, IDoA sent out reminders seniors and people with disabilities to sign-up for Circuit Breaker and Illinois Cares Rx. For faster approval and to avoid break in coverage, clients may apply online at www.cbrx.il.gov, but for those who need assistance are urged to call the Senior Helpline or Circuit Breaker at 1-800-624-2459 before the December 31st deadline.

For more information about program services to assist older adults in Illinois and their caregivers, call the Department on Aging Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327.

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