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## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Department on Aging to Assist Older Adults During Medicare Open Enrollment Period

*Free Help Available from Certified Health Insurance Counselors*

**SPRINGFIELD, III.** – With the Medicare open enrollment period set to begin on Saturday, Oct. 15, older adults looking to change their existing Medicare plan can receive free, personalized assistance through the Illinois Department on Aging’s (IDoA) Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP).

“It is that time of year where people with Medicare will encounter numerous advertisements about the various Medicare health and drugs plans for 2023,” **said Illinois SHIP Director Sandy Leith.** “Don’t go it alone, let us put your mind at ease when you discuss your options with a certified SHIP counselor and make an educated choice.”

During open enrollment, which runs from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7, people who are already enrolled in Medicare have the opportunity to review their current coverage and switch to a different plan for the following year. To make this process easier for Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers, Illinois’ SHIP program offers statewide health insurance counseling services through a network of 300 sites and over 1,000 trained and certified counselors. Illinois has trained 256 new SHIP counselors over the past year, and all counselors have received additional training on how to assist older adults during open enrollment.

SHIP counselors can answer questions about Medicare, Medicare Advantage plans such as HMOs and PPOs, Medicare Part D drug plans, Medicare Supplement policies, retiree group insurance and other health insurances. Additionally, all Medicare participants with prescription coverage will have their insulin copay capped at \$35 per month in 2023, and SHIP counselors can explain participants’ options and cost savings due to this new law.

All services are free, and SHIP counselors do not sell or solicit any type of insurance.

Aside from open enrollment assistance, SHIP counselors can also help soon-to-be eligible individuals with Medicare sign-up questions. To find a SHIP counselor near you, call the statewide Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or email [AGING.SHIP@illinois.gov](mailto:AGING.SHIP@illinois.gov). For general information about the SHIP program, please visit <https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/ship/>. You can also compare details of Medicare plans at <https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare/#/?lang=en&year=2022>.

IDoA serves and advocates 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 information about the Department’s programs and services for older adults and persons with disabilities, visit

Respect for yesterday. Support for today. Planning for tomorrow.

[www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging)

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966; 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)

<https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/programs> or contact the Senior HelpLine toll-free at 1-800-252-8966, Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.

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