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## PRESS RELEASE



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **IL Department on Aging Assists Seniors for Medicare Open Enrollment** *Free help available via Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP)*

**Springfield, IL** – The Illinois Department on Aging’s (IDoA) Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) is reminding seniors of the free counseling assistance available to Medicare-eligible individuals and their caregivers during Medicare Open Enrollment occurring October 15<sup>th</sup> through December 7<sup>th</sup>.

With over 300 SHIP offices across Illinois, the agency stands ready to refer clients to their closest site, which can schedule an appointment to assist them with open enrollment. Take advantage of the caring, expert counselors ready to help you make sense of the complicated Medicare system to make the best choices for your healthcare. “We’d urge seniors to make an appointment at their earliest convenience, because as during every open enrollment season, we anticipate it’ll be very busy with people seeking help,” said Sandy Leith, the SHIP program’s director.

During open enrollment, eligible adults can adjust Medicare Advantage or Medicare prescription drug coverage, move from original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage plan - or vice versa - switch between Medicare Advantage plans, join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan, or switch or drop existing drug plans; all of it can be overwhelming and confusing.

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

To compare 2018 drug and health plans on your own and to find out more about Medicare options, including preventive services now covered, visit the federal website, at: [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or call Medicare, at: 1-800-633-4227. Medicare phone lines are open 24/7.

SHIP is not affiliated with any insurance company, and counselors do not sell or solicit any type of insurance. SHIP counselors in the field ensure that seniors and people with disabilities on Medicare understand all of the options available to them, and which choices can save them money. Counselors educate and answer questions about all Medicare plans and options.

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