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**NEWS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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**Illinois Department of Insurance Announces Free, One-on-One Medicare Counseling Services**

*Volunteers provide help with Medicare options in Rockford-Freepport Area; pre-registration required*

**CHICAGO** – The Illinois Department of Insurance’s Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) will provide free, one-on-one counseling services in the Rockford-Freepport area to help educate Medicare-eligible individuals and their caregivers about available insurance options. The Department is conducting a series of counseling sessions statewide to assist Medicare-eligible individuals with the Medicare open enrollment season, which runs this year from November 15<sup>th</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Pre-registration for appointments is required for all sessions by calling the Northwestern Illinois Area Agency on Aging at (800) 542-8402 or (815) 226-4901.** SHIP volunteers are also available year-round to answer Medicare questions. For a list of SHIP volunteers in your area please visit the SHIP [website](#) or call SHIP toll-free at (800) 548-9034.

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|-------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>October 24</b> | <b>Loves Park<br/>Rockford</b> | <b>St. Bridget’s Church, 604 Clifford Avenue<br/>St. Anskar’s Church, 4801 Spring Creek Road</b>               |
| <b>October 25</b> | <b>Rockford<br/>Rockford</b>   | <b>Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 920 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue<br/>Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, 3300 Rural Street</b> |
| <b>November 7</b> | <b>Freeport</b>                | <b>Freeport YMCA, 2998 W Pearl City Road</b>   |

Through its staff and a network of approximately 900 trained volunteers in more than 150 sites throughout the State, SHIP assists Illinoisans who have questions about or problems with:

- Medicare
- Medicare supplemental insurance
- Medicare Advantage Plans (HMO, PPO, and PFFS)

- Medicare claims and appeals
- Prescription drug coverage through Medicare and other sources
- Long term care insurance

Every SHIP office is volunteer-based and supported by local sponsoring organizations. In 2008 alone, SHIP volunteers provided over 35,000 hours of counseling, responded to more than 31,000 telephone calls, and saved Medicare beneficiaries an estimated \$11.8 million.

For more information about SHIP, including information about SHIP volunteers in your area, please visit the SHIP [website](#) or call the SHIP toll-free hotline at (800) 548-9034. You can also visit the Department of Insurance's Web site at [www.insurance.illinois.gov](http://www.insurance.illinois.gov) or call our toll-free hotline at (866) 445-5364.

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