



PAT QUINN
 Governor
MICHAEL T. McRAITH
 Director

Illinois Department of Insurance

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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CONTACTS:
 Anjali Julka (312) 814-0093
 Louis G. Pukelis (312) 814-0778

Illinois Department of Insurance Announces Free, One-on-One Medicare Counseling Services

Volunteers provide help with Medicare options in West Central Illinois; pre-registration required

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Pat Quinn and the Illinois Department of Insurance announce free, one-on-one counseling services in West Central Illinois to help educate Medicare-eligible individuals and their caregivers about available insurance options. The Department’s Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) 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 15th through December 31st.

Earlier this month, Governor Pat Quinn proclaimed the week of November 2 through November 6 as SHIP week to recognize the program’s volunteers and the nearly 300,000 hours of free counseling provided to Illinois’ Medicare beneficiaries.

Pre-registration for appointments is required for all sessions by calling the Area Agency on Aging – Quincy at (800) 252-9027. SHIP volunteers are also available year-round to answer Medicare questions. For a list of SHIP volunteers in your area please visit the [SHIP Web site](#) or call SHIP toll-free at (800) 548-9034.

The following are dates, times and locations for SHIP sessions in west central Illinois:

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| December 3
9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. | Quincy | Quincy Senior and Family Resource Center
639 York Street |
| December 7
9 a.m.-4 p.m. | Carthage | Carl Sandburg College Education Commons
641 Buchanan Street |
| December 10
9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. | Quincy | Quincy Senior and Family Resource Center
639 York Street |
| December 14
9 a.m.-12 p.m. | Rushville | Spoon River College Rushville Center
229 West Washington Street |

December 16 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.	Quincy	Quincy Senior and Family Resource Center 639 York Street
December 21 9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Warsaw	Warsaw Public Library 1025 Webster Street
December 23 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.	Quincy	Quincy Senior and Family Resource Center 639 York Street
December 29 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.	Quincy	Quincy Senior and Family Resource Center 639 York Street

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 Web site](#) 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 or call our toll-free hotline at (866) 445-5364.

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