



**CONTACT: Area Agency on Aging Helpline
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 20, 2023

Statewide Program Provides Free, Unbiased Insurance Counseling for Medicare Beneficiaries

Older Floridians are encouraged to review plan options during Open Enrollment

WEST PALM BEACH – The Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast is reminding residents that their Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) program has specifically-trained counselors to help educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to understand their health care options so they can make the best decisions for their individual needs during the Open Enrollment period. During open enrollment, beneficiaries can change their Medicare Prescription Drug or Medicare Advantage plan to affect things like cost, coverage, drug formularies, in-network providers, and pharmacies.

“Medicare can be a daunting subject for most people and the Open Enrollment Period only runs from Oct. 15, 2023, through Dec. 7, 2023, but you don’t have to go it alone! During this time, lean on our experts for advice and utilize a local, valuable resource by connecting with the SHINE program,” said CEO Dwight Chenette.

SHINE is a program of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and is operated locally through the Area Agency on Aging. The SHINE mission is to provide free and unbiased information about Medicare and Medicaid for beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers. SHINE also educates beneficiaries to protect, detect, and report potential errors, fraud, and abuse with their Medicare coverage. SHINE strongly encourages beneficiaries to be on the lookout for their Annual Notice of Change (ANOC), which they should receive from their plan no later than Sept. 30, 2023. Reviewing their benefits and evaluating their health care options each year is vitally important for beneficiaries. Acting quickly can assure a smooth transition into the 2024 benefit year.

To receive help from SHINE, individuals may call to schedule appointments at designated SHINE counseling sites, attend enrollment events in their local communities, or arrange to speak with a trained SHINE counselor at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337). For a listing of SHINE counseling sites and enrollment events, please visit www.floridashine.org.

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