



Causey Reminds Medicare

Beneficiaries to Compare Plans During Open Enrollment

RALEIGH— Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey reminds Medicare beneficiaries they have the opportunity to compare and evaluate their current plans and make changes as necessary during the annual Open Enrollment Period. Medicare plans and prices change. It is important for Medicare beneficiaries to take advantage of the Open Enrollment Period by contacting local Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) counselors to save money, improve your coverage or both.

The Open Enrollment Period begins on October 15, 2017, and runs for eight weeks to give you enough time to review and make changes to your Medicare coverage. Changes must be made by December 7, 2017, to guarantee your coverage will begin without interruption on January 1, 2018. “Comparing Part D plans annually is imperative to insuring that the Medicare beneficiary has the best coverage for their prescription needs,” said Causey. SHIIP is a division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance and offers free, unbiased information about Medicare, Medicare prescription drug coverage, Medicare Advantage, long-term care insurance and other health insurance issues. In addition to helping Medicare beneficiaries compare and enroll in plans during the Open Enrollment Period, SHIIP counselors can help people find out if they are eligible for Medicare cost savings programs. Here are some of the ways to review and compare plans available for 2018:

- Get one-on-one help from your local SHIIP office by using the enclosed Tool Finder if you are interested in doing a comparison and send it back to the Senior Center. SHIIP counselors will evaluate your situation and call you if you need an appointment. For more information please call McDowell County SHIIP at 828-659-0821.
- Get one-on-one help from SHIIP, the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program, by calling 1-855-408-1212, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also request in-person assistance in your home county.
- Visit www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan to compare your current coverage with all of the options that are available in your area, and enroll in a new plan if you decide to make a change.
- Review the Medicare & You handbook. It was mailed to people with Medicare in September. • Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) 24-hours a day, seven days a week, to find out more about your coverage options. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. For more information about SHIIP and the Medicare Open Enrollment Period, call 1-855-408-1212 or visit www.ncshiip.com.