

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MIDDLE ALABAMA AREA AGENCY ON AGING (M4A)**



**ASSISTING  
ALL AGES AT  
ALL STAGES**

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October 1, 2016

**MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT BEGINS OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup>!  
RECEIVE A FREE MEDICARE PLAN COMPARISON DURING OPEN ENROLLMENT**

The Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A) encourages Medicare beneficiaries to take the opportunity during Medicare's Open Enrollment (October 15 - December 7) to contact M4A's State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and have a Health Plan Comparison completed by a Certified Medicare Counselor *free of charge*.

M4A's SHIP Program is available to help Medicare beneficiaries make informed choices regarding their health insurance benefits. At no cost, Medicare counselors will help Medicare recipients compare and enroll in the best and most affordable health plan available. During last year's open enrollment alone, SHIP assisted over 2,400 people compare and/or enroll in a new Medicare Advantage or Part D plan which saved over \$175,000.

"Even if someone is satisfied with their Part D or Medicare Advantage Plan, they should contact SHIP to inquire of any new changes to their current plan which may go into effect in January" said Carolyn Fortner, M4A Executive Director. "SHIP is not only available during open enrollment but all year to help Medicare beneficiaries with Medicare Supplements, Medicare Savings Programs, Medicaid, Prescription Drugs, Plan Comparisons, Billing and Claims, Rights and Protections, and Long-Term Care options".

SHIP counselors will be conducting local Medicare Enrollment events in Blount County. Medicare beneficiaries are asked to bring a list of their medications and red, white, and blue Medicare Card if they wish to have a plan comparison. SHIP also warns Medicare beneficiaries to beware of Medicare scams during open enrollment and do not give any personal information over the telephone or in person to a stranger.

**October 26, 2016, Blountsville Library at 10:00 am**  
**November 5, 2016, Hayden United Methodist Church at 8:00 am**  
**November 18, 2016, Oneonta Library at 10:00 am**

M4A is one of the 13 Area Agencies on Aging that serves older individuals, their caregivers, and people with disabilities at any age to access information, assistance, resources, and services.

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