



State of South Carolina
Office of The Lieutenant Governor

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Office on Aging
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Medicare Part D Open Enrollment Runs November 15 -- December 31

(Columbia, S.C.) Open enrollment for Medicare Part D prescription drug plans and the Medicare Advantage program begins Thursday, November 15th and runs through December 31st. During this period, new enrollees can sign up for coverage and existing members may change or drop their existing coverage. There is a great deal to consider before choosing among 56 options for Part D and 203 for Medicare Advantage.

The Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging has two ways to assist individuals enrolling or updating their Part D and Advantage plans this year. Counselors are available to help explain the differences among various plans, and a new Medicare toolkit has been developed to help beneficiaries see in writing if the plan they are considering has the benefits they need.

The I-CARE (Insurance Counseling, Assistance & Referral for Elders) program works with volunteers and organizations around the state, holding training sessions, community meetings and clinics to help people get educated about these programs. Individuals that have questions about Medicare Advantage and Part D can reach I-CARE counselors by calling 1-800-868-9095.

Be Smart: Steps to Safeguard Your Medicare is the new Medicare toolkit. The toolkit is not just an information packet, it includes a checklist designed to help evaluate plans. The checklist has two parts; one that the beneficiaries complete, showing their understanding of their plans and their providers fill out second part showing the particulars of their products. Once the form is complete, the beneficiaries can see if their understanding of their plan matches what their provider is offering. The *Be Smart* toolkit is available on the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging website www.aging.sc.gov.

"Many people find they need some help when comparing the different plans, choosing one that fits their needs and getting enrolled," said Lt. Governor André Bauer. "Since the program started, the Office on Aging has received calls from seniors who realized that the plan they enrolled in did not offer the benefits and services they actually needed, and this is a problem we try and help them address," Bauer said.

For more information on the Medicare Part D and Advantage programs or the *Be Smart* toolkit, visit the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging website at www.aging.sc.gov or call I-CARE toll free at 1-800-868-9095.

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