



**SHIIP Monthly Column
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Volunteers are Key to SHIIP's Success

Did you know that North Carolina has more than 1.77 million Medicare beneficiaries? And all those beneficiaries are served by more than 900 volunteers and coordinators from SHIIP, the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program. That equates to more than 1,600 beneficiaries for every SHIIP volunteer.

A division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance, SHIIP was established in 1986 to help educate Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers about Medicare, Medicare supplements, long-term care insurance, Medicare Advantage, Medicare Part D prescription drug plans and other health insurance options for people with Medicare.

In addition to the program's professionally-operated call center, SHIIP has a volunteer base of 120 county coordinators and 973 volunteers who provide free, unbiased counseling about Medicare in all 100 counties of North Carolina. Without its remarkable and dedicated volunteers, SHIIP could not reach out to all the people using Medicare in our state.

Volunteers for SHIIP must successfully complete a computerized training course to become certified to better help people with Medicare. They are required to attend quarterly follow-up trainings and must provide 40 hours of counseling services annually to maintain their certification. Volunteers are also required to submit reports on each client they assist. These records show they have helped 108,094 Medicare beneficiaries in one-on-one counseling sessions last year alone and hosted 7,909 public and media events. This is an outstanding accomplishment equal to about 87,000 hours of service!

SHIIP staff is very grateful for the volunteers' hard work, and we can never thank them enough for all that they do to assist people with Medicare. SHIIP is always looking for new volunteers. Would you like to give back to your community? Do you have computer skills? Are you a people person? Do you have the ability to easily explain things to others? If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, you may be a great addition to the SHIIP family of volunteers. To learn more about becoming a SHIIP volunteer, call our office today at 855-408-1212, or contact the SHIIP coordinating site in your county. Let us educate you about Medicare so you can help the citizens of this great state.

If you have questions about Medicare, contact SHIIP at the N.C. Department of Insurance at 855-408-1212 or visit www.ncshiip.com.