

## MEDICARE NEWS

### **For Immediate Release**

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### **CMS announces 2010 funding for SHIP performance awards**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today announced \$1.5 million in fiscal year 2010 federal performance funding awards for its State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIP). This is in addition to the \$41.6 million released to the SHIP network in April 2010. The SHIP network consists of 54 integral CMS partner organizations that provide benefits counseling and assistance to people with Medicare.

Performance awards are provided to SHIP organizations that have demonstrated their achievement in providing services to Medicare beneficiaries. Eligibility for a performance award is based on each organization's timely data submission in the SHIP National Performance Reporting (NPR) system for the annual reporting period (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010) and attainment of certain performance levels. Services provided by the SHIPs are focused at the community level and are intended to help people with Medicare, who prefer or need education, information, and enrollment assistance beyond what they are able to receive through CMS information channels, including 1-800-MEDICARE and [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). In fiscal 2009, SHIPs reached about 5 million people.

"These performance awards recognize SHIPs for their 2009 achievements," said CMS Administrator Donald Berwick, M.D. "By providing counseling and information services to all Medicare beneficiaries and employing innovative outreach efforts, these partners are educating people eligible for Medicare and are increasing the program's enrollment. Some people may not currently have access to or understand their benefits, rights and responsibilities in this federal program and SHIP organizations bridge that gap."

In 2010, CMS introduced a new approach to evaluate each SHIP's delivery of services. "To ensure continuity and an improved assessment of each SHIP organization's core strengths, this year CMS launched new performance measures and a benchmarking tool that are designed to improve the SHIP performance review by comparing SHIPs around similar geographic areas," said Teresa Nino, director of CMS' Office of External Affairs and Beneficiary Services.

In fiscal 2010, the CMS focus for SHIPs was to target outreach efforts to beneficiaries with disabilities, people of diverse racial and ethnic groups, and particularly people with limited verbal or written English language skills.

Through its training and technical assistance programs, CMS will continue to support the 54 SHIPs in all states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. This will help to ensure that these community networks remain fully capable of accessing and using CMS's 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), regional office resources, as well as the online tools at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) and [www.SHIPtalk.org](http://www.SHIPtalk.org) to provide assistance to beneficiaries. More information is available at [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov), a new web portal made available by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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