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Colorado Health Insurance Assistance Program Awarded 2009 Grant Funding by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Nearly \$461,000 of new funding is being distributed to the Colorado State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to help Medicare beneficiaries in Colorado get more information about their health care choices.

The funds are part of the \$35.8 million being distributed to the 54 SHIPs that provide Medicare beneficiaries with local, personalized assistance on a wide variety of Medicare and health insurance topics.

“The Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program serves an important role in providing information and support to people with Medicare all across Colorado,” said CMS Acting Administrator Charlene Frizzera. “This new funding will help to ensure that the Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program continues to work with local governments, community-based organizations and other partners in Colorado to help meet the needs of our Medicare beneficiaries.”

CMS expects the SHIPs to use the 2009 funding to conduct targeted community-based outreach to people with Medicare who may be unable to access other sources of information. SHIPs will also provide outreach and assistance to current and newly eligible Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers, with a special emphasis on reaching people who will most likely be eligible for Medicare’s low-income subsidy if they enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage.

The Colorado SHIP program has used prior grant funding to assist people with Medicare across the state, with particular emphasis on the Hispanic community, people with low literacy, and Colorado’s rural areas. Nearly half of all SHIP counseling is done in person, at beneficiaries’ homes, and event sites across the state, providing free and impartial counseling and education. Coloradans can call the SHIP office, toll free, at 1-888-696-7213.

CMS will continue to support the quality of services provided by SHIPs through training, technical assistance, the SHIP Resource Center, and the online tools at www.medicare.gov to assist people with Medicare.

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