

November 2019

REP. KATE HOGAN'S SENIOR NEWS



November is here: time for family, football, and your favorite Thanksgiving fixings. With Medicare

Open Enrollment ongoing, many of you will also be making time this month to re-think your insurance coverage. Navigating the health plans and pharmaceutical benefits available to you and deciding which one best meets your pocket book and lifestyle is no easy feat. That is why this month I want to highlight two critical state programs that can help simplify the process and provide cost (and health) savings.

SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone)

One-on-one help to demystify your insurance coverage, choices, and affordability

When you are comparing health plans and MassHealth coverage options, it can be difficult to know which plan will best support your healthy aging. The state SHINE program, run locally by Minuteman Senior Services, connects you to a counselor who gets it – and who will work with you one-on-one and free-of-charge on insurance coverage selection and cost-lowering programs. SHINE counselors are available to meet you at the Maynard Council on Aging (COA) by appointment. Simply call the COA at (978) 897-1009 to schedule your appointment.

Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS) Pharmacy Outreach Program

Medication questions? Licensed pharmacists and caseworkers just a phone call away

When you are holding onto a new prescription slip in the doctor's office, it is easy to feel confident that you understand how the medication fits into the big picture of your health goals and insurance coverage. Then, in the days and weeks to follow, the real-world questions start to emerge: *Am I taking this right? Why is this not covered? How can I make this more affordable for the long-term?* This gap between the doctor's office and reality, when explanations from providers might be out of reach, affects all of us; however, it can be particularly troublesome for seniors who are often managing multiple medications on a fixed income.

The Pharmacy Outreach Program, a joint initiative of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the MCPHS, promotes understanding and accessibility in senior medication management – and it is only a free phone call away. Licensed pharmacists, case managers, and students work with seniors on Medicare (or Medicare-eligible) and their caregivers towards the goal of helping you afford your medication and understand just how to take it and why. This includes education on strategies and programs that can help you cut prescription costs and a “medication check-up,” where you can review your prescriptions with a pharmacist. The program is available through a toll-free hotline, appointments at the MCPHS campus, and in community outreach settings. Call 1-866-633-1617 to get started.

Looking ahead: As Medicare Open Enrollment continues until December 7th, please do not hesitate to reach out to my Maynard office at (978) 897-1333 for assistance. Our healthy communities begin with a healthy you – and we are in it together, this fall and for the long-term.

Rep. Hogan's Office Hours

- **Hudson Office Hours** will be held on Friday, November 22nd from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Vintage Café, 246A Main Street, Hudson

If you are unable to attend office hours, please call the State House at (617) 722-2199 to schedule an appointment. In addition to Rep. Hogan's office hours, staff is also available at the District Office on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Kate Hogan

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Kate Hogan, State Representative

Proudly represents Bolton, Hudson, Maynard, and Stow

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