



HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA AGENCY ON AGING PROVIDING FREE, UNBIASED ASSISTANCE TO MEDICARE ADVANTAGE BENEFICIARIES IN NAVIGATING 2021 OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD

The 2021 Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period Runs through March 31

HOUSTON, TX – For Medicare beneficiaries unhappy with their current Medicare Advantage (Part C) plan, the Medicare Advantage open enrollment period – which is under way now through March 31 – is a great opportunity to switch to a different Medicare Advantage plan or select a different Medicare option.

Certified benefits counselors with the Houston-Galveston Area Agency on Aging can provide free, unbiased advice to help Medicare Advantage enrollees understand their options and can answer their questions about plan differences, coverage, and the enrollment process. The agency acts as the local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, and Wharton counties. To speak with a counselor and discuss plan options, call 1-800-437-7396.

“We often see individuals sign up for a Medicare Advantage plan during Medicare’s open enrollment period without realizing that their doctors are not in the plan’s network, or their prescription is not covered under the plan,” said Mallory Freitag, program administrator with the Houston-Galveston Area Agency on Aging. “This enrollment period serves as a way for people to test-drive their new plan and change it if it’s not a good fit for them.”

Certified benefits counselors with the Area Agency on Aging can also help Medicare-eligible individuals apply for assistance programs to help reduce Medicare costs, appeal Medicare denials, provide unbiased information on plan options, and discuss options for those newly eligible for Medicare but still working.

The Medicare Advantage open enrollment period runs now through March 31. Coverage for a new plan will start on the first of the month after making the change. This enrollment period is not for people who already have Original Medicare.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

H-GAC is a voluntary association of local governments and local elected officials from the 13-county Gulf Coast planning region, which includes an area of 12,500 square miles and more than 7 million people. H-GAC works to promote efficient and accountable use of local, state, and federal tax dollars; serves as a problem-solving and information forum for local governments; and helps analyze trends and conditions affecting the region. For more information, visit h-gac.com.



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Individuals can also receive free, unbiased assistance with finding and enrolling in Medicare plans and comparing their options by using the Medicare Plan Finder on [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov), or they can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

The Houston-Galveston Area Agency on Aging aims to help seniors remain independent and healthy in the community through services and assistance with Medicare. The agency also advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. For more information about the Houston-Galveston Area Agency on Aging and its services, visit h-gac.com/area-agency-on-aging.

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