



HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDICARE ADVANTAGE OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD

Important 2019 Update: Medicare Advantage Disenrollment now ends March 31st

Houston, TX – Medicare Part C Advantage plans can offer cost savings on healthcare costs and provide added benefits like dental, vision, and hearing. Beneficiaries sometimes enroll in one of these plans during the annual open enrollment period without realizing their providers do not accept them. In the past, beneficiaries had until Feb. 14 to disenroll from their plan. Effective this year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services extended the deadline. Beneficiaries now have an opportunity to disenroll from their Medicare Advantage plan and enroll in another Medicare Advantage plan or go back to Original Medicare and add a Part D prescription plan. The opportunity to make this one-time election ends on March 31.

“It is of utmost importance for beneficiaries to understand their benefits,” Curtis Cooper, Manager for Area Agency on Aging, said. “Beneficiaries need to ensure their plan works for their specific needs,” he added. “What may work for your friend or neighbor may not work for you and our benefits counselors are here to assist them with their questions,” said Cooper.

As the local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), the Houston-Galveston Area on Aging (AAA) provides unbiased information about Medicare benefits over the phone or by appointment. Benefits counselors help beneficiaries choose a plan that best works for them, with the help of Medicare’s online Plan Finder.

The Plan Finder calculates the estimated prescription costs based on the consumer’s list of medications. It compares the premiums, deductibles, and estimated co-pays and predicts whether and when a beneficiary will encounter the coverage gap.

To speak with a Houston-Galveston AAA benefits counselor or to set up an appointment, call 713-627-3200 or 1-800-437-7396 or visit h-gac.com/area-agency-on-aging.

Houston-Galveston AAA serves older adults and caregivers in the 12 counties surrounding Harris county: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Waller, Walker, and Wharton.

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