

LinkAge Line Link

MAAA Volunteer Newsletter

Spring 2009

I expect to pass through life but once. If, therefore can be any kindness I can show, or any good things I can do to any fellow human being, let me do it now, and not defer it or neglect, as I shall not pass this way again.

~William Penn~



QUARTERLY UPDATE TRAINING DATES

- June 16 – Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging
- September 15 – (location TBD)
- November 10 – (location TBD)

DHS VIDEOCONFERENCE DATES

All videoconferences are held at the DHS Lafayette Building and the Anoka County Government Center from 9am-12pm. I will send out a reminder to RSVP. Listed are *tentative topics* and might change but I will keep you posted on that.

- April 10
- May 8 – Social Security, Employment Services
- June 12 – ADRC, Chisago Pilot Project
- July 10 – MHCP Public Programs (MA, GA, MinnesotaCare)
- August 14 – Waivers, Managed Care Options
- September 11 – Pensions, Annuities, HIV/AIDS Program HH
- October 9 – Medicare Update for 2010, Medicare Advantage
- November 13 – Caregiver Focus
- December 11 – Mental Health

SHIP VOLUNTEER TRAINING DATES

(for new volunteers or a refresher for current volunteers)

- March 23, 25, 27 (MAAA offices in North St. Paul)
- June 22, 24, 26 – (MAAA offices in North St. Paul)
- August 24, 26, 28 – (MAAA offices in North St. Paul)
- October 19, 21, 23 – (MAAA offices in North St. Paul)

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

April 4, 2009 – Saturday

9am-12pm

Health & Safety Fair

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Lakeville Senior Center
20732 Holt Avenue
Lakeville, MN 55044

April 15, 2009 – Wednesday

7:30am

Faith & Health Senior Fair
Church of St. Michael
611 South 3rd Street
Stillwater, MN 55082

April 21, 2009 - Tuesday

11:00am-12:30pm

International Diabetes Center's Spring Symposium
3800 Park Nicollet Boulevard
St. Louis Park, MN

Volunteer is invited for lunch and to attend the keynote speaker's address

April 23, 2009 – Thursday

10:00am

Stuff information in Low Income Subsidy Outreach Bags for distribution through Second Harvest Heartland

Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging
2365 North McKnight Road,
North St. Paul, MN 55109

Please RSVP to: Marilyn at 651-917-4636 or mtheesfeld@tcaging.org]

April 25, 2009 – Saturday

9:00am-1:00pm

7th Annual Aging & Wellness Expo
Diamondhead Education Center
200 West Burnsville Parkway
Burnsville, MN 55337

April 28, 2009 - Tuesday

8:30am-12:00pm

Edina Senior Expo
Colonial Church of Edina
6200 Colonial Way
Minneapolis, MN 55436

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April 29, 2009 - Wednesday

8:30am-12:00pm

2009 Senior Spring Forum Vendor Fair
Brooklyn Park Community Activity Center
5600 85th Avenue
Brooklyn Park, MN 55443

May 17, 2009 – Sunday

Set up begins at 8am, event is from 9:00am-1:00pm
Senior Resource Fair
Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Community
155 County Road 24
Medina, MN 55391

May 20, 2009 – Wednesday

9:30am-1:00pm

Mn/DOT Wellness Fair
Transportation Building
395 John Ireland Boulevard
St. Paul, MN

May 27, 2009 – Wednesday

12:00-7:00pm (Two Shifts: 12:00-3:30 and 3:30-7:00)

2009 Boomers & Beyond Fair
North Heights Lutheran Church
1700 West Highway 96
Arden Hills, MN 55112

June 11, 2009 – Thursday

12:00-12:30

SLL presentation at a VOA nutrition site
Park Elder Center
1505 Park Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404

June 29, 2009 – Monday

9:00am-4:00pm

East Metro Project Homeless Connect
St. Paul River Centre
175 West Kellogg Boulevard

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St. Paul, MN 55102

July 8, 2009 – Wednesday

12:00-12:30pm

SLL presentation at VOA nutrition site

Lyndale Manor

600-18th Avenue North

Minneapolis, MN 55411

July 22, 2009 – Wednesday

12:00-12:30pm

SLL presentation at VOA nutrition site

Trinity Apartments

2800 East 31st Street

Minneapolis, MN 55406

August 10, 2009 – Monday

9:30-10:30am

Presentation on Medicare Supplements, Medicare Advantage and Part D plans

Chaska Community Center – The Lodge

1661 Park Ridge Road

Chaska, MN 55318

August 26, 2009 – Wednesday

12:00-12:30pm

SLL presentation at VOA nutrition site

Calvary Lutheran Church

7520 Golden Valley Road

Golden Valley, MN 55422

October 14, 2009 – Wednesday

12:00-12:30pm

SLL presentation at VOA nutrition site

Crystal Community Center

4800 Douglas Drive North

Crystal, MN 55429

November 11, 2009 – Wednesday

12:00-12:30pm

SLL presentation at VAOA nutrition site

Franklin Hi-Rise

2728 Franklin Avenue East

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Minneapolis, MN 55406

LOW INCOME SUBSIDY (EXTRA HELP) OUTREACH

Our Area Agency on Aging has been selected to participate in an innovative project to reach beneficiaries who are potentially eligible for Low Income Subsidy.

One of our outreach efforts is to partner with Second Harvest Heartland and their NAPS program (Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors). We have ordered reusable grocery bags and they are going to distribute the bags and some information to low income seniors, 60 years and older who are at 130% of poverty level, who come to their Maplewood location to pick up a 35-pound box of nutritious food (cereal, cheese, noodles, beans, canned fruit and meat, etc...) through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) on a monthly basis.

Need Your Help!! –We are planning on stuffing some information into the grocery bags on Thursday, April 23rd at 10am, which will be distributed to these individuals during the month of May. Please let me know if you are able to assist. Thank you!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT WELLPOINT

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) suspended marketing and enrollment for WellPoint Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plan contracts, effective January 12, 2009. With these imposed sanctions, WellPoint will not be able to market several of its Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plans and will not be able to enroll new beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries currently enrolled in WellPoint sponsored plans will continue to receive the same health care services and prescription drug coverage they have now. They will not lose any Medicare coverage. Beneficiaries who have questions should first contact WellPoint. If they have additional questions, they should contact 1-800-MEDICARE or their specific plan.

Beneficiaries who have had difficulty getting services from WellPoint may have a special opportunity to enroll in a different Medicare plan. If they would like to learn more, they should contact 1-800-MEDICARE and explain their situation. The customer service representative will explain the next steps.

WellPoint has served as the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program's safety net "point-of-sale" (POS) contractor, paying claims for Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) beneficiaries that have not yet been enrolled into a Part D plan. WellPoint will continue to pay these claims under the terms of its contract with CMS. This process has been used successfully by over 100,000 LIS beneficiaries in 2008 without a problem, and we

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are fully confident that the POS prescription process will continue to work effectively and seamlessly for beneficiaries at the pharmacy counter.

In the past, WellPoint also has been permitted to enroll many of these individuals into one of their plans, but this activity is being suspending as part of the sanction. WellPoint will notify CMS of any beneficiaries handled through the POS process so they can be enrolled into a non-WellPoint plan in the beneficiary's region that has a premium at or below the LIS benchmark premium amount (in other words, a zero-premium plan for individuals receiving the full subsidy.) This is consistent with the approach used in areas where WellPoint has no zero-premium plan.

The sanctions were imposed because of widespread and continued failures by WellPoint to properly administer their contracts in accordance with CMS requirements. Many of these failures have been reported by WellPoint. WellPoint's compliance problems include but are not limited to failures in the following areas: enrollments and disenrollments; benefits administration, (including determining premiums, co-pays, administering the benefit for LIS eligibles); grievances and appeals; marketing; claims processing; coordination of benefits; billing, and meeting call center and customer service requirements.

CMS has been actively monitoring information received from the CMS Complaints Tracking Module (CTM) and from WellPoint about reports of beneficiaries who cannot access Part D drugs when they go to buy their medicines at the pharmacy counter because of system failures. This analysis is part of the risk assessment that CMS continually conducts and led to the actions taken against WellPoint. In addition, CMS has been reaching out to affected Medicare beneficiaries to make sure their problems have been satisfactorily resolved. Although new problems should be prevented due to the enrollment suspension along with active efforts by WellPoint; CMS is continuing to monitor and follow up with these issues by reaching out directly to beneficiaries.

SCAM

"A bogus and deceptive website (<http://bailout.hud-gov.us>) posing as HUD. The website attempted to dupe people into providing personal information. And because it has been designed to appear to be an official US Government website, people may fall prey to this scam. Please alert your customers, clients and other stakeholders about this deceptive website." Please note, the official website for HUD regarding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is www.hud.gov/recovery.

2009 PLAN FINDER ISSUE

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A very small number of beneficiaries may have enrolled in what they thought was the lowest cost plan on the Plan Finder, but now they have re-checked the Plan Finder and learned their plan is no longer the lowest.

If you come across a case like this, please contact the SLL for assistance. Please do not contact 1-800-Medicare about this issue. The beneficiary will qualify for an enrollment exception under the "Error by Federal Employee SEP." The number of enrollment exceptions for this specific reason is not expected to be high. Typically for this scenario to occur, the beneficiary will need many generics that were not low cost.

Role of SLL volunteers:

1. Help the client by putting the drugs in medicare.gov to see if the \$ has changed
2. Use the plan finder tool to see if the donut hole would be reached within 12 months and their current plan is no longer the lowest cost.
3. If you find that it would – review their plan options and get the info about what plan they would prefer to enroll in, if they wish to change.
4. Report this to the SLL and we will assist with getting it taken care of.

FAIRVIEW PHARMACY GENERIC PROGRAM

Fairview pharmacies now have a generic program - \$4.99 for 30 days; \$12.99 for 90 days. The formulary is available online at www.fairview.org/pharmacy.

LIVE CHAT ON MINNESOTAHELP.INFO HAS OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED!

We are very pleased to announce that MinnesotaHelp NOW! (live chat) has officially been launched at www.minnesotahelp.info. Their work includes ensuring that people get directed to SLL, DLL or VLL staff whenever additional assistance is needed.

Chat will be available during the regular SLL contact center hours of 8:00am – 4:30pm. At all other times, email will be provided as an option.

FINAL RULE CREATES CHANGES FOR DOCTORS, PLANS AND PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a final rule last week that includes important changes to appeals procedures under the Part D drug benefit and to rules for the Medicare private health plans. The rule takes effect March 13, 2009. Doctors will now be permitted, after providing notice to the enrollee, to ask a Part D drug plan for a reconsideration of its denial of coverage for a Part D drug. Doctors will no longer be required to have patients fill out an appointment of representative form to send to the plan, a requirement that had slowed down the appeals process. Doctors already could request initial determinations and expedited appeals from plans without

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being the enrollee's appointed representative, but could not proceed further in the appeals process.

Also, the new rule requires all Medicare "Advantage" (MA) private health plans, including Special Needs Plans, to specify in their contracts with providers that dual-eligible enrollees—people enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid—should not be held liable for cost-sharing above what they would have to pay in Medicaid. For example, if the state Medicaid program allows no cost-sharing for doctor visits, doctors cannot charge patients with Medicare and Medicaid the standard copayment charged under the Medicare private health plan. Providers can either accept the plan's reimbursement—minus the amount of the copayment—as payment in full or bill the state for the copayment.

Finally, CMS is codifying a practice of enrolling beneficiaries into a new Medicare private health or drug plan when their current plan is shut down. CMS will passively enroll beneficiaries enrolled in an MA plan into another MA plan when the current MA plan is terminated by CMS or decides to no longer offer coverage. The new plan is required to provide notice to the beneficiary using a CMS-approved notice that they have been enrolled in the new plan and may choose to enroll in a different plan. The notice must also contain information about costs, benefits, how to access care and whether transitional coverage is available. Individuals who have been passively enrolled are entitled to a 3-month exceptional circumstances Special Enrollment Period (SEP), during which they may disenroll from the plan and enroll in a new plan or in Original Medicare.

CMS notes in the regulation that when choosing a plan for the enrollee, it will "review information about the available plans in the affected area, including their benefit packages, provider networks, and cost-sharing premium amounts, in an effort to ensure that beneficiaries who are passively enrolled maintain a level of coverage equal to or better than their current coverage, without incurring additional costs."

MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

We realize that it would be a great opportunity for our trained volunteers to mentor new volunteers that have recently gone through training and we would like to know who might be interested in participating in this opportunity. You could include the new volunteer in any new visits, outreach events, presentations that you are scheduled to do and have them shadow you. Please contact Beth if you are interested. Thank you!

MAAA MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT UPDATE

The mileage rate for 2009 is now \$0.50 per mile. Forms on the website will reflect this change for the new year. **IMPORTANT: Please make sure you are using the new form (which is attached).** Thank you!

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PAPERWORK REMINDER

All paperwork (timesheets/reimbursements, Client Contact forms and Client Agreement forms) are due to our office by **10th** of each month. Thank you very much!

BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Please be sure to visit our website to view our newsletters, forms, helpful links, and the volunteer calendar. Please let me know if there is something that you would me to add to the website. <http://www.tcaging.org/providers/volunteers.html>