

**U.S. House and Senate Notification**  
**Friday, October 1, 2010**

**To:** Congressional Health Staff

**From:** Amy Hall  
Director, Office of Legislation  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

**Subject:** CMS Awards \$1.5 Million in Performance Awards to State Health Insurance Assistance Programs

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today announced the release of \$1.5 million in fiscal year 2010 performance awards for its State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIP). The awards are in addition to the \$41.6 million released to the SHIP network in April 2010. The SHIP network consists of 54 integral CMS partner organizations that provide benefits counseling and assistance to people with Medicare.

Services provided by the SHIPs are focused at the community level and are intended to help people with Medicare, who prefer or need education, information, and enrollment assistance beyond what they are able to receive through 1-800-MEDICARE and [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). In fiscal year 2009, SHIPs reached about 5 million people.

Performance awards are provided to SHIP organizations that have demonstrated their achievement in providing services to Medicare beneficiaries. In 2010, CMS introduced a new approach to evaluate each SHIP's delivery of services, launching new performance measures and a benchmarking tool that compares SHIPs from similar geographic areas. In fiscal year 2010, the CMS focus for SHIPs was to target outreach efforts to beneficiaries with disabilities, people of diverse racial and ethnic groups, and particularly people with limited verbal or written English language skills.

The press release on this announcement is attached and available on the CMS website at: [http://www.cms.gov/apps/media/press\\_releases.asp](http://www.cms.gov/apps/media/press_releases.asp)

If you have any questions about the FY 2010 SHIP performance awards, please contact the CMS Office of Legislation. Thank you.