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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Medicare Open Enrollment Begins Next Week *Important Changes Ahead for Central Oregon Residents*



Bend, OR – October 8th, 2024 – Medicare Open Enrollment is just one week away, and the Council on Aging of Central Oregon's free Medicare counseling services are ready to assist. The [Open Enrollment period](#), running from October 15 to December 7, 2024, is the critical time each year when Medicare beneficiaries can review and make changes to their health and prescription drug coverage for the upcoming year.

This year brings important changes for Medicare Advantage plan holders in Central Oregon. Starting January 1, 2025, [Moda](#) and [Regence](#) will no longer offer Medicare Advantage plans in the region. Beneficiaries impacted by this change should have already received direct communication from their carriers regarding the discontinuation of coverage.

If you're affected by this change or simply want to reassess your Medicare options for the coming year, the Council on Aging's [State Health Insurance Benefits Assistance \(SHIBA\)](#) volunteers are here to help. This program offers free, unbiased counseling to help you navigate your Medicare options and select the coverage that best meets your needs. The areas our counselors can provide guidance on include, but are not limited to:

- Medicare Part A and Part B
- Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage (Medicare Part D)
- Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap)
- Medicare Advantage Plans (HMOs and PPOs)
- Long-term care insurance
- Medicare Savings Programs (QMB, SLMB and QI)
- Prescription drug assistance programs or drug discount cards offered by your state and pharmaceutical companies
- Medicaid and other insurance programs (including free or reduced-fee health care programs)
- Medicare scams and fraud prevention

To schedule a phone or in-person appointment with a SHIBA volunteer, or to learn more, contact the Council on Aging at 541-678-5483 or visit our website at www.councilonaging.org. For SHIBA counseling in Spanish, please call 541-325-6837 to be connected with a Spanish-speaking Medicare counselor through the [Latino Community Association](#).

About the Council on Aging of Central Oregon

Since 1975, the Council on Aging of Central Oregon (CoA) has served as the designated Area Agency on Aging for Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson counties, offering adults aged 60 and older and their loved ones a range of support services. CoA advocates for, empowers, and guides older adults and their loved ones to live with independence and well-being. To find out more about the Council on Aging of Central Oregon, visit www.councilonaging.org or call (541) 678-5483.

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