

# Arkansas Insurance Department

Mike Beebe  
Governor



Jay Bradford  
Commissioner

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For more information contact:

Alice Jones  
Communications Director  
(501) 371-2835  
[alice.jones@arkansas.gov](mailto:alice.jones@arkansas.gov)

### **Local Partnerships Available for Those Interested in Assisting Seniors in Completing Medicare Savings Applications**

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS (August 27, 2009) —State Insurance Commissioner Jay Bradford announced that money is available through the Arkansas Insurance Department's Senior Health Information Program (SHIP) for organizations such as churches, non-profits, mental health organizations, pharmacies, and others interested in assisting seniors who meet certain income requirements receive “Extra Help” for the cost of drug prescriptions.

Extra Help, also known as Low-Income Subsidy (LIS), is a Medicare program for people with limited income and resources. It pays 75% or more of prescription drug costs for qualified Medicare beneficiaries. An estimated 30,000 Arkansans are eligible for the program, but many are not aware of their eligibility.

Organizations willing to become Level 3 Application Partners will be reimbursed \$25 for each completed Extra Help or Medicare Savings Program application. “This partnership program should be highly beneficial to low income consumers,” Bradford said. The available funds are from a grant awarded to the SHIP Division from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

As an example of the possible savings, Bradford discussed an Arkansas consumer named Mary who lives in Benton County. Her retiree prescription drug plan costs her \$2,224 plus copayments per prescription. She called SHIP and spoke with a counselor who helped Mary apply for Extra Help online. Mary now pays less than \$200 a year for medicine. Mary saves

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\$2,036 per year. “We can have many more stories like Mary’s if organizations are willing to partner with SHIIP and sit down with folks from their local community to determine a person’s eligibility for the Extra Help program,” said Bradford. “It is a valuable program and these partnerships are an excellent way for organizations to help their neighbors as well as increase their own funding,” Bradford said.

More information on Extra Help is available from SHIIP by calling 800-224-6330 or email at [insurance.shiip@arkansas.gov](mailto:insurance.shiip@arkansas.gov).

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