

## MEDICARE EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS - -

On February 21<sup>st</sup> Elaine Cole, Public Affairs Specialist for Social Security Administration, presented a very informative and interactive seminar on understanding, navigating and enrolling in Social Security and Medicare. I am hoping she will be available to participate in another workshop next year.

I will be holding two educational workshops, one in May and one in September. I will be reviewing the different parts of Medicare- parts A, B, C and D, how to apply, eligibility periods, late enrollment, income related monthly adjustments, the prescription drug plan and coverage gap, and Medigap as well as Medicare Advantage plans. No plan specific information will be provided. My goal is to help you navigate the confusing world of Medicare and learn what options are available.

Both workshops will be held at the Peters Township Library, 616 E. McMurray Road, McMurray, PA 15317. The next workshop will be held on Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> from 1:30 pm until 3 pm in the Library's multipurpose room. The date of the September workshop has not been finalized yet. I will have that listed in the next newsletter.

If you are interested in attending or know of family or friends who may be interested, please let us know. This will be especially helpful for individuals who are aging into Medicare or who are leaving group coverage.

## MEDICARE STAR RATINGS- - -

Medicare uses a star rating system that gives an overall rating of how well Medicare Advantage plans (Part C) and Medicare Prescription drug plans (Part D) perform. Plans are rated from one to five

stars, with five being the highest. Plans are rated in different categories and are also given an overall star rating. The plans' quality and performance are evaluated in areas such as customer service, management of chronic conditions, members staying healthy and getting various screenings and vaccines, members experience with the plan, members complaints, drug safety and accuracy of pricing, etc. Star ratings come out in October of each year. For more detailed information on star ratings, please visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) and search "star ratings".

## IN-HOME ASSESSMENTS - - -

Individuals on Medicare Advantage plans are often contacted by their insurance company to see if they would be interested in scheduling an appointment in the convenience of their home with a nationally certified nurse practitioner. They will review your medications, your medical history, your family history, your social history, and perform a simple physical exam. They will not treat you or prescribe you medication. All the information gathered will be shared with your primary care physician.

These assessments have often proven to be a lifesaver for many individuals. I know a lot of my clients are often weary of these calls, but they have proven to be very helpful and are no charge to members. Members willingness to partake in these types of assessments also factor into the star ratings of the Medicare Advantage plans.

## STAFF CHANGES- - -

As many of you know, Cathy Delaney, who worked with me over the past couple of years, is relocating to State College to be closer to her

children. She left the end of February.

I am very excited to have Marti-Ann Fairbanks back on staff. Many of you probably remember her from a couple of years back. She will be helping me out on a weekly basis until the Fall of this year, when I will be looking for someone full time to help me during the Annual Enrollment Period (AEP). If any of you know anyone who might be a good fit in terms of supporting my clients, I would love to speak with you.

I am looking for someone who is very compassionate, and people oriented. The difficulty I find filling this position is that it is full time from September through January, and then very part time during the rest of year.

### SENIOR BLUE BOOKS- - -

The Seniors Blue Book and SeniorBlueBook.com are free resources that provide seniors, caregivers and senior professionals a comprehensive source of services, senior housing options, resources and information that enrich the lives of our elder population. The Greater Pittsburgh Area publication covers Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Washington and Westmoreland counties. Seniors Blue Book is your “go to” resource and website for everything related to aging well and caring for your older loved ones.

They have been proudly serving Seniors nationally for over 37 years and can be found in 28 other markets. Seniors Blue Book is an example of Authoritative Print Media, which means is “able to be trusted as being accurate or true; reliable”. The mission at the Seniors Blue Book is to provide seniors and caregivers with the most up-to-date resources to make educated decisions about optimal living and healthy aging.

The Seniors Blue Book is designed so that their readers can find what they need quickly. Services and information are separated into clear, easy to find, color coded sections. The guide includes over 70 listing categories that cover every aspect of senior lifestyle.

Readers find that their Housing Community and Health at Home comparison grids are one of the

most valuable tools that Seniors Blue Book offers. They list all senior housing and health at home (home health, non-medical home care and hospice) agencies along with the services and amenities. They save their readers months of investigative work and provide them with complete, qualified answers to their questions. All the information inside their guides, can also be found on their website at [www.seniorsbluebook/local/pittsburgh](http://www.seniorsbluebook/local/pittsburgh).

The Seniors Blue Book guide can currently be found at over 1200 distribution sites across Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Washington and Westmoreland counties. They can be picked up at local area Hospitals, select MD offices, libraries, senior centers, select Pharmacies, churches and grocery stores. To request a book, simply email [apryl@seniorsbluebook.com](mailto:apryl@seniorsbluebook.com) or call/text 412-551-5951.

Be sure to check out their website for Events and Activities in and around the local Pittsburgh area. Simply click on “Events” to locate Senior Events and Activities, CEU Events and Professional/Networking Events in the area. Apryl also has a monthly e-newsletter to keep you notified of Events, Industry updates and happenings throughout the area, to sign up for the newsletter simply email [apryl@seniorsbluebook.com](mailto:apryl@seniorsbluebook.com)

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