



It is that time of year again, Medicare Open Enrollment time.

Plans are allowed to change their cost and coverage rules from year to year, so it is important for you to read mail from your plan to see if there are any changes that affect you. If you did not receive this information, call your plan to request a copy. You can change your coverage during Fall Open Enrollment, which is from October 15 – December 7. The new coverage will take effect January 1.

It is recommended that all Medicare participants review their coverage every year in order to assure your coverage is complete and most economical. SHICK advisors will assess your individual medications and coverage needs to help you identify the most economical coverage choice including the possibility of falling into the “donut hole” of coverage. If eligible beneficiaries do not currently have prescription drug coverage they may pay a penalty on their premium when they do enroll.

Those who have Tri-Care, Federal Employee Health Benefits or VA coverage have access to creditable drug coverage through those programs and do not need to make changes, though Veterans who have VA health benefits may compare plans and enroll during open enrollment without penalty if they so choose. State of Kansas retirees will have two prescription drug plan options to choose from in 2017, or may purchase a plan through the Medicare Part D market.

Free, unbiased, and confidential Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK) counselors are available at Southeast Kansas Community Health Clinic, Pittsburg, and Wildcat Extension District, Girard, during Medicare open enrollment period for those wanting assistance with drug plan comparisons.

Whether you compare plans yourself or visit with a SHICK counselor, you will need your Medicare card plus a list of your medications, including the dosage and how often you take the drug. SHICK Counselors will see Medicare beneficiaries for plan comparisons by appointment only. To schedule an appointment, call the Southeast Kansas Community Health Clinic 620-240-5060 or Wildcat Extension District, 620-724-8233.