



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Waccamaw Regional offers free help with Medicare open enrollment

GEORGETOWN COUNTY, S.C. — Free help is available for Medicare beneficiaries trying to navigate the open enrollment period, which started this month and ends on Dec. 7. Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments, the dedicated Area Agency on Aging, is offering open enrollment assistance by appointment for any individual who qualifies for Medicare benefits through the open enrollment closing date.

Open enrollment is a once-a-year opportunity for Medicare beneficiaries to review their plan options for the upcoming calendar year and make changes to their coverage.” Finding the right plan or figuring out if the plan you have is the one that best suits your needs can be confusing and frustrating for many individuals,” said Kim Harmon, Waccamaw Regional’s Aging Director. She and her staff can make the process easier.

“There are several parts to Medicare and a myriad of choices to be made for beneficiaries,” Harmon said. There are traditional packages, packages designed for people with certain diseases, and of course, Medicare Part D for prescription drugs.

During an appointment, staff will conduct an assessment, talking with the individual about specific health issues and needs and getting a list of all the prescription drugs the person is taking. That information is used to find a list of plans available in the area that meet the individual’s needs. From there, Waccamaw Regional staff can work with an individual to help them determine what plan is the best option for them, factoring in price.

“It’s a more specific, person-centered type of assistance than what they get if they call 1-800-Medicare or go online. Those do-it-yourself options work for some people, but for someone who needs a little extra help, we provide that. We offer a better, more in-depth assessment of the person’s needs and help them make sure they’re getting what they need. We go that extra mile for folks.”

Staff can also provide guidance to those looking for financial assistance for Medicare Part D.

Appointments are available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, from 5:30-8 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and every other Saturday beginning Nov. 1 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. More than 80 people have already received help through the program this year. Waccamaw Regional normally assists

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anywhere from 300 to 500 individuals per year with selecting Medicare packages. This free service is available to anyone who qualifies for Medicare.

For more information about Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments and its Aging and Disability programs, visit www.wrcog.org, or contact Kim Harmon at (843) 546-8502 or kharmon@wrcog.org.

About Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments is an agency that offers regional programming and governmental services in Georgetown, Horry and Williamsburg counties of northeastern South Carolina. Created by the state legislature in the late 1960s, its mission is to support local governments in the region and develop effective partnerships that foster efficient transportation systems, economic and workforce development, and allow the region's seniors to age in place. Visit wrcog.org for more information.

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