

**PRESS RELEASE**

March 18, 2010



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**Florida SHINE Program to Help Elders Affected by Termination of Medicare Contractor**

TALLAHASSEE – Florida’s SHINE program (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) today launched an extensive public outreach campaign to provide reassurance and free assistance to 55,000 older Floridians who previously received their Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage through Fox Insurance Company. The federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services terminated its contract with Fox Insurance after determining that the plan’s “significant deficiencies” jeopardized the health and safety of Fox enrollees in Florida and elsewhere.

Floridians affected by the immediate termination of Fox Insurance will not lose prompt access to their medications, and SHINE counselors will help them enroll in alternative Medicare plans through May 1. Enrollees who do not choose a plan by that federal deadline will be enrolled in a new plan by Medicare.

“Our only mission is to protect the health and safety of older Floridians. We will do everything possible – as quickly as possible – to ensure a smooth transition to new coverage for seniors affected by this action,” said state Elder Affairs Secretary E. Douglas Beach.

Counselors from SHINE, a program of the Department of Elder Affairs, will be available through the state’s Elder Helpline, which can be reached toll-free at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337). In addition, SHINE will implement a public awareness campaign designed to reach affected seniors in their communities.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will provide Florida with \$274,000 to support the public outreach activity, but SHINE is not waiting for the federal funds to arrive before initiating its campaign and assistance efforts.

Medicare said beneficiaries who had been in the Fox Insurance plan should see no change in their drug coverage at pharmacies. Until they select another plan, all Fox Insurance enrollees will receive their medications through a program run by Medicare. Approximately 125,000 seniors nationwide are affected.

More information about the termination of Fox Insurance Company’s contract with Medicare is available at the SHINE website, [www.floridaSHINE.org](http://www.floridaSHINE.org), or from Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

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