

STATE OF ILLINOIS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
Proclamation

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, over 1.5 million Illinoisans are 65 years of age or older, and over 750,000 Illinoisans under 65 have a disability. These are the two primary groups eligible for Medicare, and they are growing in numbers every year; and

WHEREAS, elderly and disabled people who lack a social support network can be unaware of their Medicare benefits, and also may be unable to access and complete the proper application procedure; and

WHEREAS, the Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) was initiated in 1988 by the Illinois Division of Insurance in order to educate the eligible citizens of Illinois about the many benefits of Medicare, using various community organizations, senior citizen centers, and the media in order to reach them; and

WHEREAS, lowering seniors' prescription drugs costs continues to be a major focus of my administration, and through efforts such as the creation of a Seniors Prescription Drug Discount Card, which can save seniors and disabled persons as much as 30% on their medical costs, we are working diligently in that pursuit. The SHIP program has been a valuable partner in this effort, producing a Prescription Drug Information Guide to help Medicare participants find the most affordable options for obtaining their prescription drugs; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, more than 800 SHIP volunteers have contributed nearly 192,000 hours to assist over 163,000 clients, saving Illinois' citizens more than \$13.3 million in customer service costs; and

WHEREAS, SHIP volunteers are truly admirable citizens, contributing their time and talents in order to improve the lives of Illinois' Medicare beneficiaries:

THEREFORE I, Rod Blagojevich, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim September 6-10, 2004 as SHIP WEEK in Illinois, and encourage all citizens to recognize the positive work that SHIP volunteers do for our elderly and disabled citizens.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.

Done at the Capitol, in the City of Springfield,
this TWELFTH day of AUGUST, in
the Year of Our Lord two thousand and
FOUR, and of the State of Illinois
the one hundred and EIGHTY-SIXTH



Deese White
SECRETARY OF STATE

Rod Blagojevich
GOVERNOR