

1941 SOUTH 42ND STREET  
SUITE 502  
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68105

### STAFF

Sue Fredricks .....Executive Director  
Nicole Meyer.....Program Coordinator  
Rachel Schlesselman .....Client Resource  
Coordinator  
Deb Stortvedt.....Administrative  
Assistant  
Linda Houghtaling .....Receptionist

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### OFFICERS

Rick Scofield .....President  
Marian Freberg .....Vice President  
Rissa Conner.....Secretary  
Charlie Graham.....Treasurer

#### DIRECTORS

Carolyn Anderson    Gerry Rathouz  
Deb Daley    Vanessa Warren  
Dick Mitchell    Cathy Wyatt

### HOURS

MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:30-4:30

### OUR MISSION

TO SIMPLIFY THE LIVES OF  
SENIORS BY ENABLING THEM TO  
MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS  
REGARDING THEIR BENEFITS



— VOLUNTEERS —  
ASSISTING SENIORS

VOLUME 1  
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SEPTEMBER 2009

## Medicare News by Sue Fredricks

One of the frequent concerns I have heard in regards to the healthcare reform bill is that Medicare Advantage plans will be eliminated. There is, in fact, a provision to eliminate the Medicare Advantage Regional Plan Stabilization Fund and transfer any remaining amounts to the Medicare Supplementary Medical Insurance (SMI) Trust Fund. This does not mean that Medicare Advantage Plans will be eliminated.

Regional Medicare Advantage PPOs were originally established under the Medicare Modernization Act in 2003

to provide rural beneficiaries greater access to Medicare Advantage plans. To encourage PPOs to enter regional markets, the law established a \$10



billion stabilization fund to provide additional Incentives to PPOs, beyond the regular Medicare payments these PPOs receive.

In 2008, Congress eliminated about \$6.5 billion of the Stabilization Fund under the Medicare

Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA). In 2009, regional PPO's only accounted for 3% of all Medicare Advantage enrollees. HR 3200, the new healthcare reform bill would eliminate the remainder of the Stabilization Fund saving \$3.5 billion over the next ten years, which in turn would add five years to the life of the SMI Trust Fund (which had been projected to run out of funds in 2017). These recommendations come from the nonpartisan Medicare Payment Advisory Commission.

## In Memoriam by Nicole Meyer

All of us at VAS were deeply saddened to hear the news of Bill Hamilton's passing.

Bill served as president and past president on the VAS board and was honored with many awards for his service to the community, including the VAS Antonson Award and the



Humana Starlight Award. He will be remembered for his smile and his desire to help others.

Donations made in memory of Bill can be sent to the VAS office, to the attention of Nicole Meyer.



## Why We Volunteer by Joyce Mack, Kae Turco and Judy Williams

So many seniors are uninformed regarding health care, legal, and homestead issues, and the programs available to them.

We as volunteers derive a feeling of accomplishment knowing when seniors leave after a counseling session in our office; we have given them a certain peace of mind and the information they need. The senior community has so many needs that would go unfulfilled without assistance. Volunteers help fill these



needs through outreach events, office counseling and phone calls. There is a feeling of satisfaction knowing that we are able to provide the necessary tools for them to negotiate the system. Many seniors are not comfortable using a computer

especially when it has to do with government programs; they are comfortable getting help from us. We as volunteers are rewarded with a sense of satisfaction and feeling of accomplishment to be able to assist people on many levels. Volunteering fills empty hours, provides companionship and a new avenue for meeting new and interesting people from diversified occupations and interest. What a great way to start a life after retirement!

*“Sure I’m for helping the elderly. I’m going to be old myself someday.”*  
 -Lillian Carter,  
 Jimmy Carter’s  
 mother at age 85

## 60 Minutes by Nicole Meyer

What can you do in one hour to help VAS?

In one hour you could:

1. Write a letter to ten businesses that you frequent and ask them to donate to VAS
2. Ask a friend if they would like to volunteer at VAS
3. Organize a garage sale and

4. Give a presentation about Medicare to a senior group in your area
5. Attend a health fair and give out information to seniors about VAS services
6. Sell unwanted items on eBay and donate the proceeds to VAS

7. Attend a general meeting
8. Make a donation in honor of or in memory of a friend or family member
9. Perform data entry tasks at the VAS office
10. Get a wish list from VAS and purchase much needed office supplies for VAS (tax deductible!)

## Ask a SHIP Expert by Rachel Schlesselman



*Q: Do Medicare Advantage plans cover fitness benefits?*

*A: No, Medicare Advantage plans do not in the basic form cover any fitness benefits. Those benefits are available if you*

*purchase the additional rider benefits that the plans offer.*

*Q: Do Medicare Supplement plans always pay secondary?*

*A: No, not always. For most people, a supplement plan pays secondary because that is the only other insurance they have. For some people*

*who have other insurance, like retiree coverage, that other insurance is secondary and their supplement plan is tertiary or third. In most instances like this the individual may want to reconsider whether it is worth the benefit to pay for the Medicare supplement plan.*

# From the Director's Desk by Sue Fredricks



Once a month, VAS holds a general membership meeting. These meetings offer members a chance to learn about current issues and events of interest to seniors in our community, keep current on VAS business and

socialize with friends. The meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at Countryside Community Church, 8787 Pacific Street. The meetings start at 1:00pm and conclude at 2:30pm. If you have not been attending these meetings, I would like to encourage you to do so in the future. General Meetings have been a long tradition with VAS, affording the opportunity to interact with other seniors who

share your interests in VAS and our programs.

*General Meeting Speakers*

9/14-Cathy Wyatt-Midwest Geriatrics, "Aging with Passion & Purpose" Conference

10/5- Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly, Overview of Program Services

11/2- Sharon Lier. Farmers Insurance—Identity Theft Awareness & Protection

## 9/11: A Day of Service

In the wake of disaster, extraordinary things happen to communities. Everyday citizens come together out of kindness and necessity to work for a greater good. Earlier this year, the President made it easier for Americans to get involved by signing The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act into law. An important part of the act is the

creation of a new day of service, the National Day of Service and Remembrance -- to take each year place on September 11.

It's a day for Americans to pledge their time to service, and to remember the outstanding work and compassion of the many people who formed together in the aftermath of the attacks to help those in need.

But it's not just about the heroes -- it's also about remembering the victims.

With their memory in our hearts and thoughts we observe the National Day of Service and Remembrance by helping the many who today are suffering.

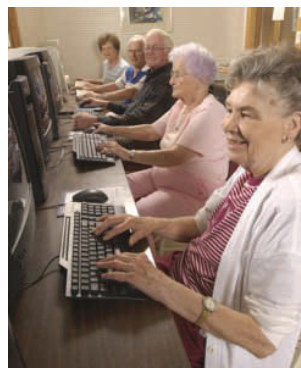
*From VolunteerMatch.com*

**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."  
-Margaret Mead**

## SHIP Training

Interested in learning more about Medicare? Do you want to educate other seniors on insurance? SHIP training will be held October 22-23.

Please contact Rachel at 444-6617 if you or anyone you know is interested in taking this informative class.



## Notes

VAS will be closed on Monday, September 7, in observance of Labor Day.

## Volunteers Assisting Seniors

The Center Mall  
 1941 South 42nd Street  
 Suite 502  
 Omaha, NE 68105  
 Phone: 402-444-6617  
 Fax: 402-546-0886  
 E-mail: nmeyer@vie.omhcoxmail.com

## Retirees Sharing the Experiences of a Lifetime

# SEPTEMBER 2009

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 6-8:30pm Guard/Conservator Class (New Cassel)	3 9:00 Fundraising Committee Meeting (VAS)	4	5
7 	8	9	10	11	12
14 11:45 Conservator Meeting 1-3 General Meeting (Countryside Church)	15	16	17	18 11:30-2:30 Ask An Attorney (VAS)	19
21	22	23	24	25	26
28	29 3:30-5 Board Meeting (ENOA)	30			