



Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement Volunteer Opportunity: SMP Counselor

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) is a statewide network of trained volunteers who educate, assist and advocate for consumers about their rights and options regarding Medicare health insurance and health care access. A program of the Washington Office of the Insurance Commissioner, SHIBA volunteers provides free, unbiased, and confidential advising. [SHIBA](#) is Washington State's [Senior Medicare Patrol \(www.smpresource.org\)](#) project. SHIBA-SMP volunteers help clients prevent, detect and report Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse

Locally SHIBA is sponsored by the nonprofit Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement.

Purpose

To empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers to prevent, detect and report health care fraud, error, and abuse by educating them in individual counseling sessions.

Position Description

SMP Counselor Volunteers work with the SHIBA-SMP coordinator at their local partner agency to provide one-one-one counseling about preventing, detecting, and reporting health care fraud.

Responsibilities

SMP counselors discuss individual situations with beneficiaries and/or their caregivers and may review Medicare Summary Notices (MSN), billing statements, medical records, and other related financial and health documents. Counselors also educate beneficiaries about how to prevent, detect, and report Medicare fraud, error, and abuse. Counselors listen carefully to the beneficiary's or caregivers account of a situation and determine whether to:

- Share information with, or provide an explanation to, the beneficiary or caregiver
- Send the beneficiary or caregiver to an SMP staff person or volunteer who handles complex issues, or
- Send the beneficiary to another more applicable organization for assistance (such as the SHIP, QIO, 1-800-Medicare, etc.)

When an SMP counselor decides to refer a beneficiary's case to a staff person or volunteer who handles complex issues, the counselor may receive and confidentially transmit the beneficiary's documents to that person with the SMP's confidentiality and data security procedures in mind. Counselors provide their services in person or by telephone. Counseling may take place at locations such as senior centers, SMP or Medicare education events, and libraries, to name a few. When counseling in public settings, steps are taken to ensure confidentiality of client information.

Qualifications

- Good oral communication skills, including:
 - Ability to communicate with clients in a professional and confidential manner
 - Ability to explain complex topics in an easy-to-understand manner
 - Active listening skills and maintaining objectivity
- Excellent ability to pay attention to detail
- Ability and willingness to learn and share information related to preventing, detecting, and reporting health care fraud, error, and abuse.
- Strong research skills
- Strong computer and internet competency
- Willingness to learn and retain information
- Ability to work independently or as part of team
- Patience and persistence
- Valid Washington's driver's license and access to an insured vehicle or reliable transportation

Time Commitment

Availability to volunteer requires a **minimum of eight or more hours per month**, on average 2-4 hours a week. This includes counseling hours, outreach events, continuing education, and volunteer meetings that take place each 4th Wednesday of the month. Attendance at 18-hours of initial basic training is mandatory as well as on-going training and annual review classes. Because of the training volunteers who counsel receive, they are asked to commit to a **minimum of one year** of service.

Location

Volunteers who counsel may be stationed at their local SHIBA host organization, the Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement office. They may also offer one-on-one counseling at various locations throughout their local community.

Supervision

SMP Counselor Volunteers report to their local SHIBA coordinator.

On Site-Supervision

SHIBA Counselor Volunteers typically work independently and report their activities to their coordinator.

Orientation/Training

All SHIBA volunteers receive 18-hour basic training on Medicare health insurance, prescription drug, and healthcare access options. Volunteers who counsel beneficiaries also receive additional role-specific training on basics of Medicare fraud, error, and abuse.

Benefits

SMP Counselors will:

- Participate in a national effort to educate Medicare beneficiaries, their caregivers, and the general public about health care fraud, error, and abuse
- Enhance their communication and interpersonal skills
- Interact with diverse group of people
- Receive recognition for their contributions to the program
- Make a contribution to the well-being of Medicare beneficiaries and the community as a whole

Contact

Volunteers are always encouraged to contact their local SHIBA coordinator for support. For full consideration for this position, please review and sign volunteer agreement, and request a SHIBA volunteer application. Contact the SHIBA program coordinator at 360-788-6534 or email waha@hinet.org

Volunteer Agreement

I acknowledge that I have read the above volunteer description and agree that it defines the position as it currently exists. I also understand that the above is intended to describe the general content of and requirements for performance of this position. It is not to be considered as an exhaustive statement of duties, responsibilities, or requirements and does not limit the assignment of additional duties at the discretion of the supervisor.

SHIBA Volunteers do not accept gratuities in return for the services they provide.

Volunteer Signature: _____

Date: _____