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Toni Roberts.....Executive Director
Scott Glaser.....Program Director
Karen Didion...Operations Manager
Kae Turco....Volunteer Coordinator
Diana Palmer.....Office Assistant

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HOURS

MONDAY-FRIDAY
8:30AM-4:30PM

OUR MISSION:
EMPOWERING SENIORS
WITH THE KNOWLEDGE
AND CONFIDENCE TO MAKE
INFORMED DECISIONS
ABOUT THEIR BENEFITS.

www.vas-nebraska.org
402-444-6617

Follow us on Social Media



— VOLUNTEERS —
ASSISTING SENIORS

FALL 2023

Helping seniors navigate the complex worlds of Medicare and Homestead Exemption.

Fall Open Enrollment

October 15-December 7

Fall is just around the corner, and it's almost time for Medicare's Annual Open Enrollment. During this time, you can review your Part D drug plan or your Medicare Advantage Plan and compare it to other plans to make sure you have the plan that best suits your needs and budget.

VAS will be offering Open Enrollment assistance again this year. We will be offering a variety of appointments and times to serve our clients in Douglas, Dodge, Sarpy, Cass and Washington counties.

We will be offering in-person appointments three days a week (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday) at our office and have in-person events throughout our service area on scheduled dates (watch our website and social media for details). In addition to in-person appointments, we will once again have phone appointments six days a week (Monday- Saturday).

Contact us at **402-444-6617** beginning **September 5th** to get an appointment. Appointments fill up fast!

Why You Should Review Your Plan Annually

Every year, from October 15 to December 7, Medicare has an Open Enrollment period for Medicare eligible beneficiaries to review and or change their Part D prescription drug plan or their Medicare Advantage plan. . But why is it important to review your plan every year?

Each year, Part D and Advantage plans change. These changes can include:

- premium increases
- copayment/coinsurance changes
- coverage changes including:
 - what pharmacies/providers are covered
 - what drugs are covered
 - tier changes to covered drugs

Your plan will send you a letter about any changes in September.

Changes to your plan could be either drastic or minimal, so it is important that you review your plan to make sure that it is still giving you the coverage you need. Also, remember that the best plan for you might not be the cheapest premium.

All of these changes can be very confusing, which is why we offer Open Enrollment counseling. We can help you review your current plan and compare it to other plans available in our area. We can also help you learn what questions to ask about your coverage to help you make more informed decisions about your benefits and plans.

The Cans and Can'ts of Open Enrollment

What you CAN do during Open Enrollment:

- change/enroll/disenroll Part D plan
- change from Original Medicare to an Advantage plan
- change from a Medicare Advantage plan to Original Medicare
- switch Medicare Advantage plans
- switch from a Medigap plan to an Advantage plan

What you CAN'T do during Open Enrollment:

- Sign up for Original Medicare (parts A and B) if you are not in your Initial Enrollment Period or a Special Enrollment Period or General Enrollment Period
- Switch Medigap plans

Medigap Plans and Open Enrollment

Medigap plans are NOT included in annual Open Enrollment. However, you can drop a supplement plan and switch to a Medicare Advantage plan.

If you wish to review your Medigap plan, you may make an appointment with VAS outside of the Medicare Open Enrollment period.

Fraud and Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment means more ads on TV and in the mail about various Medicare Advantage plans. It can also mean more cold calls, emails or texts from insurance companies to get you to switch plans.

There are many rules that agents and companies must follow. Companies that

you have never had a plan with are not allowed to call you. They are also not allowed to say that they represent Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid. These types of calls, emails or texts are fraud.

For a full list of rules, visit <https://www.medicare.gov>

*"No spring nor summer beauty hath such grace as I
have seen in one autumnal face."
- John Donne*



VAS Website Changes



The VAS website is getting some updates! We have added a donation button to allow for an easier donation process and to allow individuals to make recurring donations.

We are in the process of updating all of the photos on the website and making the site easier to navigate to the information you need.

Our biggest update to so far: the ability to register for New to Medicare Workshops via our website.

Be on the lookout for the ability to request presentations from our site in the near future.

We hope to bring even more to our site in the coming year.

Visit us at: www.vas-nebraska.org

Important Information:

**Open Enrollment:
October 15-
December 7**

Review, compare, switch:
Part D drug coverage or
Medicare Advantage
Plans

Call VAS at **402-444-6617**
starting **September 5** to
make your appointment.

*Your current plan will
send you a letter about
changes in September.



**Be sure to read
page 4 for
information
about upcoming
events and our
new Program
Director!**



**Gold
Transparency
2023**

Candid.



Barry Gerken: VAS Volunteer Remembered

This July, one of our valued volunteers passed away. Barry Gerken started at VAS in 2012 and served on the board of directors for ten years, serving as President for six of those years. He was passionate about helping people and educating them about their Medicare benefits.

Barry will be remembered for his kindness and generosity by all that knew him. The following statement appeared in his obituary:

"Barry was extremely thoughtful, empathetic, and friendly to all. Another character trait everyone could agree on about Barry was his selflessness. After retiring from the IRS, Barry dove into volunteer work around Omaha. He loved spending time at St. Cecilia's Cathedral, Volunteers Assisting Seniors and the IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program."

We miss you Barry, all of us at VAS

A letter from our board President: Time to Grow--With Your Help!

Hello everyone,

With the coming of open enrollment, I continue to be amazed at the thousands of people we serve and the millions of dollars we save clients every year. I am grateful to Toni and the staff who function as a great team and thankful for their willingness to be resources to volunteers and for all their work connecting with so many partners in our community. I am also grateful for a wonderful team of volunteers who make things happen and for the support/help we get from the SHIP staff in Lincoln.

As a Volunteer I am grateful for many things which make VAS great, but I often think how much more effective we could be if we all could get even more support in some ways we may not think about.

Thanks to Karen and our tech team we will soon see an updated web page, www.vas-nebraska.org, which gives VAS a fresher look and provides several new tabs for information. It will also have a new tab for "support" which will include ways you and your friends can help.

Personally:

- Talk to your neighbors about the great work we do helping folks navigate Medicare. It is amazing how many of our new clients come to us by "word of mouth."
- Speak to your friends about volunteer opportunities: either as a counselor or someone who can offer support for the office especially during the busy time of open enrollment.

Financially:

- We now have a way to accept donations directly through the website (both one-time and recurring)
- we are now able to accept a qualified charitable deduction from required minimum distributions
- we would appreciate if you and your friends would consider remembering VAS in your will or estate plan (if interested in these options contact Toni)

Yes, it is time to be grateful for what VAS is and does, but with your help and support I know we will be even stronger in the years to come.

Jeff Smith
Board President

New to Medicare Workshops:

UPCOMING
EVENTS

- Bellevue (Calvary Christian Church 10100 Cedar Island Rd.)
 - September 12, October 10, November 14, December 12
- Omaha (New Cassel Retirement Center 900 N 90th)
 - September 20, October 18, November 15, December 20
- Omaha (Digital Express at MCC-Fort Omaha Campus 5300 N 30th St, Building 10)
 - September 7, November 9

For more information, or to register, visit www.vas-nebraska.org or call our office at 402-444-6617.

Open Enrollment event sites and dates:

- **Digital Express** at MCC-Fort Omaha Campus
 - October 18, November 8, December 6
- **Goodwill**; 7805N72nd St; **Omaha**
 - October 18, November 15
- **SCC-Plattsmouth**; 537 Main St; **Plattsmouth**
 - October 26, November 16
- **Friendship Center**; 1730 W 16th St; **Fremont**
 - October 24, November 9
- **KROC Center**; 2825 Y St; **Omaha**
 - November 1, November 15
- **Montclair Senior Center**; 2304 S 135th St; **Omaha**
 - October 25
- **Bellevue Senior Center**; 109 W 22nd Ave; **Bellevue**
 - October 19
- **Camelot Community Center**; 9270 Cady Ave; **Omaha**
 - October 20
- **Florence Senior Center**; 2920 Bondesson; **Omaha**
 - November 1



Welcome to Scott Glaser: New Program Director

WELCOME
TO THE TEAM!

Scott is a native of Rochester, MN, earned a bachelor's degree in international business from Wartburg College in Waverly, IA, and a master's degree in human development and leadership from Murray State University in Murray, KY. Scott has been a non-profit professional for over 25 years. He served multiple non-profit organizations in Denver, Colorado before moving to Nebraska in 2016. He most recently served as the executive director of Lutheran Service Corps before joining the VAS staff. Scott and his wife, Amy, live in Omaha with their mixed breed dog, Dobby. Scott enjoys listening to music and practicing his juggling skills with the Omaha Juggling Club.

Friends,
We are finishing up the planning process for Open Enrollment and are looking forward to serving you this fall. We will start taking appointments on September 5, so

call soon. We are excited about all of the updates to our website, so if you haven't visited the site recently please check it out!

—Toni Roberts