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A publication of

**LifePath**  
options for independence

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# THE GOOD LIFE

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## Neighbors Helping Neighbors—You Can Make a Difference



**Melissa Hatch, LCSW,  
Home Care Program Director**

One of the joys of living in Franklin County and the North Quabbin region is the sense of community you get from these small towns. I've lived in the North Quabbin area for the past five years, and one of the first things I noticed was how tight-knit the community is, with neighbors who wave to each other and say hello.

Something else I have noticed about my own neighborhood is the many older adults living here, and that the helping spirit is alive and well, with neighbors bringing over food to those who need help with meal prep, and other neighbors mowing the lawn for folks who need help with yardwork.

We see these small acts happen all the time, and we're familiar with them. But something that most community members are likely unfamiliar with is the workforce-shortage crisis in the home care aide industry. LifePath has over 1,100 older adults we serve who rely on in-home care to remain

**If you are a neighbor helping an older adult, LifePath wants to help you be paid for this work by directing you to one of the many home care agencies that we contract with.**

safe in their home with a positive quality of life, and too many of them are waiting for services, and waiting for too long. Many of these folks don't have extensive needs—they

need someone to do two hours a week of housework for them, or help them do their laundry. Some just need a companion, a person to socialize with so they don't feel so lonely.

LifePath has a long history of creative thinking, and so do the agencies that we work closely with. It is out of this spirit of creativity and passion for the work we do helping older adults, that LifePath, in conjunction with Danielle Lord, COO at O'Connell Care at Home, came up with the idea for a grassroots effort called Neighbors Helping Neighbors. This campaign focuses on our commitment to finding folks who would like to be paid for tasks they are already doing, for their neighbors or older adults living in close proximity.

If you are a neighbor helping an older adult, LifePath wants to help you be paid for this work by directing you to one of the many home care agencies that we contract with. We have a dedicated phone line that will be monitored by experienced staff in the Home Care department, who will talk with you further about what town(s) you would like to work in and what tasks you'd like to do. Then our staff will direct you toward the next steps of getting hired by an agency to do this work.

Only a few hours a week could help keep your neighbor living safely and happily in their home, as well as help you to make a little extra money while giving back to your community. Anyone interested can call our dedicated phone line at 413-829-9299 to get started!

## Time For Your Yearly Medicare Plan Review!



**Lorraine York-Edberg,  
SHINE Regional Program Director**

During the months of September and early October, your current Medicare Advantage Plan (HMO, PPO, POS) with drug coverage or your Medicare Prescription Drug Plan will be sending you information regarding the upcoming changes to your coverage in 2024. This information will allow you to make an informed decision about whether to keep your current coverage or make a change.

### Review and save all letters from your plan!

During the Medicare Open Enrollment

**Reach thousands of existing and potential clients with an advertisement in *The Good Life*.**

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For more information, contact:

**Elizabeth Coté** or **Suzanne Hunter**  
203-912-4680 413-772-0261 x 228  
[ecote@recorder.com](mailto:ecote@recorder.com) [shunter@recorder.com](mailto:shunter@recorder.com)

(October 15 - December 7), you will have an opportunity to **CHANGE** your coverage for next year. You can decide to stay in Original Medicare or join a Medicare Advantage Plan. If you are already in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you can use the Open Enrollment to switch back to Original Medicare with a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or you can enroll into a Medicare Prescription drug plan for the first time. State-certified SHINE (Medicare) counselors can help you understand your plan changes, as well as other options you may have. **Call us early to get a SHINE appointment (1-800-498-4232) during open enrollment!**

**If you are already in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you can use the Open Enrollment to switch back to Original Medicare with a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or you can enroll into a Medicare Prescription drug plan for the first time.**

When reviewing your Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage, "Your Annual Insurance Check-Up," you want to make sure:

- Your plan continues to cover your medications;
- To check your plan for any restrictions like quantity limits, prior authorization, or step therapy;
- To check any mail you received from your plan to make sure it continues to be available in Massachusetts, or if you have been re-assigned to a new plan.

### All the ways to get the help you need:

- Visit [Medicare.gov](https://www.Medicare.gov) to use the Medicare Plan Finder.
- Look at your most recent "Medicare and You" handbook to see plans in your area; 2024 books will be mailed in late September.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) and say, "Agent." Help is available 24 hours a day, including weekends.
- Contact your local SHINE program or Senior Center.
- Attend a local presentation regarding the annual Open Enrollment period.

If you wish to have this article emailed to you to access the links, please contact 413-773-5555, ext. 2426, or 800-498-4232 to request a copy of this article.

SHINE counselors can also screen you to identify if you are income and asset eligible for any special programs that can help assist with the cost and coverage of Medicare Part B Premiums and for Extra Help to reduce drug costs.

*The SHINE program, Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone, provides confidential and unbiased health insurance counseling for Medicare beneficiaries. This is a free service, though contributions are welcome and will go a long way to help support this vital program. For further assistance with any Medicare issue, you can make a SHINE appointment. To reach a trained and certified counselor in your area, contact the regional office at 1-800-498-4232 or 413-773-5555, or contact your local council on aging.*



*"You learn some great history and stories that you'd never have known without meeting these people. They're all unique and special in their own way."*

- Alan Coutinho, Volunteer Meals on Wheels Driver

Find your story.  
Volunteer with LifePath.

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