

NEW MEXICO AGING & LONG-TERM SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Building Bridges: Reimagining New Mexico's SMP Volunteer Program Around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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OBJECTIVES

We will discuss:

- A framework for analyzing your program needs
- A focus on integrating person-centered volunteer characteristics into your recruitment strategies
- Tips for involving stakeholders
- How implementing adjustments to recruitment and training strategies can positively impact your program



New Mexico

- ❑ Covers 121,598 square miles; **5th** largest state in the U.S. by area
- ❑ Population approximately 2.1 million; **6th** most sparsely populated state in U.S. (2024)
- ❑ Population of Bernalillo County where Albuquerque, the largest metropolitan area, is approximately 557,000 (2024)
- ❑ 1/10th of the population is Native American
- ❑ New Mexico SHIP consists of five regions (Metro, NW, NE, SW, SE)
- ❑ SHIP coordinators drive as much as 4 ½ hours *each way* to events



What Is the Purpose of the Volunteer Program?

- ❑ Goal: Extend the SHIP and SMP reach through our local presence
- ❑ Goal: Improve service to priority populations including
 - Rural communities
 - Native Americans
 - Spanish speaking
- ❑ Challenges:
 - Time
 - Geography / distance to rural areas
 - Earning trust



Our View of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Volunteers should reflect the communities they serve.

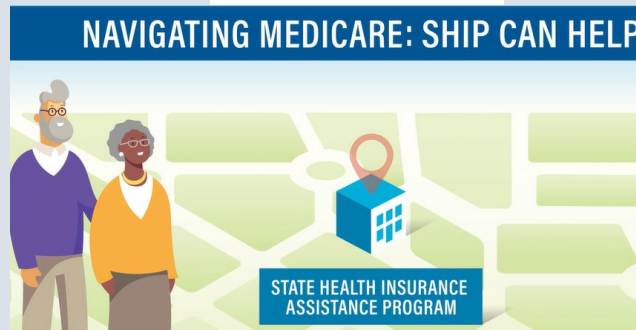
- Socio-economic status
- Race and ethnicity
- Language
- Religion
- Level of education
- Type of community (rural, urban)



Re-envisioning the Volunteer Program

Goals

- SHIP/ SMP name recognition in local communities
- One volunteer in each county and tribal area
- Strategic partnerships with other agencies
- Reaching more beneficiaries



Actions

- Identified essential volunteer characteristics
- Defined what we need volunteers to do
- Identified the positive community impact their time and efforts make

Paradigm Shift – Volunteer Characteristics

- ❑ Previous focus - recruiting “professional” level volunteers
 - ‘Medicare PhD’
 - Technical experts
- ❑ Current focus - importance of building connections
- ❑ Current focus - the value, ability, and opportunity for volunteers to build relationships in their communities
 - Volunteers have inherent understanding and knowledge of the local culture
 - Smaller communities trust those from within their community easier
 - Buy-in possible because of the volunteers’ credibility and easier availability
- ❑ Current focus - meeting volunteers where they are



Your Turn!

What could work for your program?

- What are ideal volunteer characteristics for your program?
 - Which traits and talents are most valued in your program?
- What gaps do you need the volunteers to fill? What do you need them to do for your program?
- Which new or additional volunteer characteristics could improve your volunteer program?
- How could these adjustments improve your service to your priority populations?



Redesigning Roles/ Requirements

Volunteer Input

- Focus groups with long-serving volunteers
- Frequent communication with volunteers

New volunteer levels/ training requirements

- Associate Level 1 Volunteer
- Associate Level 2 Volunteer
- Certified Level Volunteer

Critical buy-in from SHIP coordinators on importance of volunteer recruitment

- Who will fit best for the communities they serve?
- How and where recruitment efforts are most effective?



Recruitment Strategies

Medicare is complex, intimidating.
Volunteering is a commitment.
Commitment can be challenging.

- ❑ Media/ Advertising
- ❑ Grassroots – SHIP coordinators recruit in a variety of locations at county and tribal health council meetings and local events
- ❑ Progress check- 18 packets sent out; 3 volunteers in training
 - We're still working on our pitch.
 - Continuously evaluate.
 - Be willing, ready, and able to pivot.



Your Turn!

What can we learn from your recruitment successes and challenges?

- What types of recruitment efforts have worked for your program?
- What were instrumental factors in your recruitment success?
- What were the challenges to successful recruitment?
- When did you know it was time to pivot?



Empowering Volunteer Success

- ❑ Initial training- foundation and relationship building
- ❑ Mentoring
- ❑ Ongoing training
- ❑ Volunteer-to-volunteer interaction
 - Essential in volunteer-led program
 - Helps build connections between volunteers
 - Ability to lean on one another
- ❑ Volunteer-to-coordinator connection



Creating Opportunities for Volunteers

- Self-scheduled events
- Events with coordinators
- Walk-ins and office support
- Ask Stan* newsletter
- Office hours / events
- Callbacks and other beneficiary support assignments
- Assisting with volunteer recruitment
- Fall Open Enrollment



NEW MEXICO AGING & LONG-TERM SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Newsletter: Ask Stan Medicare Questions

Volume 4, Issue 2 February 2024

Report Medicare Related Fraud by calling the New Mexico Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) at 1-800-432-2080

The SMP will provide you with the information you need to PREVENT, DETECT and REPORT Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse.

Dear Stan,

My wife was recently diagnosed with dementia. I feel overwhelmed not knowing what to do to help her. Does Medicare pay for dementia treatment? What should I do?

*Leo
Moriarty, NM*

Dear Leo,

Medicare will pay for some services during every state of dementia care. They include:

- home safety evaluations
- cognitive assessments
- planning for care
- Prescription drugs – for drugs your doctor orders for dementia
- hospital stays
- respite care
- hospice care.

Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning -- thinking, remembering, and reasoning. Peoples' behavior, feelings and relationships may change as well. The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's. Over time the symptoms of Alzheimer's and related dementias will make it difficult to think clearly and function independently. Planning as early as possible can lead to a better tomorrow.

Health care planning is important. Having a **living will** lets doctors know how you

Results



- 3 new volunteers, none from rural areas yet
- Continuing to fine-tune approach
- Beneficiaries receiving assistance in a timely manner
- Increase in number of outreach events

- Staff able to focus on other tasks
- Valuable connections between volunteers and their SHIP coordinator
- Increased satisfaction for volunteers - utilizing individual strengths

Your Turn!

Time to ponder...

- How could your community benefit from a pivot in your program?
- What would be the pros and cons?
- How would you know it was time to take the leap?
- Where would most of the challenges exist?
- How would you measure the success of your efforts?



Thank you for participating!

Insights from New Mexico's SHIP/SMP progress

- Analyze program needs.
- Focus on integrating person-centered volunteer characteristics into our recruitment strategies.
- Involve stakeholders.
- Reflect on our program regularly.
- Made adjustments based on challenges and feedback from stakeholders.
- Kept trying!



Questions?

THANK YOU!

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(Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube)

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