RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2016-356

MEETING: July 12, 2016

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: John Carrier, District V Supervisor

RE: Letter Supporting Funding for State Health Insurance Assistance Program

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:
Approve a Letter Supporting Funding for State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP); and Authorize the Board of Supervisors Chair to Sign the Letter. The Senate Appropriations Committee recently approved a Labor-Health and Human Services (HHS) measure that eliminates funding for SHIPs. This program provides free assistance to Medicare beneficiaries in navigating the complex world of Medicare coverage, as well as helping to resolve fraud and abuse issues, billing problems, appeals, and enrollment in low-income health assistance programs.

The House Labor-HHS Appropriations Committee has not yet finalized their spending plan, and the National Associations of Area Agencies on Aging are urging local governments and citizens to contact their Congress Members and urge them to support fully funding SHIPs. Mariposa County is a member of the Area 12 Agency on Aging, which provides critical funding to our senior assistance programs.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:
The Board has supported letters pertaining to issues that will ultimately benefit the citizens of Mariposa County.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:
Do not approve the letter. Individual Board members may draft their own letters which may carry the same weight as a letter endorsed by the entire Board.

ATTACHMENTS:
SHIP Letter of Support (DOCX)

CAO RECOMMENDATION
Requested Action Recommended
RESULT: ADOPTED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Rosemarie Smallcombe, District I Supervisor
SECONDER: Marshall Long, District III Supervisor
AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Carrier
July 12, 2016

Honorable Tom McClintock
United States Representative
2331 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Medicare State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

Dear Representative McClintock:

The Senate Appropriations Committee recently approved a Labor-Health and Human Services (HHS) measure that eliminates funding for State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs). The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors opposes this recommendation and encourages the House Labor-HHS Appropriations Committee to support these vital programs.

Today's Medicare beneficiary must choose their coverage from an average of 19 Medicare Advantage plans, more than 20 prescription drug plans and a wide variety of supplemental insurance options. Each of the available options has unique premiums, cost sharing, provider networks and coverage rules. For more than 24 years, SHIPs have advised, educated, and empowered individuals to navigate their State-specific Medicare choices and find the coverage that works best for their needs. In addition, SHIPs have helped to resolve fraud and abuse issues, billing problems, appeals, and enrollments in low-income health assistance programs.

Eliminating SHIPs will leave millions of citizens without the free, personalized and unbiased support they need to compare increasingly complex coverage options, appeal coverage denials and apply for financial assistance and navigate the increasingly complex world of Medicare benefits. With 10,000 baby boomers aging into Medicare each day it is critical that SHIP not be eliminated or compromised. As the House Labor-HHS Appropriations Committee has not yet finalized their spending plan, we respectfully request that you not jump ship on SHIP but rather give our seniors your full support.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter.

Sincerely,

JOHN CARRIER
Chairman

cc: Senator Feinstein
Senator Boxer
National Association of Counties
Area 12 Agency on Aging