



## **New Advocacy Opportunity to Save Our SHIPs!**

### **Ask Your Representative to Sign on to House Letter**

**June 28, 2016**

As n4a's [June 13 Legislative Update](#) and [June 21 Advocacy Alert](#) detailed, the Senate Labor-HHS measure that recently passed out of the full Appropriations Committee would zero out the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). Eliminating SHIPs would leave millions who need support comparing coverage options, appealing denials, applying for financial assistance, and navigating increasingly complex Medicare benefits stranded—with nowhere to turn.

While the Senate proposed eliminating SHIPs, the House Labor-HHS Appropriations Committee has not yet finalized their spending plan, but may do so shortly after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. n4a and other national aging advocacy organizations have been very focused on outreach to the House to ensure leaders in that chamber reject the Senate's recommendation to eliminate funding for SHIPs. To this end, the House Seniors Task Force is circulating a [Dear Colleague letter](#) to House Appropriations Committee leaders encouraging them to fully fund SHIPs in FY 2017.

**Please reach out to your Representatives not just to educate them on the value of the SHIP program and the need for continued funding, but also to ask them to sign on to the Dear Colleague letter supporting SHIPs!**

### **Action Steps**

- **Reach out to your Members of Congress and let them know your agency opposes the Senate Appropriations Committee's SHIP funding recommendation.** You can still use [the Alert](#) we sent last week to send a customized email or send them an email directly, but make sure you communicate the value of the SHIP program in your community!
- **NEW: Ask your Representative to sign onto the [Dear Colleague letter supporting SHIP funding in the House Labor-HHS appropriations bill](#).** Members of Congress who wish to sign on can contact Cathy Hurwit (202.225.2111) or Megan Sussman (202.225.7163).

- **Engage your community!** Keep up the drumbeat on this issue! The [n4a & Medicare Rights Center alert](#) is easy to understand and makes taking action very simple. Please **both continue share the link** with your providers, advisory boards, partners, SHIP volunteers and consumers to take action **and encourage your Representatives to sign the [Dear Colleague letter](#)** in the House!

Note, as you reach out it's also important to PERSONALIZE the emails you send and share anecdotes about the type of direct assistance SHIPs provide, data on how many volunteer hours are provided in your area and other stories or data sets that will educate Congress about the value of the SHIPs.

For national data and background information on SHIP:  
<http://www.acl.gov/Programs/CIP/OHIC/SHIP.aspx>

**Thank you for your advocacy on this important issue!**

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**If you have questions or concerns about this *Advocacy Alert*** or n4a's policy positions, please contact Autumn Campbell at [acampbell@n4a.org](mailto:acampbell@n4a.org) and Amy Gotwals at [agotwals@n4a.org](mailto:agotwals@n4a.org).