



Insurance Made Easy

with  **ALLEN / FREEMAN / McDONNELL**
AGENCY

Fall/Winter 2014

www.InsuranceMadeEasy.com • 207-942-7371 • 1-800-762-8600 • 141 N. Main Street, Brewer, ME 04412

Fall Begins the Open Enrollment Periods for ACA Individual Health Plans and Medicare

October 15th begins the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period.

This is the period during which Medicare beneficiaries can make changes to their prescription drug coverage known as “Medicare Part D” or enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan also known as “Medicare Part C”.

Companies have mailed their “Annual Notice of Changes” to their insureds detailing 2015 adjustments to their current coverage. October is a great time to contact Sue McKay to discuss your needs for 2015. Applications can not be submitted before the October 15th start of the annual enrollment period and requested changes must be made by the December 7, 2014 deadline.

It is a very busy time of the year in our Life/Health department, so plan to talk with Sue prior to mid November if possible. Waiting until the deadline approaches does not leave much time for the thoughtful process your health coverage deserves.

November 15th begins the Open Enrollment Period for non group ACA health insurance.

Most Americans not covered by Medicare, Medicaid (called MaineCare in our state) or an employer’s group health plan are required to enroll in individual health insurance as defined under the provisions of the Affordable Care Act or face financial penalties.

The 2014 year was challenging because of serious issues with the healthcare.gov website. However, we anticipate this coming year will be a smoother ride. We invite you to contact our office to discuss the plans we will represent in 2015.

Identity Theft Can Be Costly

The headlines are filled with reports of security breaches and stolen identities. As we enter the busiest shopping season of the year, take time to review your personal consumer habits and insurance policies.

Recent headlines have focused on nation wide credit card breaches such as the one reported in September with Home Depot. However, every day individuals are courted by identity thieves and don’t even realize it.

(This article is continued on the back page)

(This article is continued on the back page)

As consumers hunger for more high tech devices to make our lives easier or be more informed, the more vulnerable we become.

On the internet we know there are “phishing scams” and while many of us have learned not to send money to a king in Nigeria, the techniques of using our friends and loved ones names and email addresses, often makes it difficult to tell the honest emails from the corrupt.

Best practice would suggest these and unexpected emails from financial institutions, utility companies, retail stores or even state or local government agencies should be eyed with caution and when in doubt confirmed by phone before responding by email.

Smart phones are a great source of data; for storage, making financial transactions and are perfect targets for identity theft. Companies try to provide a high level of security, but as they raise that bar, the challenge to defeat their protections also increases.

Consumers have to remain vigilant. Closely monitor your bank balances and credit card bills, looking for discrepancies or unauthorized purchases. Medical claims are also another area to be wary. Occasionally unintentional billing errors occur, but identity theft and fraudulent billing are not uncommon with Medicare, Medicaid and health insurance claims.

Stolen Social Security numbers can result in fraudulent tax return filings which may not be detected until the real John Doe complains he didn't receive his tax refund!

A few tips:

1) When shopping on line, make sure you are using reputable familiar companies with a secure network. Do not purchase anything on line that does not have an SSL (secure sockets layer) The URL for secure sites starts with HTTPS:// not HTTP://.

2) As mentioned above, monitor your accounts for any irregularities. This is great advice whether you are protecting yourself from identity fraud or as a best practice for detecting billing errors.

3) Annually review your credit reports. The Federal Trade Commission's official site for free reports is “consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0155-free-credit-reports”. That website will direct you to a secure website to request reports from up to three credit reporting entities.

4) Be cautious with all your personal information, whether it be over the phone, US mail or on-line.

5) If your purse or wallet goes missing, lost or stolen, alert the companies through whom you have credit cards, and if you currently have identity theft insurance, notify the insurance carrier.

6) Identity Theft Insurance can be part of a homeowners or renters policy or in some cases as a stand alone policy. These plans can assist with the various costs involved of restoring one's identity which can be time consuming as well as costly.

If you are not sure if you currently carry Identity Theft Insurance, call our office. The cost of the coverage is minor compared to the expense of reclaiming your good reputation.

NOTE: The principles contained in this material are general in scope and, to the best of our knowledge, current at the time of publication. The insurance companies, IIABA and AFMA specifically disclaim all liability for damages or personal injury alleged to arise from reliance on the information contained in this document.