



**MILWAUKEE**  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 19, 2008

**Milwaukee Public Library Participating in Generations on Line Project**

*New tool aids seniors with Internet access, Medicare Drug Plans*

MILWAUKEE - Seniors and their caregivers facing the daunting task of enrolling or re-enrolling in the Medicare Drug plan will have the assistance of a new tool this year called Generations on Line, a special web-based program that guides seniors who have never used a computer onto the Internet and especially the Medicare Drug Plan Finder. The Seniors Online Southeastern Wisconsin Initiative was launched today to provide trained volunteer help in many libraries and some elder housing centers in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Walworth, Racine, Ozaukee and Washington counties. The initiative is comprised of a group of not-for-profit agencies and organizations who banded together to help the more than 115,000 people in southeastern Wisconsin 65 years of age and up who cannot or do not use the Internet.

“Generations on Line is a free program that provides step-by-step on-screen help in large type and plain language, offering direct access and guidance on the Medicare website, as well as free simplified email for seniors, multilingual search in 36 languages, an intergenerational chat, and links to other popular sites,” said Tobey Dichter, founder and CEO of Generations on Line. “The program is now available in all Milwaukee Public Libraries and many Lakeshores and Waukesha Library system locations, as well as some low income elder housing. It will be available in more libraries and senior centers over the next year”

This tool is especially effective in guiding seniors to the Medicare Plan Finder – an interactive government website that shows seniors which of these health plans best suits their prescription needs and priorities. Trained RSVP senior coaches will be on hand to introduce elders to the many benefits of using the Internet through this simplified way to get to Medicare selection tools with three clicks.

- MORE -

add one

Although Generations on Line will continue to be available throughout next year and beyond, the Medicare Drug Plan re-enrollment period ends on December 31, 2008. Seniors who need assistance selecting a Medicare drug plan before the end of the year should consult their local library for branches and schedules for this free enrollment help.

“Some of the neediest people on Medicare - those who qualify for the Low Income Subsidy (or Extra Help) - could face surprises if they don’t watch their mail closely and know the changes ahead,” said Dr. Peg Nugent, a specialist at the Southeastern Wisconsin Area Agency on Aging (SEWAAA). “More lower income seniors are facing re-assignment into different plans for next year, especially because two of the larger subsidized drug plans for 2008 will not qualify as fully covered plans in 2009. Those who have chosen either of these plans could be billed as much as \$25.85 a month next year; this is the amount their new premium exceeds the Extra Help benchmark of \$38.15,” according to Dr. Nugent.

Seniors enrolled in one of 53 different Medicare Prescription coverage (Part D) plans in Southeastern Wisconsin should reevaluate their choice for 2009, given some steep increases in premiums and some reductions in gap coverage program, said Dr. Nugent, adding that twelve Medicare Part D plans have announced premium hikes of more than \$10 a month. “In almost every case where we have helped folks reenroll in plans, we have found a less expensive option for them than staying with their current plan,” says Nugent. “Often the savings is close to \$1,000.”

The Seniors Online Southeastern Wisconsin Initiative is made possible through foundation grants.

For more information, go to [www.generationsonline.org](http://www.generationsonline.org)

CONTACTS: Tobey Dichter, Generations on Line at 215.922.3244 ([tobeydichter@att.net](mailto:tobeydichter@att.net))

Dr. Peg Nugent, SEWAAA at 262.821.4444 ([pnugent@sewaaa.com](mailto:pnugent@sewaaa.com)).

For specific information on Milwaukee Public Library locations and training dates, go to [www.mpl.org](http://www.mpl.org) or contact Sandy Rusch Walton at 414.286.3032 ([slrusch@milwaukee.gov](mailto:slrusch@milwaukee.gov)).

###