



S E N I O R

PHARMAssist

Fall Newsletter 2023

# Medicine Chest

Education - Prevention - Access



## Branching Out

Sharing strengths and finding inspiration beyond the Bull City border

Senior PharmAssist has been firmly rooted in Durham for 29 years. As we work with and serve our neighbors, others often ask us, “Why isn’t there something like Senior PharmAssist where I live?” After all, the complicated healthcare and social care systems and rising costs are a challenge for older adults across the country.

A year ago, we began working with three other North Carolina counties that were interested in learning about the Senior PharmAssist model and how they might create a similar program in their own communities. With a grant from the Duke Roybal Center, National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Aging, and our colleagues at Duke, we provided training sessions, an online implementation manual, and coaching to healthcare and nonprofit leaders. This year, those communities are launching their own versions of our model and reporting back their own outcomes, so we can all learn from one another.

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### Inside the Medicine Chest

#### News and Updates

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#### Welcoming New Faces

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#### FY23 Donor Roll

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#### FY23 Annual Report

Impact and Financials — *insert*

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Another way Senior PharmAssist has extended its influence beyond our home in Durham is through the appointment of our ED, Gina Upchurch, to the MedPAC. The MedPAC is the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, an independent congressional agency that advises the U.S. Congress on issues affecting the Medicare program. As a Commission member, Gina joins 16 other experts to discuss policies and procedures that affect the insurance options for Medicare beneficiaries. Gina carries all she learns from our Durham participants and their own struggles and successes to Washington D.C. to influence and inform these critical conversations.

## News & Updates



Patricia, Henry, Collette, Lisa, and Katrina accepted the award on behalf of all of our SHIIP volunteers

This summer, our SHIIP (Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program) volunteers were honored with the **Governor's Award for Volunteer Service**. The award honors the true spirit of volunteerism by recognizing individuals and groups that make a significant contribution to their community through volunteer service. That's certainly true of our incredible SHIIP volunteers! They train hard, work hard, and make a real difference for folks navigating the complicated world of Medicare. Thank you to all of our volunteers, including our award winning SHIIP counselors: Peter Adland, Shelley Beason, Betty Jean "BJ" Boyarsky, Collette Driscoll, Bruce Hays, Henry Luftman, Lisa Nadler, Roslyn Muse, and Debra Taylor.

This year, thanks to the generosity of our supporters and some of the new policies enacted in the Inflation Reduction Act, Senior PharmAssist has been able to **add new prescription medications to our formulary** (the list of drugs we help cover at the pharmacy). Now we can say "Yes, we cover that!" more often and for more people. One participant commented, "The program has helped me tremendously. I'm glad that they added Eliquis and Novolog - that really helped me, and I'm pleased with all the meds they have assisted me with."



Clinical Pharmacist Marilyn meets with participants to talk about their medications



Gerontologist and Senior PharmAssist participant Dr. Joan Burke (pictured here with ED Gina Upchurch) was a featured speaker

In September, we celebrated at the **2023 Breakfast with Senior PharmAssist**, our first in-person gathering since 2019! 200 people joined us bright and early at the Durham Convention Center to hear about the services that we provide and the impact of those services on older adults and on their healthcare providers.

Our Board of Directors issued a challenge to our guests, matching every dollar they raised up to \$30,000. Our guests gave generously - raising over **\$44,000** along with our event sponsors: BD Technology and Innovations, the NC Dept of Insurance SHIIP Program, Syneos Health, Duke Health/Duke Regional Hospital, the Durham Convention Center, Durham Internal Medicine - Millennium Physician Group, and The Potter Financial Group. We are so grateful for the Durham community, which supports our work and lifts us up.

# New Faces in Leadership

## Senior PharmAssist Board of Directors

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Tom Wollman

Gina Upchurch  
*Executive Director*



We're excited to welcome our newest Board members, George Bernhardt, David Bright, Liz Aderoju, Dementric Matthews, Karen Dunn, Rochelle Jackson, and Kelly Sullivan. Our new Board members add experience in nonprofit finance, medicine, healthcare, research, education, and business.

## Gratitude

Many thanks to the following volunteer leaders who recently served on our Board of Directors: **Michael Honeycutt, Cathy Martin, Anne Toohey, and Colleen Ramsey.** Their dedication was tremendous!

Thank you to our consultants **Rachael Clemens** and **Vanna Labi**, who made invaluable contributions to our replication work with three other North Carolina communities.

Finally, we thank **Patricia Trull** for five years of kind and effective leadership as our Operations Director.

### Meet **Adam Velez**, Senior PharmAssist's new Operations Director

Adam joined the Senior PharmAssist team in September 2023. After earning his Master of Divinity from Gardner-Webb University, Adam spent several years in nonprofit management with a focus on community engagement, operational effectiveness, and customer service. During this time Adam helped to implement and oversee several evidence-based health initiatives and various wellness programs. Adam has since expanded his repertoire through work in the private, for-profit sector and with local municipalities. He is also an ordained minister. Adam is excited to work with Senior PharmAssist's Community Referral Specialists and the rest of the staff to expand our impact in Durham and beyond!







# Thank you for supporting our mission!

Senior PharmAssist depends on the support of our community to live out our mission to promote healthier living for older adults in Durham. We are endlessly grateful for every donation we receive.

The following lists are donors who contributed to our work between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. If you notice an error or an omission, please contact us to correct it and accept our sincere apologies.

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First Presbyterian Church



*Pat Murray, founder of the Durham SkyWriter, also serves as an Outreach Worker for Senior PharmAssist. She even DJs for events as DJ Piddipat!*

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*Board Member Mary-Jo Keenan and Larry Reid represented Senior PharmAssist at the 2023 Durham Blues & Brews Festival in May. The event is hosted by the Exchange Club of Durham, a longtime supporter of Senior PharmAssist.*

# Giving in FY2023 (July 1, 2022-June 30,2023)

## Leaders (\$500-\$999)

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Last September, Senior PharmAssist was honored to host Vice President Kamala Harris at the Durham Center for Senior Life! Vice President Harris was in Durham to discuss the Inflation Reduction Act, which affects prescription drug benefits for Medicare beneficiaries nationwide.

VP Harris met with eight Senior PharmAssist participants and advocates during her visit, hearing their stories about how the changes to Medicare affect older adults in Durham.

The Inflation Reduction Act will reduce prices of critical life-saving drugs, cap out-of-pocket prescriptions, and negotiate some drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries. The resulting savings allowed us to expand our formulary and income guidelines, to cover more prescription medicines for more people.



# Giving in FY2023 (July 1, 2022-June 30,2023)

## Friends (cont'd)

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Senior PharmAssist staff members Rachel, Katrina, Nathalie, and Patrica handed out popcorn, waters, and educational materials about how to avoid fraud at our drive through Shred-a-Thons this spring

### Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina

#### Matching Gifts Program

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**Thank you,  
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## Giving in FY2023 (July 1, 2022-June 30,2023)

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***Rosanna** didn't sign up for Medicare when she turned 65 because she was serving as a volunteer in Peru. She was later surprised by a late enrollment penalty. "English is not my first language and it is so confusing! I didn't know where to go or what to do, and a friend referred me here." Senior PharmAssist helped her get the penalty waived to make her insurance more affordable.*

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**We are so grateful for each and every one of our generous donors.  
 We rely on you to live out our mission to serve our neighbors Durham.  
 If you see an error in this list, please let us know by contacting  
 Adam Velez at 919-688-4772 so we can correct our mistake!**

***Iris** joined our program in 2018 to seek help with the cost of her prescription medications, which were getting more and more expensive. "I don't know why it has to be so difficult for people to get what they need," she says. "But Senior PharmAssist saves me a lot. They have so much knowledge and if I have a problem they always help me."*




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# Medicare Open Enrollment Period



## October 15 - December 7, 2023

Medicare's Open Enrollment Period is an opportunity for Medicare beneficiaries to review and change their plans for 2024. Changes must be made by Dec 7 to guarantee your coverage will begin without interruption on Jan 1.

This year, there are several new plans available for you to consider. Senior PharmAssist is the Durham coordinating site for the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP). A SHIIP counselor can help you identify the best plan for you considering your unique circumstances and needs. SHIIP counselors do not sell, endorse, or oppose any product, plan, or company - so you can count on us to work with you to find the best plan for you.

SHIIP counselors work with Medicare recipients of any age or income who live in Durham. By appointment only.

### SHIIP Volunteers

Peter Adland	Bruce Hays
Theresa Ahrens	Henry Luftman
Shelley Beason	Roslyn Muse
BJ Boyarsky	Lisa Nadler
Collette Driscoll	Allison Rice

# Appointments: 919-688-4772