

Louisiana SMP Members Attend Regional Conference in Kansas City

SMP program director Linda Harkey, volunteer Ron Rindone and program manager Julie Agan spent three days in Kansas City, Mo. attending the 2010 Regional SMP Conference Aug. 3 - 5. With a theme of Volunteerism, Vision and Vigilance, the conference offered presentations by the Office of Inspector General, the Medicare Program Integrity Contractors, the Administration on Aging, the National Hispanic Council on Aging and others.



The focus of the conference was on Volunteer Management, a fascinating subject that is so important to the continued success of SMP programs nationwide.

Louisiana SMP program manager, Julie Agan (right) is pictured at the regional conference with volunteer management experts Linda Graff (left) and Steve McCurley (center).

Louisiana SMP, along with many of the SMPs in other states, does not have a written code of policies and procedures for volunteers. We learned that having such a document leads to happier volunteers. Clear objectives, well-defined job descriptions and measurable program successes keep volunteers happily engaged in their work. Today's volunteers are no longer satisfied with stuffing envelopes in a back room; they want to be involved in purposeful work that provides a sense of accomplishment.

The importance of Risk Management in a volunteer program was also stressed. When all volunteers did was stuff envelopes, there was no need for any risk management. That is no longer the case today. The National SMP Resource Center is working with two volunteer management experts to develop a risk management program for SMP volunteers nationwide.

The conference also provided the SMP programs an opportunity to participate in a show and tell of Best Practices. Each state brought along a giveaway, handout or program idea to share with other SMPs. Some of these ideas are things we want to implement in Louisiana. We especially want to get involved in more partnerships with senior advocates who can help us get our information into the hands of more seniors. One of the ideas included holiday menus that are distributed through Meals on Wheels and at congregate meal sites. Each menu has holiday graphics intertwined with useful Medicare fraud, waste and abuse information.

Louisiana proudly displayed our bookmarks and magnets. But we stole the show with our \$60,000,000,000 t-shirts. Everybody wanted one!