

MARKETING TO MEDICARE AGE-INS HANDBOOK

ARE YOU PREPARED TO WIN THE HEARTS OF MEDICARE BENEFICIARY AGE-INS?

Make sure with these 10 tips



Over 10,000 people per day will turn 65 and become eligible to enroll in Medicare health plans during the next 15 years.¹

1 HELP AGE-INS BETTER UNDERSTAND MEDICARE.

To most age-ins, Medicare is a new world they are seeking to understand. Information gathering is a key part of the process. Your communications should not just be about your plans. You should have the tools and resources available to help age-ins learn how all aspects of Medicare coverage work. This includes descriptions of Parts A, B, C and D, as well as enrollment periods and penalties for missing these windows. Providing objective, helpful information about Original Medicare, private insurer Medicare plan types and the entire enrollment process can be one of the most valuable strategies you can employ to connect and build relationships with age-ins.

2 KNOW THAT CHOOSING A MEDICARE PLAN IS NOT AN EASY DECISION.

After making the decision that private insurance is better than Original Medicare, age-ins need to choose a private carrier and a plan in that carrier's portfolio. All these decisions have a significant impact on well-being and finances, and the decision-making process is loaded with that underlying pressure. With these dynamics in mind, it's easy to understand why so many are anxious about making the right choice. They will research online and talk among friends and family, and more than half will read every direct mail piece.² Make sure you provide information that will help a shopper feel that by choosing your plan, they are also making a good choice that offers security and peace of mind.

1. AARP, Politifact.com, Elder Care Development, LLC.
2. Deft Research, 2015 Senior Shopping and Switching

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DO YOUR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT HOMEWORK.

Premiums and co-payments tend to be the primary drivers for most shoppers.² Conducting competitor analyses to ensure your plans offer competitive price points is extremely important. It is also valuable to confirm what the current drivers are in your specific markets by plan type (for example, Medicare Advantage, Stand-alone PDP, Medicare Supplement, etc.). Pricing will always be near the top, but knowing which other plan features and benefits are hot buttons is vital as well. Examples of this include provider network size, drug coverage and wellness coverage, as well as dental, vision and chiropractor benefits. The perceived value of these plan features, whether baked into the plan or offered as optional supplements, will change between markets—even within the same state. The more comprehensive your research and analysis, the better prepared you will be to create plan products that stand out and capture the interest of prospective members.

MAKE YOUR MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS CLEAR AND ENGAGING.

This is easier said than done. With tiers, exclusions, medical terms, mandated language, legal disclaimers, etc., insurance content can be complicated. To rise above this clutter, make your primary communications simple, to the point and meaningful. Benefit-driven language is a must for increasing engagement. Related and equally important is the research mentioned in Tip #3. It will help determine what the drivers are for those in your target audience. Make sure to prioritize these in your communications so the most important items are addressed first. These same prioritized communications should then be consistently rolled out across all marketing channels for optimal response.

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ENHANCE THE EASE OF COMPARING PLAN BENEFITS.

Age-ins will want to understand what your plans have to offer. Make it easy for them to visually compare your plans' various coverage options so they understand what the value and cost is for each. Also, make clear how your coverage compares to what they would receive with Original Medicare. Ideally your assets will include online plan comparison and provider look-up tools, as well as printed pieces that neatly categorize the main benefits and options side by side. Tips #3 and #4 are also relevant here: they will help ensure you highlight and compare popular features that can give you a competitive edge.

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2. Deft Research, 2015 Senior Shopping and Switching

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START YOUR AGE-IN MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS EARLY.

Approximately 50% of seniors will start researching Medicare plans at 63 years old. This peaks when they turn 64, when almost 80% are actively researching.³ Since creating relationships with shoppers is the goal, you should structure outreach programs that reach age-ins multiple times starting soon after they turn 63. There are numerous ways to do this based on the contact information you have in your database. Mail, email and cold calling are the best and most frequently used options. If you do not have a current house contact list, there are vendors who sell prospect lists with a good range of contact information, including names, home addresses, email addresses and phone numbers.



BE EVERYWHERE SENIORS ARE.

Make sure you have an integrated program that provides seniors with multiple ways to become aware of your plans. Direct mail, broadcast, online marketing, emails, posters, kiosks and social media all have their place in a successful Medicare marketing program. Also, if you are thinking your current members who are aging in will naturally pick your Medicare plans, think again. In a recent study, 65% of insured age-ins did not even know whether their current carrier offered Medicare insurance or not. Once they were told their carrier did offer Medicare insurance, only 21% said they were very likely to enroll in one of their plans and 76% said they were moderately to very likely to shop.³ So make sure your Medicare plan marketing is out there loud and clear. Finally, bear in mind that direct mail is the most effective means to acquire and retain members, providing the highest readership and response rates.^{3,4}

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BE CREATIVE WITH GRASSROOTS PROGRAMS.

Think of events you can host at senior centers or other venues that include sponsored speaking engagements, ice cream socials, Bingo night, etc. All provide an informal but effective forum to create a connection to your brand and generate sales leads. Granted, AEP is generally a more advantageous time to do this from an ROI standpoint, but establishing relationships with key senior groups should be a year-round endeavor to effectively build trust and an affinity for your brand among prospects.

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MAKE IT EASY FOR SENIORS TO RESPOND AND GET THEIR QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

Seniors will respond in different ways at different points in their consumer journeys, such as when they are prospects as opposed to when they are enrollees. Make sure you provide relevant support options all along the way. At any point in the process, a senior should be able to request assistance and/or directly connect with someone in person or by phone, website, mail or email. It will also be important to have someone available to assist them during the enrollment process itself. This helps ensure that questions are answered in real time, reducing incomplete forms and missed enrollment opportunities.

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BE 100% COMPLIANT!

Check the CMS Medicare Marketing Guidelines or with a Medicare Compliance legal SME to ensure your materials, events and all other aspects of your Medicare marketing programs are compliant. There are numerous requirements related to language, such as:

- claims
- disclaimers
- location of marketing
- levels of incentives
- types of food at events
- distinctions between sales vs. educational events
- customer service hours
- TTY numbers
- and more

Even if age-ins love what you are saying, being out of compliance can lead to serious sanctions that could mean suspension of the right to market your plans. So always make compliance a top priority.

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Call 818-703-8775 or email russell@kernagency.com to schedule an appointment and learn more about how KERN can help you increase age-in enrollments.