



Early Reflections on Post-2012 AEP

While in some ways we are all still sorting through the full impact of the revised AEP calendar, we now know that it brought a new rhythm to the 2012 sales season. According to a recent survey by [Extend Health](#), 43 percent of members reevaluated their coverage during AEP, and roughly 20 percent changed plans. Even if members were satisfied with their coverage, the changing landscape brought new, unique challenges from a contact center perspective.

Did you not close as many early sales as you planned for at the earlier start? Did you experience some white-knuckle moments towards the December 7, 2011 deadline, waiting to see what members would do last minute? If you answered yes to either of these two questions, you are not alone.

When calendar changes impact the sales cycle, you need a contact center partner that can deliver the following:

Scalability

A contact center that delivers a customized approach ensures that high service levels are maintained during unpredictable call volume periods, such as those seen during AEP. Drawing on past experience and superior workforce management, your contact center should be able to ramp up quickly to cover large variations between projected and actual call volumes and continue to deliver the highest quality call interactions.

Call Trending / Retention

The ability to trend new call arrival patterns and flag potential issues can impact the churn you see with your membership. In the early stages of AEP, the contact center should be able to trend member call outcomes and identify issues impacting their decision to stay or leave a plan, enabling you to quickly address them and work to retain members. It's a proven fact that the cost of acquiring a new customer is five times greater than keeping an existing one. During the AEP sales cycle, you need a contact center that can effectively handle calls from members who are reevaluating their coverage or 'holding off' on their applications, to help you defer these potential high costs.

Exceptional Call Quality

Meeting customer needs is critical, but improving member service is one of the least expensive and most effective means to improve margins, growth and retention. A high quality contact center should deliver a high level of accuracy and professionalism, while providing superior service in all areas related to member communication. Your contact center should not only understand how plan members shop for coverage, but also effectively explain premium increases, co-pays, drug coverage and deductibles from year to year. The partner should always convey the additional benefits and value.

A contact center that is experienced, scalable and brings best practices in the Medicare space can be a valuable partner throughout the year. By aligning with the right contact center partner, you can achieve happier plan members and better AEP results.

To learn how DialAmerica can help your business, contact our solution specialists at 800-913-3331

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