



Staying Ahead of the Curve:

Boosting Your CMS Star Rating in 2012

According to CMS, the average Star Rating for Medicare Advantage plans is 3.32 stars, up from 3.27 stars. For many Managed Care plans, this slight increase still leaves plenty of room for improvement.

Enhancing your Star Rating also means keeping in mind that the measuring system continues to evolve and it is important to make quality improvements in your communications strategies to reflect these changes. Among the changes, CMS increased the complexity of the Star Rating from the original 33 star measures to more than 50.

According to a [survey](#) of Medicare Advantage plan members conducted by the American Research & Policy Institute, of those members aware of Star Ratings, 91 percent said Star Ratings given to Medicare Advantage plans were important.

Bottom line, a higher Star Rating is a critical indicator of member enrollment, retention and overall satisfaction.

Ensuring quality communications at every touch point is a surefire way to deliver an exceptional experience to plan members and boost your rating well above the national average, even achieving five stars. In planning your member communications strategies for 2012 as they relate to your Star Rating, consider the following:

- Do you deliver a highly personalized experience to your members at every touch point?
- Do you measure every touch point with your members across all domains, so that you can effectively identify areas that need improvement?
- Are your members happy and could they be happier with their plan?

Every communication with a member should be personalized to address a specific need. A plan that utilizes a contact center that can deliver an integrated, multi-angle approach across all domains and diligently report measureable data can significantly bolster its Star Rating. This includes proactively reaching out to health plan members to schedule chronic care and routine screenings, vaccines, and tests encouraging preventive and chronic disease management. Conducting proactive outreach to high-risk members adds an additional layer of contact to ensure that preventive care is reached.

A highly effective communications strategy also includes identifying potential problems before they occur and being proactive in finding out if a member is unhappy with a plan before they migrate during open enrollment. Enhancing the communications experience for a member also means having a contact center agent with access to a member's full history, who uses the information to engage in a real dialogue rather than a scripted one.

While the CMS Five Star Rating System will continue to evolve, at its core, the evaluation process remains focused on having happy members. The happier the members, the higher the Plan's Star Rating.

Being flexible and continuing to make quality improvements, while delivering a highly personalized experience at each touch point, will drive member satisfaction and keep you ahead of the curve.