

A photograph of three people in a professional setting. On the left, a man in a dark suit and light blue shirt is smiling and looking at a laptop. In the center, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a striped shirt and a beige cardigan, is also smiling and looking at the laptop. On the right, an older man with glasses and a white polo shirt is looking down at the laptop. The laptop is open on a desk, and there are some papers with tables on it. The background shows a window with curtains and some greenery outside.

OEP

An Agent's Guide



AEP is over...now what?

Once the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) has ended, agents and brokers should be getting ready for the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period (OEP).

In 2019, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) replaced the Medicare Advantage Disenrollment Period (MA-PD) by reinstating the OEP. As an agent or broker, it's up to you to know the guidelines for OEP so you can provide the best help to your clients (and stay compliant while you're doing it.)



OEP FAQ

Before we dive into the details, let's answer some common questions agents have about the Open Enrollment Period:

Q: What is the OEP?

A: The Open Enrollment Period is one of several enrollment periods that occur every year, providing an opportunity for Medicare Advantage enrollees to make a change to their existing plan. This can benefit any enrollees who are unsatisfied with their plan, network, or copay costs.

Q: How long does the OEP last?

A: The Open Enrollment Period runs from January 1st to March 31st.

Q: Who qualifies to use the OEP?

A: This enrollment period can be used by beneficiaries who are already enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan as of January 1st. Newly eligible beneficiaries who enroll in an MA plan during their Initial Enrollment Period (IEP) have a separate OEP for 3 months following their plan's effective date.

Q: What can the OEP be used for?

A: Beneficiaries who qualify for the Open Enrollment Period can use it to make one of these one-time changes:

- Switch between MA or MAPD plans
- Switch from an MA plan to an MAPD plan
- Drop an MA or MAPD plan and return to Original Medicare

Q: What can it *not* be used for?

A: Certain changes cannot be made during the Open Enrollment Period, including:

- Switch from Original Medicare to an MA or an MAPD Plan
- Join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan if already enrolled in Original Medicare.
- Drop an MA or MAPD plan and return to Original Medicare

OEP Compliance Guide

During the OEP, agents and plan sponsors are not allowed to “knowingly target or send unsolicited marketing materials to any MA or Part D enrollee during the OEP,” which can make marketing tricky. Here are some “Do’s and Don’ts” to help you stay compliant during OEP.

DO:

- Send marketing materials to a client who has made a proactive request.
- Hold a one-on-one meeting at the client’s direct request.
- Market to beneficiaries who are aging in (who have not yet made an enrollment decision.)
- Market to dual-eligible and LIS beneficiaries, many of whom may make changes once per quarter during the first nine months of the year.
- Provide information for the OEP on your agency website.

DON’T:

- Send unsolicited materials referencing the OEP or advertising the ability or opportunity to make an enrollment change.
- Call or contact former enrollees who have selected a new plan during the Annual Enrollment Period (AEP)
- Market or promote agent or agency activities that intend to target the OEP as an opportunity to sell more plans.
- Target beneficiaries who made a choice during the AEP by purchase of mailing list or other identification.

Compliant Conversations

Since you can’t market directly about the OEP, one of the best ways for agents to take advantage of this time is to look to your existing clients. When checking up with your current MA customers, they may express dissatisfaction with their current plan or network. Once they have asked about changing their plan, you are permitted to explain their options. Below are some examples of compliant responses:

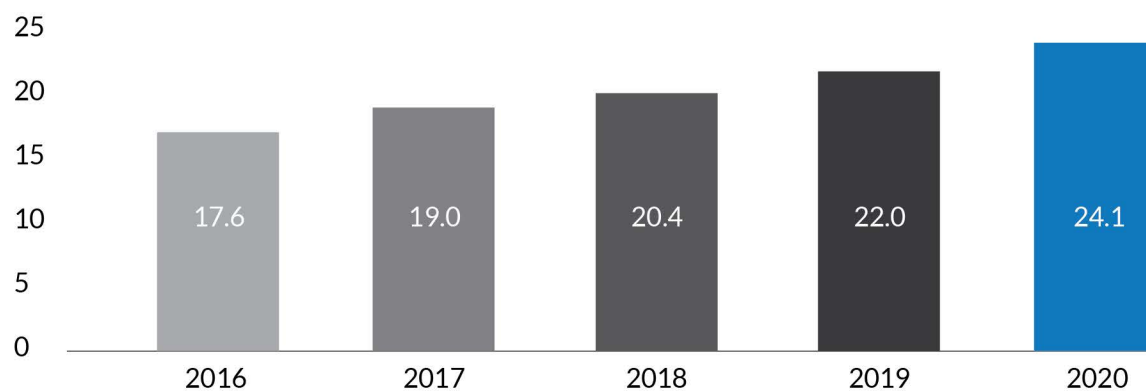
SITUATION	YOUR RESPONSE
On a follow-up call, a client mentions they are not satisfied with their plan.	“I’m sorry to hear that! Can I ask you about a few questions to determine if you qualify for a special enrollment period?”
You have set up a table at an event or retailer after AEP ends, and someone asks about their enrollment options	“Actually AEP ended on Dec. 7 but you may qualify for a special enrollment period. I can send you additional materials or set up a meeting if you would like.

OEP Trends & Insights

The most effective salespeople in any industry rely on data to make predictions and plan for the coming challenges. Fortunately, the data in the Medicare Advantage space has been trending steadily upward, and shows encouraging signs of even more growth in the next year.

- Medicare Advantage enrollments grew at a 50% higher rate in February 2020 in comparison to February 2019. All plan types have seen growth, with Local Preferred Provider Organizations showing the highest growth rates.

Total Medicare Advantage Enrollment (in millions)

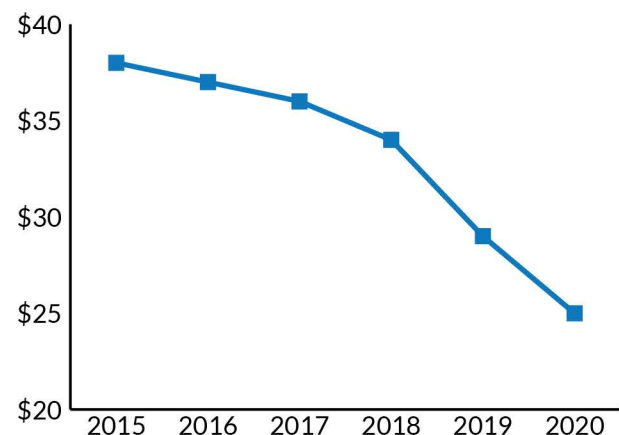


- Expanded MA Plan Benefit Packages (PBPs) across the industry are set to provide lower average monthly premiums and more benefits for beneficiaries. Average premiums for MAPD plans are also trending downward from previous years.

2021 Plan Benefit Package (PBP) Growth

	All Plan PBPs	New Entrant PBPs	Existing PBPs
Avg Monthly Premium	\$38	\$9	\$42
Meal Plan Benefit	60%	61%	53%
OTC Benefit	29%	36%	28%
Transportation Benefit	77%	88%	75%

Average MAPD Plan Monthly Premiums



Partnering with an FMO



What can an FMO do for your OEP?

With all the federal regulations governing the OEP and Medicare in general, it can be hard for agents to focus on what they do best: sales. It may be best to partner with a team who can handle the red tape and compliance concerns, so you can give your clients the time and attention they deserve.

Partnering with a field marketing organization, or FMO, could be a crucial part of your strategy for the OEP. These organizations can provide all the back office support you need with services such as:

- **Marketing Support**
- **Compliance & Sales Training**
- **Lead Generation**
- **Contracting and Licensing**
- **Quoting Engine or Broker Portal**
- **Supplies**
- **...and more!**

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