



Rules for Hosting a Compliant Medicare Sales Event

Thinking about holding a marketing event to grab the attention of Medicare leads? Make sure you're following CMS' rules for hosting your sales event!

Establishing Your Event

First and foremost, you must determine which type of marketing event you'd like to hold. There are two types of sales events: formal and informal. Here's what sets them apart:

- **Formal Sales Events:** The agent presents plan-specific information to an audience invited to the occasion.
- **Informal Sales Events:** Agent offers plan info upon request only while at a table, booth, kiosk, etc.

After you do that, you should decide on the when and where. **You must register sales events with the proper parties and hold them in a public setting where individuals do not receive health care services.**

Note, you may carry out sales activities in common areas of health care settings, including common entryways, vestibules, waiting rooms, hospital or nursing home cafeterias, and community, recreational, or conference rooms. **You may NOT carry out sales activities in exam or hospital patient rooms, treatment areas where patients interact with their provider or provider's team, and pharmacy counter areas where patients interact with pharmacy providers and obtain medications.** Avoid sales activities at health fairs or expos where health screening is being provided to avoid the risk of being perceived as engaging in "cherry-picking".

To meet these fundamental requirements, be sure to schedule your event far enough in advance to reserve a suitable space and let everyone know about it.

Registering Your Event

Do you need to register for sales events? Exact reporting deadlines and requirements vary from carrier to carrier, but carriers are responsible for maintaining accurate records of all their agents' educational events and informal and formal sales events. The earlier you submit your events to carriers, the sooner you'll be able to start advertising them.

Getting to know all your carriers' reporting requirements is important. Not registering an event in time with one of them will force you to reschedule it. Furthermore, if you fail to register an event with a carrier, you could lose out on sales commission and have your contract revoked.

Note: Any event not advertised as “educational” can be viewed as a marketing event and should be registered as one.

Marketing Medicare Sales Events

While just putting out a flyer with your sales seminar or workshop’s information on it seems nice, it’s unacceptable. You must adhere to certain regulations for marketing your sales event.

When creating ads or invites, **you cannot require potential attendees to provide contact information to RSVP for the event.** While you may plan to educate attendees on Medicare programs during your presentation, you cannot say your event is “educational.” You should disclose the products you plan on reviewing.

You can promote your gathering online, via direct mailers and flyers, or through other forms of media. However, if you cancel the event at least two days in advance, it’s a good practice to notify potential attendees via the same advertising channels you used to promote the event.

Giving Your Presentation

Sales events allow agents to try to direct potential enrollees or current members toward a plan or set of plans. Many marketing and lead-generating activities are allowed, but there are rules regarding the information you can collect. See what you can and cannot do at sales events below.

Sales Event Do’s and Don’ts

Do’s:

- Let beneficiaries approach you first at informal events.
- Use sign-in sheets that clearly indicate providing contact information is optional
- Name all products and plan types you’ll cover before starting
- Use only carrier - and CMS-approved presentations and talking points
- Distribute giveaways with your contact information on it
- Give away promotional items that include plan name, logo, toll-free number, and/or carrier website
- Provide refreshments or light snacks (e.g., coffee, soda, fruit, crackers)
- Hand out objective educational materials on Medicare Advantage, Part D, and other Medicare programs
- Distribute Start Ratings information, Summary of Benefits, Pre-Enrollment Checklist, and the Multi-Language insert with any enrollment form
- Collect lead cards and business reply cards
- Collect enrollment applications
- Freely give out your business card to any attendee
- Arrange follow-up appointments

- Call attendees who attended a sales event if they gave express permission at the event for a follow-up call (you must have documented permission to contact)
-

Don'ts:

- Offer health screenings or similar activities that could seem like, or be used for, “cherry-picking”
- Require attendees to use a sign-in sheet
- Compare one carrier’s plan to other carriers’ plan by name without getting written consent from all carriers involved in the comparison or without having studies or statistical data to back up comparisons (Comparisons must be factually based and can’t be misleading)
- Discuss or cross-sell non-health care related products (e.g., annuities, life insurance)
- Use absolute or qualified superlatives
- Use the contact information provided by attendees for raffles or drawings for any other purpose
- Give away cash or other monetary rebates
- Offer or subsidize meals or a combination of foods and beverages that could make it seem like you’re offering meals
- Require attendees to fill out a Scope of Appointment form or enrollment forms
- Collect enrollment application unless the enroll has a valid election

Cancellations

Not everything goes as planned. Sometimes you may have to cancel your sales event. While the MCMG doesn’t require you to submit sales event cancellations in HPMS, you should follow the best practices below and any policies set forth by your carriers.

Best Practices for Canceling a Sales Event

If you cancel the event within 48 hours of its originally scheduled date and time for any reason (including zero attendance) you should...

- Submit the event cancellation to all carriers involved or your upline
- Let the venue know
- Be present, or have a plan representative present, on-site at the original start time to let potential attendees know about the cancellation and provide them with plan information (unless the cancellation is due to inclement weather)
- Remain, or have the plan representative remain, on-site at least 15 minutes after the original start time

If you cancel the event at least 48 hours in advance of its originally scheduled date and time...

- Submit the event cancellation to all carriers involved or your upline
- Let the venue know
- Tell potential attendees about the canceled event the same way you let them know about it (if you cannot, you must provide proof substantiating that to all carriers involved)

The Importance of Staying Compliant

All those reasons we previously covered on why it's important to stay compliant when holding a Medicare educational event? They fit here as well.

Don't forget, during your event, you may unknowingly speak with a secret shopper. By treating all attendees with respect and following the rules, you can ensure a secret shopper will only have good things to report.

Conducting a compliant Medicare sales event can seem intimidating, however, you shouldn't let that stop you from adding them to your list of strategies to grow your insurance business. Remember, we're always here to help with any questions, so you have nothing to fear.

Looking to partner with **SENIOR MARKET** **ADVISORS?**

Not partnered with SMA? Visit the Contact page on our website at www.seniormarketadvisors.com/contact to get in touch and find out what else we can do for you!

Our team can give you all the details you need and get you started **selling with SMA!**

Already part of the SMA Family?

You have access to a **TON** of awesome training opportunities! Contact your account manager to find out more!

