



# Medicare Advantage

Market Explorer

# What is a Market Explorer?

OWL Research Partner's Market Explorer methodology explores the market factors at play in an industry – including market dynamics, financial outlook, key competitors, target audiences and influence landscape.

The following sample report evaluates the market forces impacting the Medicare Advantage category, a type of health insurance plan that offers Medicare benefits through a private insurer.

# Guiding Research Questions

**Market Dynamics:** What market dynamics or market factors could be impacting the growth and perceptions of brands within the Medicare Advantage market?

**Market Description:** How is the Medicare Advantage market described in traditional and/or social media conversations?

**Market Outlook:** What is the current state of the Medicare Advantage market and how is it expected to grow and change in coming years?

**Market Players:** Who are the major Medicare Advantage market players and how are they differentiated or described in discussions?

**Target Audiences:** What key audiences do key Medicare Advantage players appear to target, if any?

**Market Influencers:** What type of influencers have an impact on the Medicare Advantage market?

**Media Outlets:** What traditional media outlets are most likely to cover the Medicare Advantage market and in what context?

**Social Media:** What role does social media play in the Medicare Advantage market, and how do the major players use it to increase awareness?



# Market Dynamics

What market dynamics or market factors could be impacting the growth and perceptions of brands within the Medicare Advantage market?

# The Medicare Advantage Story

Despite rising enrollment, many Medicare Advantage customers are confused and disengaged, frustrated by the complex process and the perception that most plans are nearly identical. Insurer brands struggle to differentiate, focusing too closely on costs and provider networks rather than connecting to customer experience or expectations.

Overall, this dynamic creates a market that is vulnerable to disruption, especially from new entrants and offerings that are taking a more consumer-centric approach.

Brands have the potential to rise above the fray by promoting brand-agnostic education specific to Medicare Advantage as a category, aligning plans and messaging to lifestyles rather than price points, simplifying or streamlining choices and creating a brand experience that is simple, modern and savvy.

# Market Dynamics

- **Sustained Enrollment Growth.** The trend of rapid growth in the Medicare Advantage (MA) program shows no signs of slowing in 2021. The aging and increasing life expectancy of the Baby Boomer generation will create further market opportunity, with aggressive estimates suggesting that the share of beneficiaries enrolled in MA plans will rise to 70% between 2030 and 2040, compared to roughly 40% in 2020
- **Expanding Number of Plans.** For 2021, the average Medicare beneficiary has access to 33 Medicare Advantage plans, the largest number of options available in the last decade. With a total of 3,550 Medicare Advantage plans available nationwide for individual enrollment in 2021 – a 13 percent increase from 2020 – beneficiaries can choose from the largest number of plans ever available, but this also has the potential to add to existing confusion and decision paralysis
- **Urban vs Rural Discrepancies.** On average, beneficiaries in urban areas can choose from about twice as many Medicare Advantage plans as beneficiaries in non-metropolitan areas. In 221 counties, Medicare beneficiaries can choose from more than 40 Medicare Advantage plans, including 16 counties with more than 60 plans in 2021. In contrast, in 109 counties, most of which are rural counties, only one firm will offer Medicare Advantage plans in 2021
- **Highly Concentrated Market.** Even with the significant and growing number of plan choices, Medicare Advantage enrollment is highly concentrated among a small number of firms. The top ten companies collectively provide coverage for 75.5% of the market. UnitedHealthcare and Humana together accounted for 44% of all Medicare Advantage enrollees nationwide, and the BCBS affiliates (including Anthem BCBS plans) accounted for another 15 percent of enrollment in 2019
- **Ongoing Market Evolution.** With 14 insurers entering the market for the first time in 2021, new entrants and evolving service models suggest that incumbent Medicare Advantage vendors must be prepared for a changing competitive landscape. Most of the latest entrants are focused on Special Needs Programs (SNPs), which provide benefits to people with certain diseases or dual eligibility status, but some are coming from the tried-and-true tech startup world and have their eyes set on market disruption
- **Regulatory Uncertainties.** Results of the 2020 presidential election will introduce regulatory changes that could impact Medicare Advantage enrollment. President-elect Biden's plan to lower the eligibility age to 60, efforts to bring 'Medicare for All' closer to reality and the CMS's Primary Cares Initiative will be closely watched by Medicare Advantage carriers.



# Market Factors

- **Market Description.** Although a portion of media coverage predictably aims to offer education and advice for seniors regarding considerations for plan selection, the Medicare market-at-large is often described within a broader context of a market in motion thanks to new plan options, shifting government policies and emerging players. Brands are challenged to stay attuned to broader market shifts while also contributing to plan selection tools and enrollment advice
- **Market Outlook.** Amid a very favorable growth outlook, the Medicare market is facing a crisis of indifference – once enrolled, fewer and fewer beneficiaries have the motivation or mental capacity to wade through the glut of plans. When trying to secure a market advantage, insurers are increasingly challenged to not rely on the assumption that seniors will proactively and painstakingly shop for plans
- **Market Players.** Confused and overwhelmed, seniors are seeking simplicity in a Medicare Advantage plan, while most brand messaging efforts focus on the wide variety of options available to customers. This disconnect could be fueling customer paralysis and unwillingness to comparison shop. Brands that differentiate with clarity and ties to customer lifestyles are best positioned to gain new enrollees
- **Target Audiences.** From Age-ins to current Medicare Advantage and Original Medicare enrollees, all audiences struggle with confusion and decision-paralysis when it comes to plan selection. But these audiences may also have varying expectations, as highlighted by a growing “savvy senior” segment that has fully embraced the Amazon and Apple’s Genius Bar consumer experience. Brands that acknowledge this reality and tailor the selection process and experience accordingly may increase enrollment
- **Market Influencers.** The complexity of the Medicare Advantage market is reflected in the unique profile of market influencers, with a government-managed star rating system being one of the most influential sources. Celebrities, which are often appreciated by the Baby Boomer generation, seem to wield mixed results in Medicare-related endorsements so brands should approach with caution
- **Media Outlets.** Because the Medicare Advantage conversation is so focused on public policy, regulatory changes or general advice on choosing between original Medicare and Medicare Advantage, opportunities for brands to stand out or differentiate are limited
- **Social Media.** Currently social media is primarily used as a platform for sharing personal stories, advice and education opportunities specific to Medicare Advantage. But as more social media proficient seniors age into Medicare, brands may also find value in increasing their presence on these channels

# Market in Motion

The Medicare Advantage market is on the move. A complex competitive dynamic, rising customer expectations and changing regulatory landscape is forcing market players to reimagine the future

## Current State

- Growing enrollment
- Highly concentrated markets
- Expanding number of plans
- Indifferent customers

## Near Term Pressures

- Emerging disruptors
- New types of plans
- Changing audiences
- Regulatory uncertainty

## Future Transformation

- What will Medicare look like in the future?
- What role will Medicare Advantage play in a new healthcare landscape?





# Market Description

How is the Medicare Advantage market described in traditional and/or social media conversations?

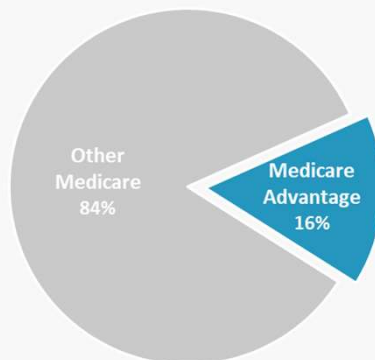
# Market Description

- The largest share of media discussions of the Medicare Advantage market describe developments related to health policy and market projections. Even within coverage more specifically relevant to current or new beneficiaries, conversations often hinge on regulatory changes, company news and financials. COVID-19 also contributed significantly in 2020, mostly in the form of questions about Medicare coverage for testing or access to benefits such as telehealth. This broader focus leaves few opportunities for MA brands to make the case about their offerings to seniors
- When enrollment advice is the focus, the content is suggestive of a low level of education about Medicare options, offering rudimentary advice on the process for signing up, the difference between original Medicare and Medicare Advantage, and recommendations for how to choose a plan. Only a fraction of these articles mention specific brands or offer specific recommendations
- Meanwhile, brand reviews and statements rarely align to the advice given to seniors on how to consider and select a Medicare Advantage plan. Most brands highlight core offerings such as costs, coverage areas (prescriptions, dental, vision, hearing) and provider networks, but these features show little evidence of differentiation, as most available plans are often very similar. Meanwhile, areas where brands could stand out – matching to customer needs, creating a positive customer experience or quality ratings – are rarely mentioned or could be even an afterthought. This disconnect creates a market that is ripe for both disruption from a product perspective and an information or marketing perspective
- **To cut through the noise, brands can focus on customer considerations beyond core offerings**

# Media Conversation

The Medicare conversation is extensive, but brands have only minimal opportunity to engage

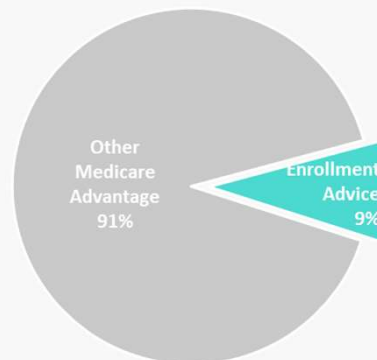
## Medicare



8,967 articles

Medicare Advantage is only a fraction of the overall Medicare conversation, which is often driven by health policy discussions

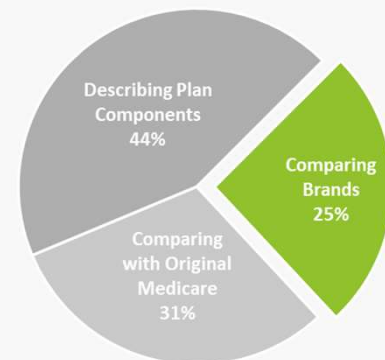
## Medicare Advantage



1,400 articles

Enrollment advice is commonly an afterthought, overshadowed by regulatory and company financial news and primarily appearing in local news outlets

## Enrollment Advice



102 articles

Targeting an uninformed audience, enrollment advice is typically focused on high level Medicare decisions, only occasionally comparing brands

# Customer Considerations

Media generally advise potential Medicare Advantage customers to evaluate one or more of eleven different considerations before making a purchasing decision

## Core Offerings

Mentioned in 90% of enrollment advice articles

## Customer Needs

30% of enrollment advice

## Expert Opinions

14% of enrollment advice

## Brand Experience

10% of enrollment advice

**Plan Composition/Coverage.** What is included and covered, including dental, vision, prescriptions, etc.

**Provider Network.** Capacity to maintain access to current primary care physician and/or specialists.

**Costs.** Affordability of premium costs, deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses, as well as predictability of overall costs.

**Supplemental Benefits.** Accessibility to extras such as fitness plans, meals delivery and transportation to medical appointments.

**Care Coordination.** Potential for managed or integrated care, both in terms of medical services/specialties and plan administration.

### Footprint/Travel Flex.

Ability to receive covered care in variety of geographies.

**Health Status.** Availability of specialized plans tailored to specific chronic health conditions.

**CMS Star Ratings.** Insurer rating based on an objective and standard measure of plan quality and customer experience.

**Reviews/Rankings.** Third party explanation and validation of plans via reviews, rankings, and other forms of recognition.

**Communication & Outreach.** Relevant communications and outreach offer clear plan information and support easy sign-up.

**Brand Familiarity.** General preference for well-known insurance brands based on quality and reliability assumptions or past experiences.



# Market Outlook

What is the current state of the Medicare Advantage market and how is it expected to grow and change in coming years?

# State of the Market

- Driven by the aging of the Baby Boomers, the Medicare Advantage market will likely sustain significant growth for the foreseeable future as the number of Americans over age 65 is projected to double to 95 million by 2060
- Enrollment is increasing across all contiguous states. However, states with the largest share of seniors – Florida, Texas, California, Michigan, and New York – are home to the most crowded markets and are experiencing the most significant enrollment gains
- As the healthcare market shifts away from a traditional Fee-For-Service approach that favored volume-based care, the future balance of Medicare enrollees is expected to dramatically lean toward the value-based model of Medicare Advantage
- Given the greater attention being paid to value, players are increasingly touting value-added increases – including supplementary and specialty benefit offerings – in combination with lower premiums to attract more enrollees to their Medicare Advantage plans
- Amid a highly concentrated market, new players face significant barriers to entry. But if venture capital and private equity investor attention is any indication, market disruption could be looming. Health payer startups – like Bright Health, Clover and Oscar Health – have already expanded into Medicare Advantage, and appear to differentiate based on tech enabled features and consumer friendly marketing
- Even with a favorable growth outlook, the Medicare market continues to face challenges in engaging enrollees. One in three Medicare beneficiaries report difficulty understanding the program, which translates to less comparison shopping or consideration of alternate plans that might serve their situation better
- **Category growth will benefit all players, but brands must address the ongoing sense of confusion and resulting lack of consumer engagement to secure predictable market share and position against potential disruptors**

# The Medicare Market Challenge

The process of enrolling in Medicare – either Original or Advantage – is onerous and lacks a real sense of accomplishment or affirmation of choice at any point. This reality leaves little room for insurers to create brand affinity or loyalty and instead potentially opens the door to market disruptors

Shopping for health insurance can be new for those who have not used a marketplace before - enrollees must keep track of important dates, penalties, decision points, information resources

The process may be over for now, but frequent plan changes as well as lifestyle or health changes with age necessitate comparison shopping each year





# Market Disruption

With only a small foothold currently, the ongoing complexity and confusion surrounding Medicare creates space for market disruption from startups that are primarily targeting the customer engagement and experience angle

## Clover Health

Clover Health – a San Francisco-based insurer that provides high-tech, benefit-rich Medicare Advantage plans to mostly rural or underserved areas – recently announced that it was partnering with Walmart to offer Medicare Advantage plans in eight counties in Georgia. Clover touted this partnership as highlighting the promise of both brands in terms of offering the best value at the lowest price. Clover is in the process of being acquired by a “blank check company” led by billionaire Chamath Palihapitiya – the money will fuel continued growth and profitability

## Devoted Health

Touted as a “next-generation Medicare Advantage plan,” Devoted was co-founded by former US CTO Todd Park and his brother Ed Park, former athenahealth CTO and COO. In what they describe as a “Disney-level” of service, Devoted offers members an individual representative to guide them through the complexities of the Medicare system and delivers tech-enabled care services to the home, including clinician house-calls for patients who are sickest and most at risk. The company’s ultimate mission is to give Medicare members “the kind of care that we all would want for our own family”

## Bright Health

A venture-backed health insurance startup, Bright Health raised another \$500 million in September 2020 to expand its Medicare Advantage offerings into new markets. The company, which was co-founded in 2015 by former UnitedHealthcare CEO Bob Sheehy, offers individual market plans and Medicare Advantage plans. It uses a technology-driven narrow-network model that involves partnering closely with one health system in each local market to deliver a “more personalized, affordable and convenient end-to-end health care experience for consumers”

## Trusty.Care

A platform developed for Medicare producers, insurance FMOS and financial professionals, Trusty.Care launched in early 2018, aiming to increase the efficiency of the Medicare experience from signup to system navigation with a suite of highly personalized benefits-management products. Trusty.Care has been described as the “TurboTax for Medicare,” a compelling metaphor for anyone who’s had to navigate the uncertainties of the government insurance program



# Market Players

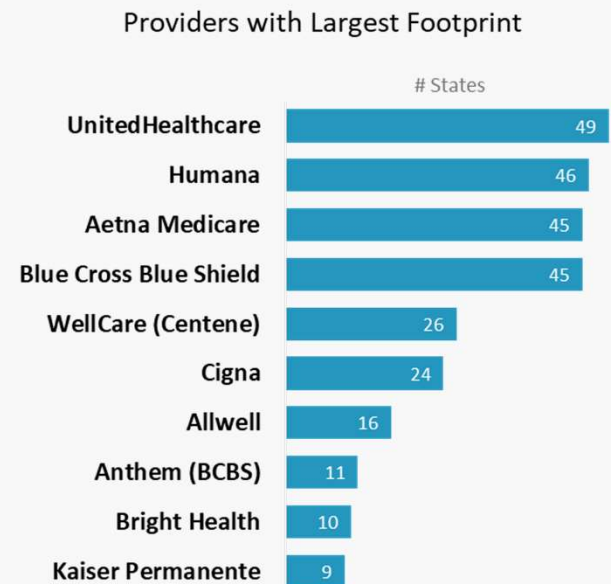
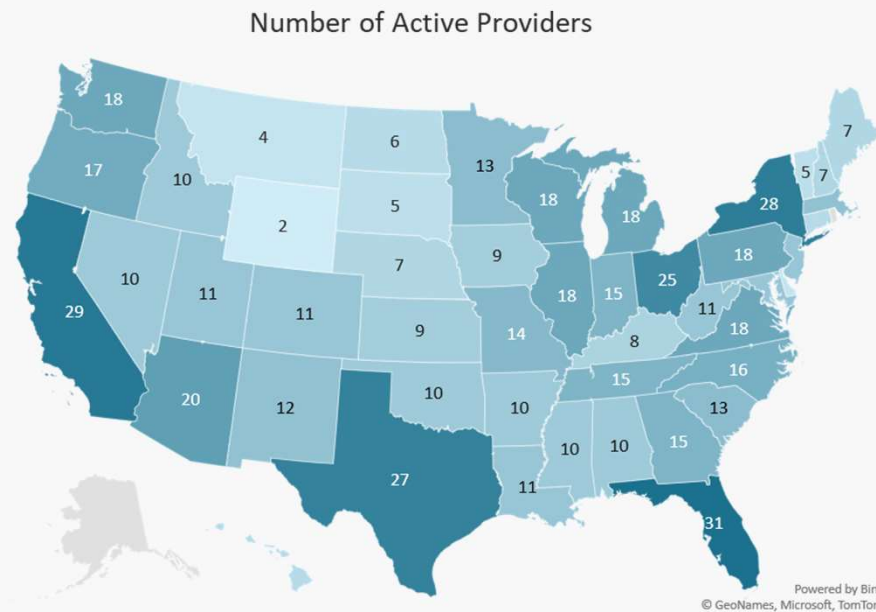
Who are the major Medicare Advantage market players and how are they differentiated or described in discussions?

# Market Players

- Over 230 different providers offered Medicare Advantage plans in 2020. Although this suggests staggering levels of competition, provider footprints tend to be highly localized and concentrated. Most plan providers (75 percent) are active in only one state, with some operating in a single metro area. Only nine insurers have a plan presence that extends to ten or more states
- While the big players continue to dominate in terms of market share and media attention, the localized nature of the Medicare Advantage market leaves room for local and aggregator providers to play a role. Additionally, growth projections have inspired some new market entrants. More than a quarter of major US health systems intend to launch a Medicare Advantage plan in the next four years. Startups are also aiming to fill gaps in the market, appealing to specific audiences or finding a foothold in less competitive local markets
- For market leaders, the growing and complex competitive landscape requires differentiation above and beyond price comparisons or Star Ratings, with insurers increasingly offering plans designed to appeal to specific lifestyles or patient populations
- Recent media coverage of the introduction of senior-focused, primary care clinics affiliated with Medicare Advantage players underscores this reality while adding another dimension to the market. One example is United Healthcare service centers within Walgreens stores
- **Top market players tend to focus too closely on core plan offerings and fail to adequately differentiate from competitors.**

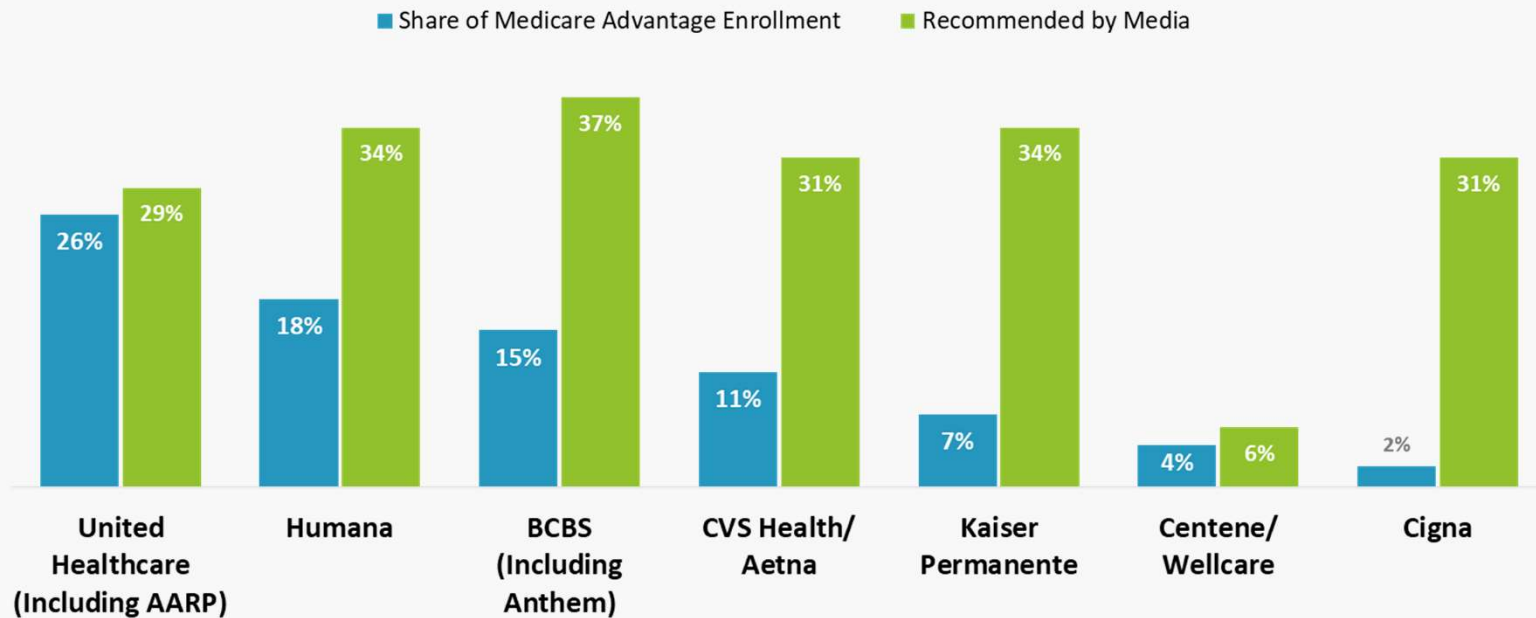
# Market Concentration

Choice of Medicare Advantage plans varies significantly by area, with both local and national players competing for customer attention



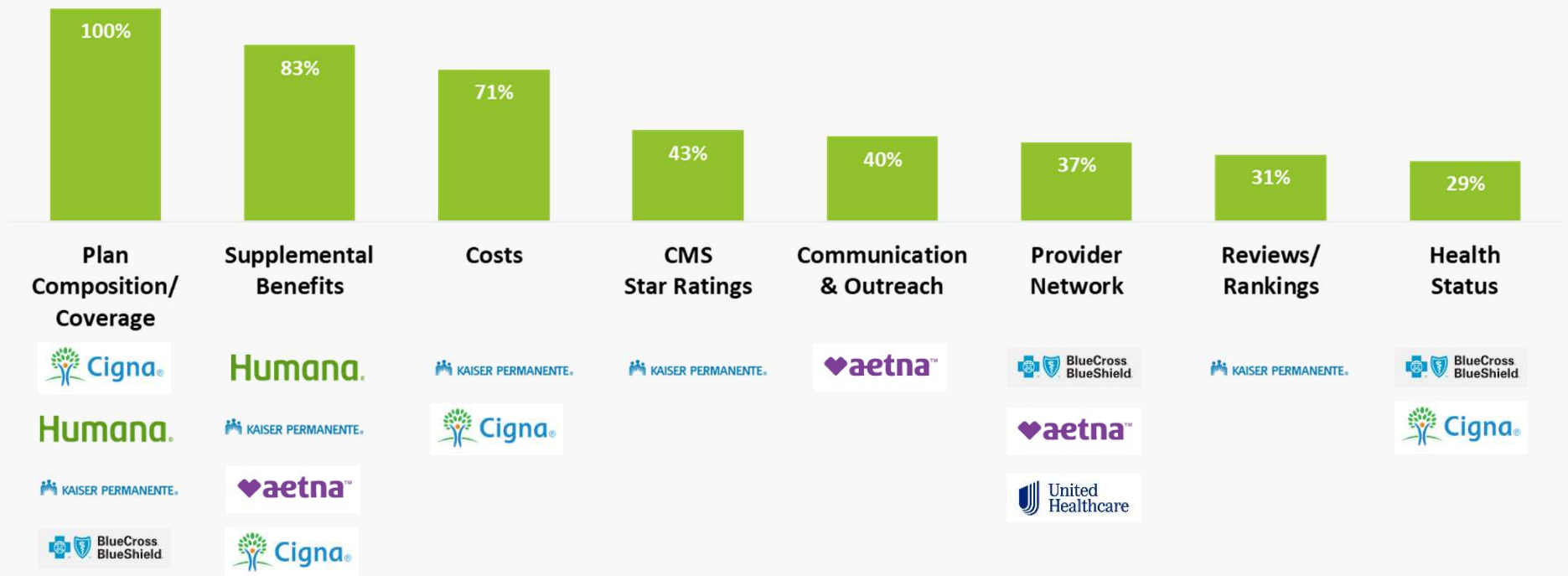
# Market Leaders

Despite varying enrollment rates, the leading Medicare Advantage brands receive similar attention in terms of share of voice in media reviews and recommendations



# Leaders by Consideration

Media reviews most frequently mention a brand's plan composition, supplemental benefits and cost as reasons to recommend, but no brands emerge as clear leaders based on these considerations



# Market Positioning

Because plans are often so similar, it is difficult for brands to stand out based on core offerings. Expert ratings, customer experience and brands that target specific customer needs offer more potential for differentiation

## Core Offerings

65 percent of reasons to recommend a brand relate to its core offering, such as cost, coverage areas, provider network and supplemental benefits



## Customer Needs

16 percent of reasons to recommend a brand relate to CMS star ratings or other rankings



## Expert Opinions

10 percent of reasons to recommend a brand connect with specific customer needs such as health status or coverage while traveling



## Brand Experience

10 percent of reasons to recommend a brand relate to the brand communication and outreach or familiarity with the brand







# Target Audiences

What key audiences do key Medicare Advantage players appear to target, if any?

# Target Audiences

- **Age-Ins.** New enrollees are among the most important audience to engage with as it relates to Medicare Advantage plans. Aging-in to Medicare means suddenly facing more health insurance options than ever before and it is critical that these soon-to-be enrollees – roughly those age 62 to 65 – receive education outreach prior to their actual eligibility
- **Current Medicare Advantage Subscribers.** Among existing Medicare Advantage enrollees, the “itch to switch” remains relatively low – with typically less than 10 percent opting for a change during open enrollment. Low switching rates could indicate that many beneficiaries find the process of comparing plans too challenging, are unaware of the open enrollment period, or have limited confidence in their ability to actually choose a better plan. When a switch is made, the number one motivation is perceived lack of value for the money, suggesting that clear, value-based comparisons of Medicare Advantage plans could appeal to this audience and increase switching consideration
- **Accidental Defaulters.** As of 2016, roughly 71 percent of new beneficiaries were covered under Original Medicare for their first year. A portion of this segment is seniors that didn’t proactively seek understanding around plan benefit options and simply defaulted into Original Medicare. Based on plan composition and costs, research indicates that Medicare Advantage would be the best plan option for approximately 20% of seniors who are on Original Medicare. Because this segment never made a conscious decision to remain in Original Medicare, they may respond positively to the right outreach and guidance around choosing a Medicare Advantage plan
- **Dual Eligibles.** As of 2019 there were 12.3 million individuals simultaneously eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. Roughly 44% of these individuals are currently enrolled in Medicare Advantage, suggesting there is still a sizable opportunity to capture more of this segment. But because dual eligibles often face an added level of complexity in health status as well as understanding their benefit options, this audience may favor outreach in the form of general education vs. selling a specific brand
- **Savvy Seniors.** The profile of seniors is changing – fewer are retiring at 65, and more are embracing digital and mobile communications. As a result, soon-to-be or current seniors may be more savvy about researching and selecting consumer-centric or tech-enabled plans. Facing a choice that is notoriously complex and confusing, their expectations of how Medicare Advantage providers market to them will rise. Savvy seniors can exist across each of the aforementioned audiences, but they will be an increasingly important segment to keep in mind

# Outreach Opportunities

Medicare's footprint is large and comprised of several target audiences that could offer expansion potential for Medicare Advantage players

## Current Medicare Enrollees

61 Million Americans are currently enrolled in Medicare

### Original Medicare

39 Million subscribers

11 Million

New Enrollees (Ages 65-69)

7.8 M

Accidental Defaulters

6.9 M

Dual Eligibles

### Medicare Advantage

22 Million subscribers

3.5 M

New Enrollees (2018-2020)

2.2 M

Switchers (Annual Rate)

## Additional Segments

**Age Ins.** 12 Million Americans are between the ages of 62 and 64, preparing to age-in into Medicare

**Savvy Seniors.** Younger seniors are applying their digital skills and online shopping expertise to the Medicare Advantage market

# Target Audience Priorities





























Market players can appeal to target audiences by aligning messaging with the priority considerations that are likely to be most important to each segment in their selection of a Medicare Advantage plan

	Age-Ins	Accidental Defaulters	Current MA Subscribers	Dual Eligibles	Savvy Seniors
CMS Star Ratings	●	●	●	●	●
Plan Composition/Coverage	●			●	
Care Coordination				●	
Provider Network	●			●	●
Footprint/Travel Flex	●				●
Health Status				●	
Costs	●	●	●	●	●
Supplemental Benefits	●		●		●
Communication & Outreach	●	●	●	●	●
Reviews/Rankings	●		●		●
Brand Familiarity	●				●

● = High priority to audience

# Target Audience Brand Alignment

Kaiser Permanente, AARP UnitedHealthcare, Aetna and Cigna each show high affinities for the priority considerations of target audiences

Age-Ins	Accidental Defaulters	Current MA Subscribers	Dual Eligibles	Savvy Seniors
				
				
				
				
				
				



# Market Influencers

What type of influencers have an impact on the Medicare Advantage market?

# Market Influencers

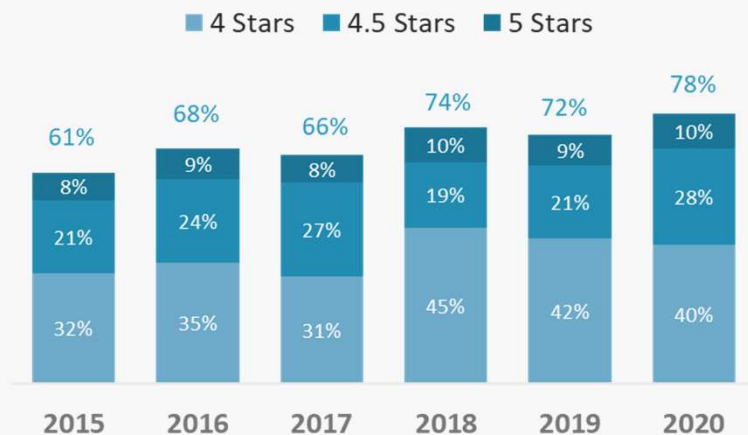
- **CMS Star Ratings.** The Star Rating System in Medicare Advantage plays a critical role in promoting quality, ensuring public accountability, and giving beneficiaries the tools to choose high-quality plans. An estimated 77 percent of Medicare beneficiaries who enroll in Medicare Advantage plans with drug coverage will be in plans with 4 or more stars in 2021
- **Third Party Advisors.** A surprising 44 percent of Medicare enrollees never visit the official government hosted Medicare site. Of the seniors that do choose to proactively shop for a plan, many turn to third party resources – including insurance agents, senior advocacy groups, online marketplaces and State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIP network) – to do much of the leg work when it comes to researching and validating the ins and outs of the various plans
- **Medical Professionals.** In addition to being highly trusted professionals, physicians and pharmacists in particular are often armed with information about Medicare Advantage plans and member benefits directly from insurers. This dynamic puts them in a position to provide word-of-mouth input to patients in terms of which plans offer which benefits, and which plan may serve their individual situation best
- **Celebrities.** From celebrity influencers like television personality Meredith Vieira (MyHealthPolicy), figure skater Dorothy Hamill (Aetna), comedian Bill Engvall (HealthMarkets) and musician Willy Chirino (Humana) to celebrity brand partnerships like UnitedHealthcare working with Warby Parker to offer the famously hipster glasses to its Medicare Advantage plans, celebrity can play a role in this market



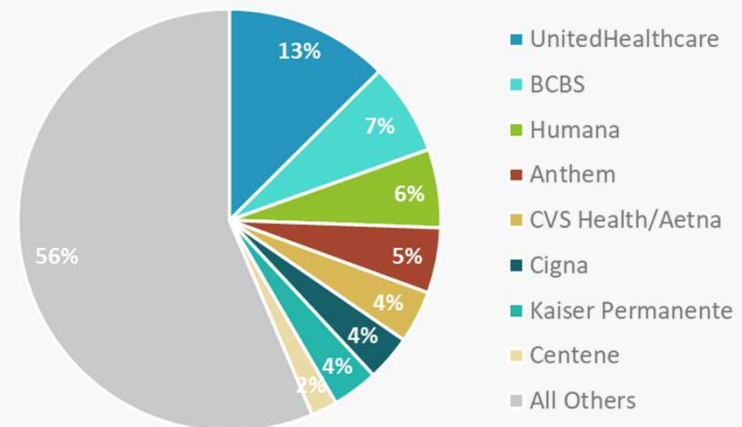
# Medicare Star Ratings

Government-issued Medicare Star Ratings are a key measure used by consumers to narrow or validate their plan choices. High performing brands benefit from greater consumer exposure as plan options are typically ranked by rating, while plans with lower star ratings are three times as likely to have members choose to leave year over year

Share of Enrollees by Plan Star Rating



Share of 4+ Star Plans by Brand



# Third Parties

In addition to insurance carrier hosted resources, a wide variety of third-party influencers produce content across different online platforms – including websites, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook – that aim to inform or sway beneficiary Medicare Advantage plan choice

## Insurance Agents/Brokers

- Boomer Benefits
- GoMedicare
- HealthMarkets.com
- MedicareHub.com
- Medigap.com
- MyHealthPolicy.com
- Plan Prescriber

## Independent Advisors

- Ask Claire
- Eligibility.com
- The Medicare Coach
- Medicare Hero
- MedicareResources.org

## Government Resources

- Medicare.gov Medical Plan Finder
- HHS.gov
- CMS.gov
- SSA.gov
- USA.gov

## Consumer Advocacy Groups

- AARP
- Consumer Reports
- Medicare Rights Center
- Better Medicare Alliance
- Medicare World
- State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs)

# Medical Professionals

As highly trusted professionals, both physicians and pharmacists have the potential to wield a significant level of influence on individual Medicare plan choice

## Physicians

Doctors continue to be among the most trusted professionals across all industries, just behind nurses and just ahead of pharmacists. As such, Medicare shoppers are likely to seek input from their physicians, going beyond just ensuring that their doctor is included in a specific plan network. For various reasons, doctors may prefer Medicare Advantage over Original Medicare, or vice versa. A new doctor who's trying to build a practice might favor a Medicare Advantage plan's structure because it allows them to simply join a practice that's already set up. But more established providers may feel they have more flexibility under Original Medicare so they don't have to adhere to network rules. Regardless of the physician's ultimate preference, they have the potential to be a highly influential source for Medicare shoppers

## Pharmacists

Motivated to save money for both their pharmacy and their patients, pharmacists can also play an influential role in Medicare plan choice, particularly as it relates to understanding prescription drug benefits. As a highly trusted healthcare partner, pharmacist recommendations have the potential to hold greater weight for senior shoppers. This is especially true in contrast to online comparison tools—pharmacist input is inevitably more personal because it is based on the individual's unique health status and history

# Celebrities

As a generation, Baby Boomers favor celebrity endorsements but this component only appears in a limited number of Medicare Advantage plans' marketing strategies – and with varying levels of favorability



**Dorothy Hamill**

Legendary Olympic Gold Medal figure skater Hamill appears in Aetna Medicare Advantage marketing. To encourage members to stay active and choose the plan that best fits their needs, Aetna selected Hamill as its new Medicare spokesperson in October 2020. Hamill will appear in Aetna Medicare's advertising campaign and is featured in a new Aetna guide called Putting the 'Me' in Medicare eBook



**Meredith Vieira**

Award-winning journalist and former 'TODAY' host, Vieira serves as online health insurance marketplace myHealthPolicy's spokesperson. The brand selected Vieira because she is "a longtime healthcare advocate and her authenticity and relatability resonates with consumers. Her voice will help us reach and educate a broad audience"



**Bill Engvall**

Engvall is known for his clean-cut humor and common man approach and for being part of the Blue Collar Comedy tour and concert films. HealthMarkets selected the comedian as a celebrity spokesman because "we know that many people find shopping for insurance confusing and stressful. Bill provides a warm southern welcome that helps put people at ease"



**Joe Namath**

1960's quarterback hero Namath is a spokesperson for the Medicare Coverage Helpline, an often criticized for-profit Medicare Advantage insurer that produces advertisements suggesting the company is affiliated with the Medicare government agency, Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (it's not)



# Media Outlets

What traditional media outlets are most likely to cover the Medicare Advantage market and in what context?

# Media Outlets

- **Medicare Advantage Topics.** Much of the Medicare Advantage conversation is focused on public policy, regulatory changes and company business news, and the opportunities for brands to utilize media to engage with customers is limited
- **News Cycles Driving Brand Recommendations.** About one in ten Medicare Advantage articles offer advice to seniors, in the form of advice on how to choose a plan or specific brand reviews. These articles are typically timed to align with the enrollment calendar, with peaks during open enrollment and the Medicare Advantage disenrollment windows
- **Media Landscape.** Media coverage of Medicare Advantage appears primarily in major news and business outlets, local metros and consumer health publications. Of these outlet types, consumer health publications are the most likely to review or compare specific Medicare Advantage brands, while business publications mix general Medicare advice with some brand recommendations.

# Major News Cycles

Most Medicare Advantage media attention is concentrated during enrollment periods, such as the fall open enrollment timeframe and the winter timeframe for new Medicare Advantage customers to change or disenroll





# Publication Types

Media attention toward Medicare Advantage primarily appears in three outlet types, although the focus of this content varies significantly

## Major News & Business

Key Outlets: MarketWatch, USA Today, NerdWallet, New York Times, CNBC, Barron's, Washington Post, US News & World Report, Investopedia

Key Topics: public policy and the future of Medicare, company news and financials, advice to seniors, brand comparisons

 Humana.

 Cigna®

 BlueCross BlueShield

## Metros

Key Outlets: Houston Chronicle, Miami Herald, Chicago Tribune, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Arizona Republic, Orlando Sentinel, Los Angeles Times, New Castle News, Greensboro News & Record

Key Topics: Advice to seniors, enrollment process, local resources, implications of regulatory changes

No brand recommendations – focus is on education and how to choose a plan

## Consumer Health

Key Outlets: EverydayHealth, VeryWellHealth Health.com, Expert Insurance Reviews, Healthline, Eligibility.com, MedicalNewsToday, AARP

Key Topics: Advice to seniors, enrollment process, how to select a plan, brand comparisons

 KAISER PERMANENTE.

 Humana.

 aetna™

 Cigna®

 BlueCross BlueShield



# Social Media

What role does social media play in the Medicare Advantage market, and how do the major players use it to increase awareness?

# Social Media

- Baby Boomer Medicare Advantage shoppers and beneficiaries do take to social platforms to share opinions and seek advice about which Medicare Advantage plans and providers are reliable, and which are not. Facebook and Twitter are popular forums for this type of discussion
- Government and nonprofit organizations utilize Facebook to educate seniors about their Medicare options and tips, as well as to share more general information related to health and wellness
- Insurance agents and advisors promote information sessions or free assessments via social channels, especially Facebook. This segment is also the most likely to use Instagram, a platform that is much less commonly used for communications specific to the Medicare Advantage market
- Insurers mostly employ Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to share information related to Medicare Advantage plans. UnitedHealthcare has a distinct “Medicare Made Clear” campaign across all three platforms
- **Brands can reach seniors through targeted educational campaigns, especially on Facebook and YouTube**

# Seniors & Social Media

Baby Boomers have demonstrated the greatest increase in activity on social media platforms compared to other generations, suggesting that these channels may increasingly play a role in how they shop for Medicare Advantage plans



## Prefer Facebook

Facebook is the preferred platform among the Seniors crowd, and they're highly engaged there – Boomers are 19% more likely to share content on Facebook than any other generation and 70% of Boomer Facebook users report that they log into the platform daily. Over 15% of Boomers spend 11 hours or more on Facebook every week



## Engage with Video

While Millennials tend to prefer photos, Boomers are drawn to video. Roughly 27% of Boomers are regularly watching videos on Facebook, while 68% of Boomers say they watch YouTube videos to be entertained or learn new things. An estimated one quarter of YouTube visitors are Boomers and they have higher than average ad views and click-through rate











## Interested in Twitter

Amid significant overall platform growth due to chatter related to the COVID-19 pandemic, Boomers may also find themselves more likely to follow discussions on Twitter than previously. The level of recent discussion specific to Medicare Advantage plans certainly suggests that there is an audience on Twitter for this type of information

# Insurers on Social Media

AARP United Healthcare has the strongest cross-channel social media presence of top insurers. With the exception of UnitedHealthcare's "Medicare Made Clear" accounts, most insurers do not maintain Medicare Advantage specific social channels, instead mixing Medicare with other health insurance content

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	YouTube
 United Healthcare	211,368 followers (#6)	54,500 followers (#2)	9,084 followers (#5)	7,250 subscribers (#6)
 AARP	537,019 followers (#3)	135,100 followers (#1)	51,900 followers (#1)	159,000 subscribers (#1)
 Humana	398,435 followers (#5)	44,400 followers (#6)	9,002 followers (#6)	9,730 subscribers (#5)
 Anthem	753,281 followers (#1)	28,100 followers (#7)	N/A	1,180 subscribers (#8)
 aetna	121,392 followers (#7)	53,500 followers (#3)	12,300 followers (#4)	56,900 subscribers (#2)
 KAISER PERMANENTE	466,157 followers (#4)	52,200 followers (#4)	37,500 followers (#2)	42,900 subscribers (#3)
 WellCare	17,179 followers (#8)	2,683 followers (#8)	N/A	1,710 subscribers (#7)
 Cigna	601,185 followers (#2)	50,400 followers (#5)	17,100 followers (#3)	10,400 subscribers (#4)



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