

Medicare Marketing 2026 Calendar

This calendar provides a high-level view of the Medicare Advantage (MA) marketing cycle for the 2026 plan year, aligning key activities with regulations from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and beneficiary engagement best practices. By understanding how priorities shift throughout the year, Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) can better allocate resources, remain compliant, and maximize impact.

Timeframe	Key Focus / Activities	Channels
January-March	MA-OEP & Post-AEP Follow-up: Focus on retention of current members and assisting those in the MA-OEP. Educational events about plan benefits and preventive care are common.	Direct mail, digital marketing, member services, educational events (no sales allowed)
April-July	Market Research & Plan Design: Internal focus on plan performance analysis, competitor analysis, and preparing plan bids for submission to CMS. Some general, compliant educational marketing to pre-seniors (aging in) or those with SEPs.	Internal meetings, data analysis, limited pre-senior mailings
August-September	Material Preparation & Regulatory Approval: Finalizing marketing materials (Annual Notice of Change, Evidence of Coverage) for CMS approval. "Pre-heat" marketing activities begin to build awareness for AEP.	CMS submissions, creative development, initial awareness campaigns
October-December	Annual Enrollment Period (AEP): High-intensity marketing push to drive enrollments. Focus is on plan comparisons, local availability, and clear calls to action.	Television, radio, social media, direct mail, formal marketing events (sales permitted), call centers

The CMS rules and guidelines must be followed. For detailed information on marketing rules and timelines, please refer to official resources like the Medicare Communications and Marketing Guidelines from the CMS: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/health-drug-plans/managed-care-marketing/medicare-guidelines>

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