



PERFORMANCE BY THE NUMBERS

2025 Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) Drips Performance Report



It's all about how you say it™

© 2025 Drips All rights reserved



Dan Fox

Managing Director
of Healthcare

2025 AEP REPORT

Foreword

The 2025 Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) played out against a backdrop of heightened complexity—tightened regulations, increased member distractions, and shifting plan dynamics. Yet even in this environment, the goal is clear: the right conversation, at the right time, still cuts through the noise.

At Drips, we view AEP not just as a campaign, but as a chance to connect real people with licensed agents to have meaningful discussions about their health coverage. That's why we don't just aim for more engagement—we focus on *better* engagement.

As a managed service, we act as an extension of our clients—delivering compliant, thoughtful outreach to have conversations with their members amid shifting strategies and regulations. The FCC's upcoming consent revocation rule, set for April 11, 2025, poses major challenges for healthcare organizations. With our expertise in AI-powered two-way SMS and deep understanding of FCC and TCPA regulations, we're helping clients navigate changes and stay connected with their members.

This year's results show that quality wins: lower opt-outs, higher conversions, and stronger performance across the board. Several clients leaned in with equal focus on **retaining existing members**—investing in early engagement and year-end touchpoints to reinforce plan value and reduce churn. Whether the goal was acquisition or retention, the lesson was the same: relevance and timing are everything.

This report captures what we learned by supporting nearly a million Medicare shoppers through programs that ran across all 50 states. It reveals how personalization, timing, and trust continue to drive outcomes—and why empathy and strategy aren't mutually exclusive.

As we look ahead, we're reminded that great engagement isn't about volume—it's about value. And in this space, **it's still all about how you say it.**

Sincerely,

Dan Fox

Table of Contents

25-AEP Overview	4
Sucess Story	14
A Deeper Dive	16
Broker vs. Payer Performance	24
Looking Towards 2026	29

Drips Programs Overview



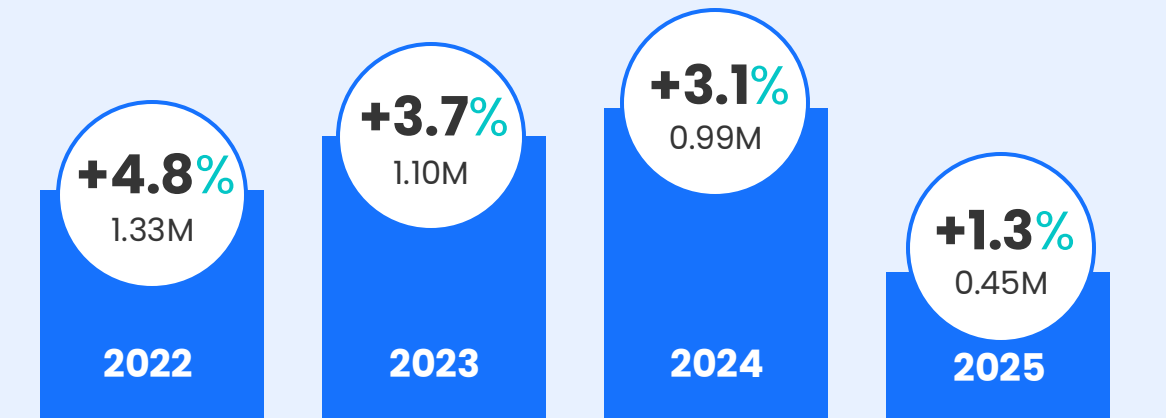
It's all about how you say it™

MARKET DYNAMICS LEAD TO SLOW INDUSTRY GROWTH

Medicare Advantage (MA) Growth



34 Million individuals
are now enrolled in Medicare Advantage¹



MA enrollment increased 1.3% during AEP 2025, down from 3.1% last year and 3.7% the prior year.²



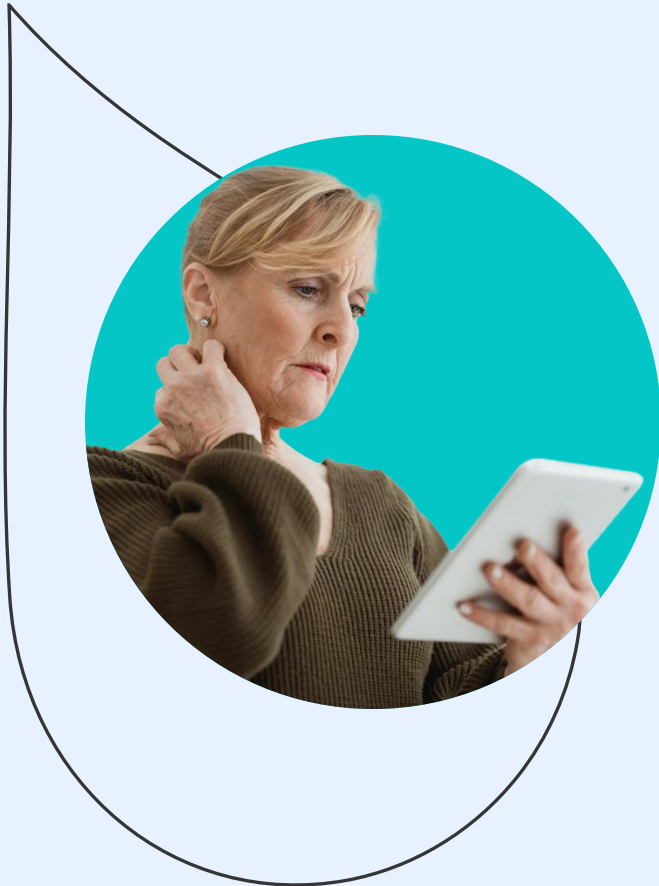
Expansion and Exit Trends

Payers prioritized stability, with many exiting unprofitable markets, reducing benefits, and even pulling commissions mid-AEP—moves likely driven by industry-wide pressures from reimbursement rate adjustments, the shift to Risk Adjustment Model V28, and the Inflation Reduction Act. Despite these pressures, market leaders remain bullish on Special Needs Plan (SNP) growth, particularly those with exclusively aligned enrollment and an increased focus on serving C-SNP individuals (C-SNP segment growth up 28% from 2023).

Source: 1. & 2. Medicare Market Insights MA/MAPD/PDP Enrollment Web App which uses Dec 2024 and Feb 2025 CMS Medicare Advantage/Part D Contract and Enrollment Data, CMS PBP Benefits Q42024, CMS CY2025 Landscape Files. Note: the definition of “AEP enrollment increase” is the change in enrollment counts from **December 2023** to **February 2024**.

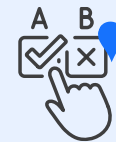
Shoppers Continue to Have Many Choices

Medicare Advantage plans undergo annual changes that can impact coverage, including shifts in extra benefits, cost-sharing, provider networks, drug formularies, and service utilization rules such as referrals and prior authorizations. Despite these adjustments, many beneficiaries do not review or compare their plan options each year, potentially missing opportunities to optimize their coverage and costs.



Access to a Wide Array of Plans

The average Medicare beneficiary has access to plans offered by eight different firms in 2025, the same as in 2024, and an increase of two firms since 2018. Virtually all enrollees (99%) also have access to at least one zero-premium plan that includes prescription drug coverage, consistent with recent years and substantially higher than the 84% in 2018. Source: **KFF**



Choice Overload

In 2025, the average Medicare beneficiary had access to **42 MA plans** (down from 43 in 2024), many of which appear similar in plan design. While the change is relatively insignificant, the sheer number of choices poses the risk of overwhelming beneficiaries, making it challenging to compare options and make informed decisions.



Plan Diversity

The diversity of plans, including HMOs, PPOs, and Special Needs Plans (SNPs), allows members to select plans that best match their health needs and preferences.

OCTOBER 15 – DECEMBER 7, 2024

Drips 25 – AEP Programs

Survey Overview

- Drips reached out to nearly 1M Medicare shoppers on behalf of some of the largest U.S. health insurance plans and brokers.
- 18 AEP outreach programs with 265 sub-programs across the early, middle, and late AEP periods.
- We reached out to shoppers eligible for 2025 plan selection during AEP and collected data from October 15 to December 7, 2024.
- All 50 states and D.C. are represented.
- Drips used Conversations as a Service (CaaS) to drive beneficiaries to calls with licensed agents.
- Year over year comparison data: the 24-AEP data was collected in FY23 and 25-AEP in FY24.

YOY – 24 vs. 25 | Metrics That Matter

43.8%

All Clients: Lower Disqualification Rate (DQ)

Users who request to opt-out (lower is better).

125%

All Clients: More Members Transferred YoY

Number of members transferred to a licensed agent to explore plan options.

17%

Brokers: Lower Engagement Rate

Includes all positive engagement, excluding individuals that choose to opt-out.

240%

Brokers: Higher Conversion Rate

Connected shoppers who successfully enrolled in coverage after speaking with a licensed agent.

5.7%

Health Plans: Higher Engagement Rate

Includes all positive engagement, excluding individuals that choose to opt-out.

100%

Health Plans: Higher Conversion Rate

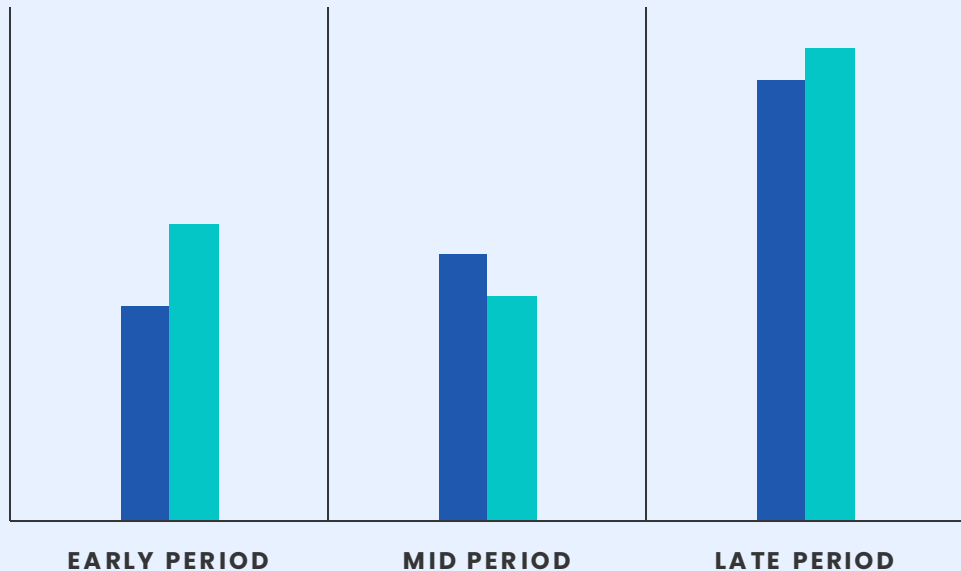
Connected shoppers who successfully enrolled in coverage after speaking with a licensed agent.

YOY – 24 VS. 25

Connect Rate

The total number of members transferred to an agent **increased by 125.5% YoY.**

■ 2024 AEP (PY) Transfer Rate ■ 2025 AEP (CY) Transfer Rate



Connect Rate: Some call this a transfer rate, defined by an individual that successfully connects and completes a phone call with a licensed agent.

Significantly more members transferred across brokers and health plans.

Early Period

Large spike in connect rate (+38.1%), a 144.7% increase in transferred members, suggesting a shift in behavior where more members opted to select plans early compared to last year.

Mid Period

Decline in connect rate (-15.4%) but a 239.9% increase in number of transfers YoY. Even though the rate of transfers decreased, the sheer volume of members transferring during this period surged.

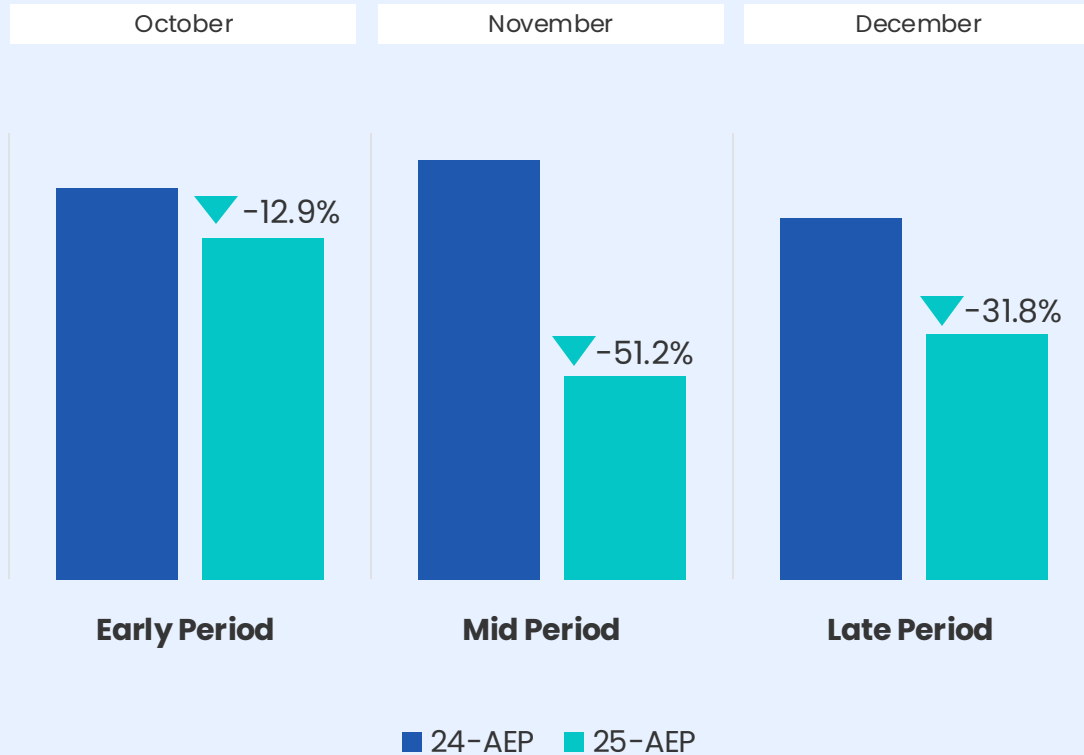
Late Period

Saw a modest increase in connect rate (+7.0%), a 53.7% increase YoY, suggesting there were fewer late period transfers compared to earlier periods, but still a notable YoY increase in volume.

24-AEP VS. 25-AEP

Disqualified (DQ) Rate Change

Month over Month and Year over Year View



43.8%
DQ rate down 43.8% YoY

For disqualified rates, lower is better

DQ rates performance improvement:

Performance Efficiency

- DQ rates dropped nearly 44% YoY — showing that smarter, more personalized outreach and the use of conversational close outs led to fewer disqualified leads.

Mid-AEP Optimization Wins

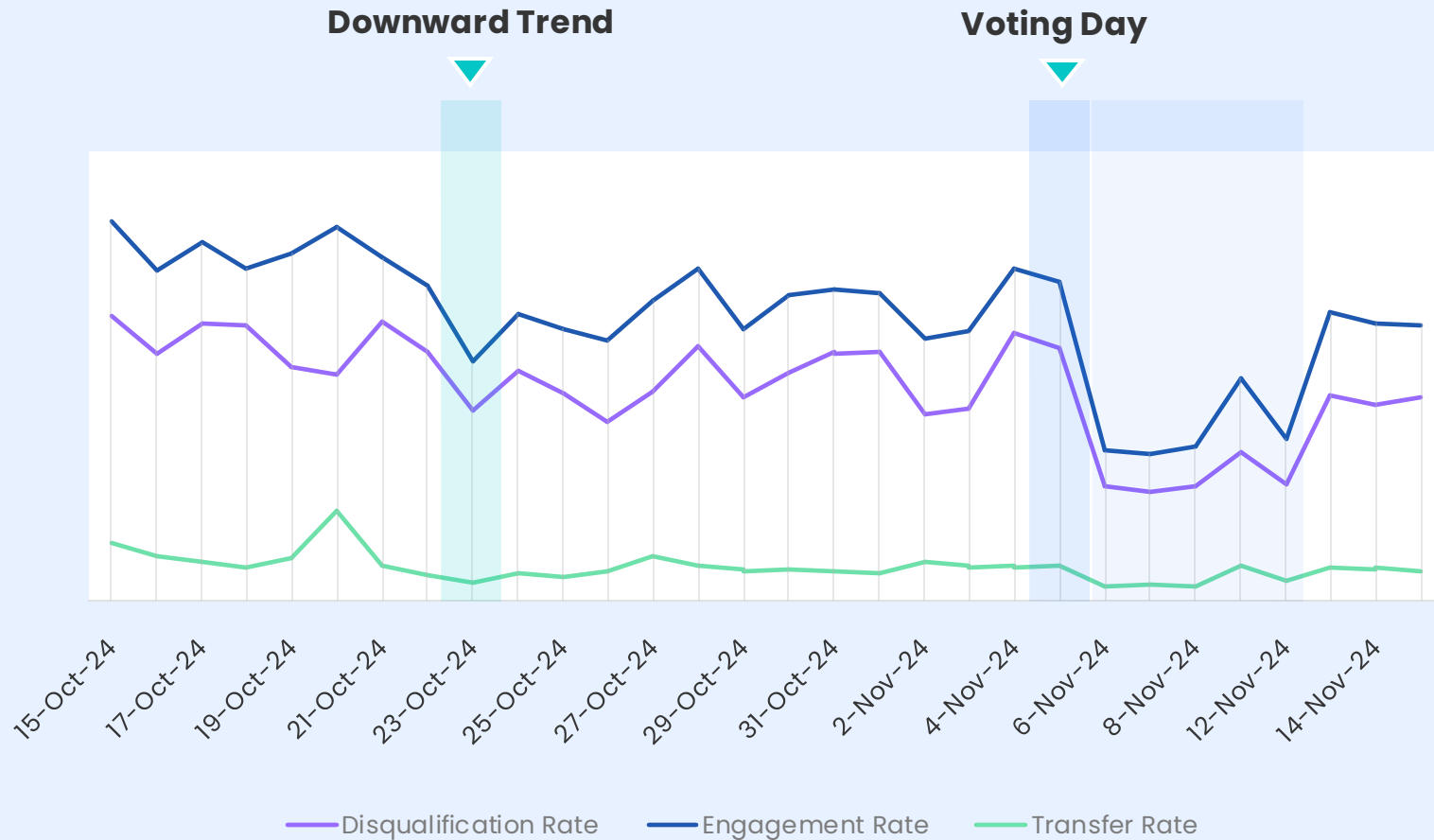
- The most dramatic gains came mid-AEP (51.2% decrease), highlighting the impact of refined messaging strategies during a typically high-volume decision period.

Strategy > Volume

- This wasn't just about doing more — it was about doing it better. Enhancing tone, personalization, and timing proved more effective at qualifying members. This means fewer wasted calls, better agent productivity, and higher potential for beneficiary interactions.

ELECTION FATIGUE

25-AEP Election Year Trends



Since 2024 was a major election year, we recognized that behavior may be impacted by excessive political communications and consumption of media.

We noticed:

Overall Trend: A noticeable drop in Transfer Rate and Engagement Rate was observed right after the election, likely due to election notification fatigue.

Notable Date: October 23rd began a notable downward trend which continued until November 12th and then returned to stability.

Our Key Takeaways



Quality Over Quantity

Engagement performance varied between health plans and brokers. While Health plans recognized a steady increase, Brokers noticed a dip in engagement, however - they also realized an increase in connect and conversions. That tells us we didn't just reach more people—we reached the right people.



Cadence Awareness

The pattern of behavior over the phases of AEP (early, mid, late) highlights that while people warm up as AEP progresses, maintaining a steady cadence remains crucial—even in an election year. A significant dip in performance around Election Day reinforces the need for consistent outreach, ensuring engagement rebounds in the later phases of AEP.



Be Specific

Identifying the specific plan(s) beneficiaries requested information on reduced any confusion about who was contacting them and why. This led to **a 100% lift in engagement rate and a 62.9% lift in response rate.**

BEST PRACTICES FROM THE ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS AT DRIPS

How to Enable a Better Enrollment Experience



Prioritize Quality

While speed is important, it's not the only factor in providing an excellent enrollment experience. To ensure quality, engage with beneficiaries in a way that respects their time and preferences. Provide them with the necessary time and resources to make informed decisions, stay in touch, and make it easy for them to connect with you when they're ready.

Overcome Challenges

Overcoming challenges, such as fear and confusion around the FCC TCPA rules regarding consent and preference management, can be challenging. However, seeking guidance from similar organizations that have successfully navigated these challenges can help you innovate and improve your outreach campaigns.



Encourage Interaction

Instead of sending one-way communication, invite feedback from your beneficiaries, ask them questions, and provide educational resources related to their health plan. This will help build a long-term relationship with them and encourage them to engage with you.

Ensure Deliverability

Without a thoughtful approach to deliverability, your outreach may get caught in spam filters and never reach your shoppers. Therefore, ensure your outreach campaigns comply with deliverability guidelines so that they are reaching the intended recipients.



Track Performance

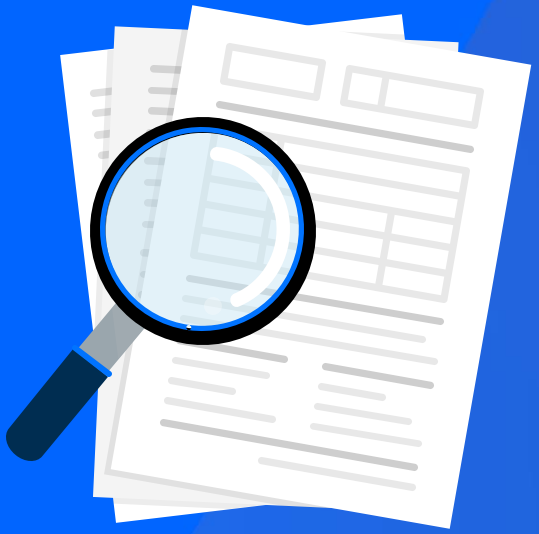
To optimize engagement, it's important to track performance with defined metrics. Analyze a campaign's performance so you can identify areas of improvement and refine your approach accordingly.

Provide Clear Calls to Action (CTAs)

A clear CTA is essential to getting your shoppers to connect with you. Therefore, make sure your CTA is easily visible, readable, and repeated often.



Success Story



It's all about how you say it™

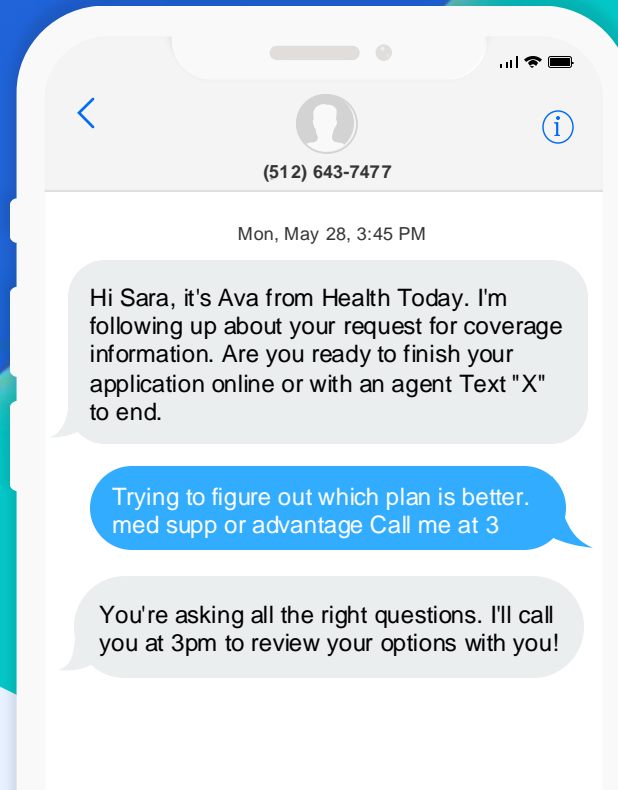
© 2025 Drips All rights reserved

Drips Success Story

Medicare insurance broker adds \$2M by converting thousands of beneficiaries into members

HIGHLIGHTS

- Improved conversions and call center efficiency across programs
- Re-engaged interested beneficiaries who had gone cold for six months
- Optimized programs with continuous A/B testing



Engaging Thousands of Shoppers

AI-powered SMS, voicemails, and scheduled calls helped this broker convert thousands of beneficiaries into enrolled members.

Acquire

- 125,000+ Medicare beneficiaries engaged
- 9.6% transfer to conversion rate
- \$265K in revenue

Re-Engage Interested Beneficiaries

- 140% improvement in transfer rate vs. benchmark
- 15.8% transfer to conversion rate
- \$365K in revenue

New to Medicare and SEP

- 230,000 beneficiaries engaged
- 34% transfer to conversion rate
- \$1.5M revenue

[Read full case study](#)

A Deeper Dive

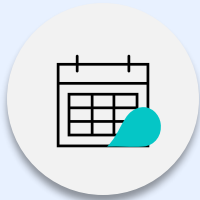


It's all about how you say it™

Reaching Healthcare Consumers

During the 2025 Medicare Annual Enrollment Period, Drips used Conversations as a Service (CaaS) to connect eligible members with licensed agents.

In the process, we learned a lot about where, when, and how this audience decides to engage. We share this information to help you with workforce planning, staffing, consumer experience planning, and much more.



Day of the week



Time of day



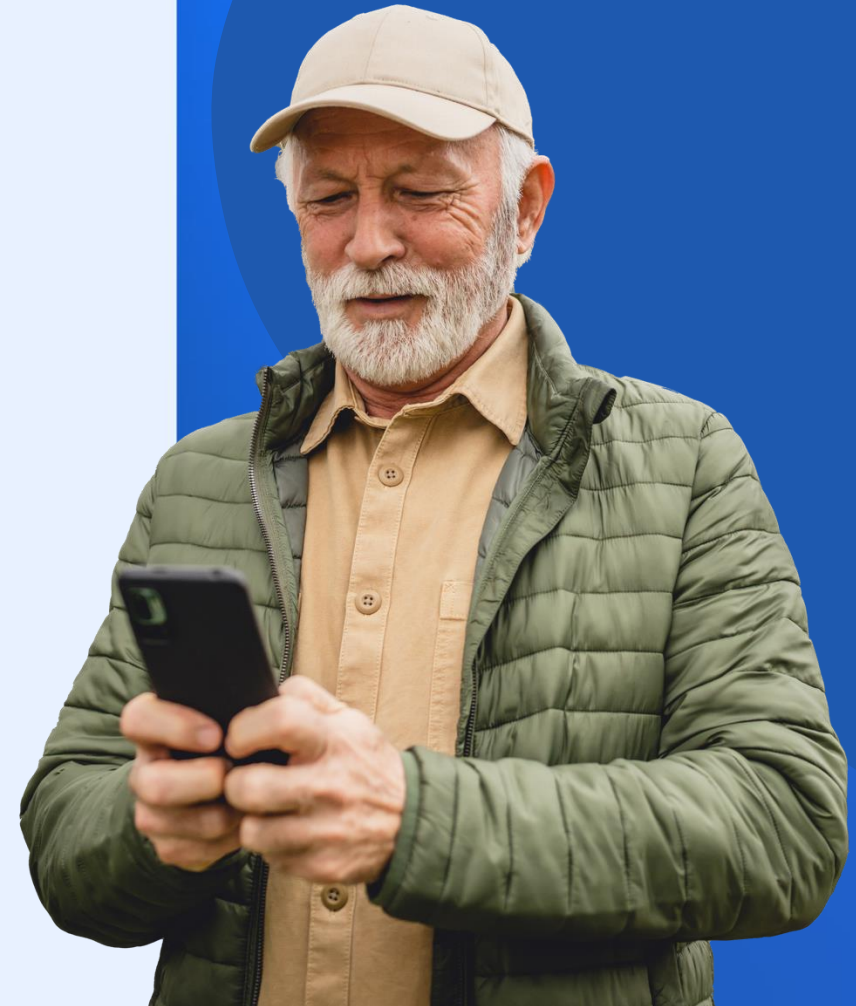
Timing



Scripting



Cadence during AEP



STAFF UP ON TUESDAYS!

Top Day of the Week

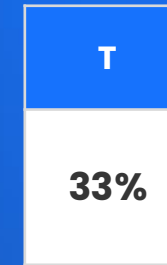
Average Percent of Connections by Day of the Week
(Inbound Transfers and Outbound Scheduled)

M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
14.3%	19.1%	18.7%	16.3%	18.3%	9.3%	4%

Tuesdays were the best-performing day of the week with **19.1% of successful transfers to a licensed agent.**

Performance varied across weekdays and dipped on weekends. This aligns with conventional wisdom that weekends are less effective for outreach.

Last Year's Top Day...



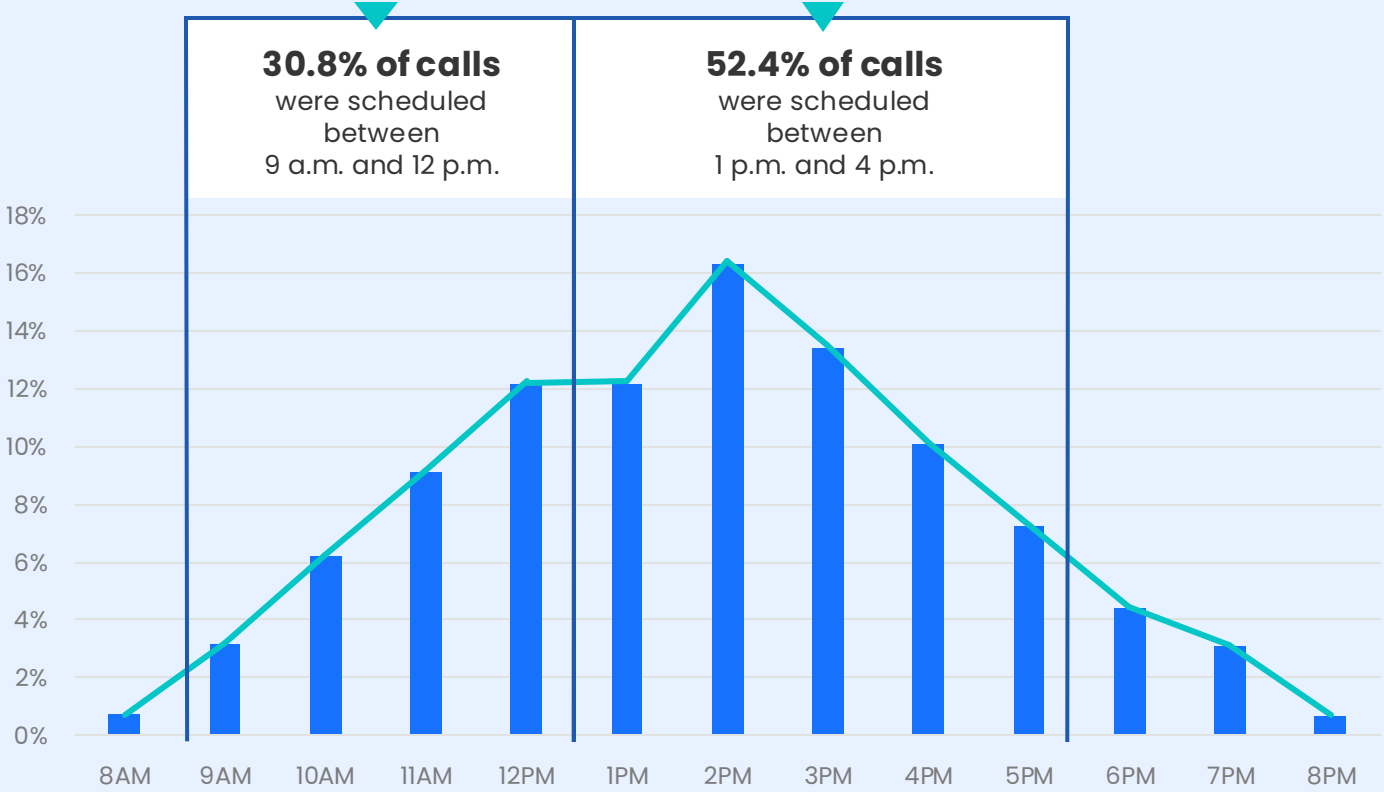
During the 2024 AEP, Tuesday saw the highest connections accounting for **33%** of all transfers to an agent.

During the 2025 AEP, although Tuesday had the highest transfer rate, scheduled calls were more spread out across the weekdays.

WHEN ARE MEMBERS READY TO TALK?

Top Time of the Day

Percent of Connections/Transfers by Time of Day

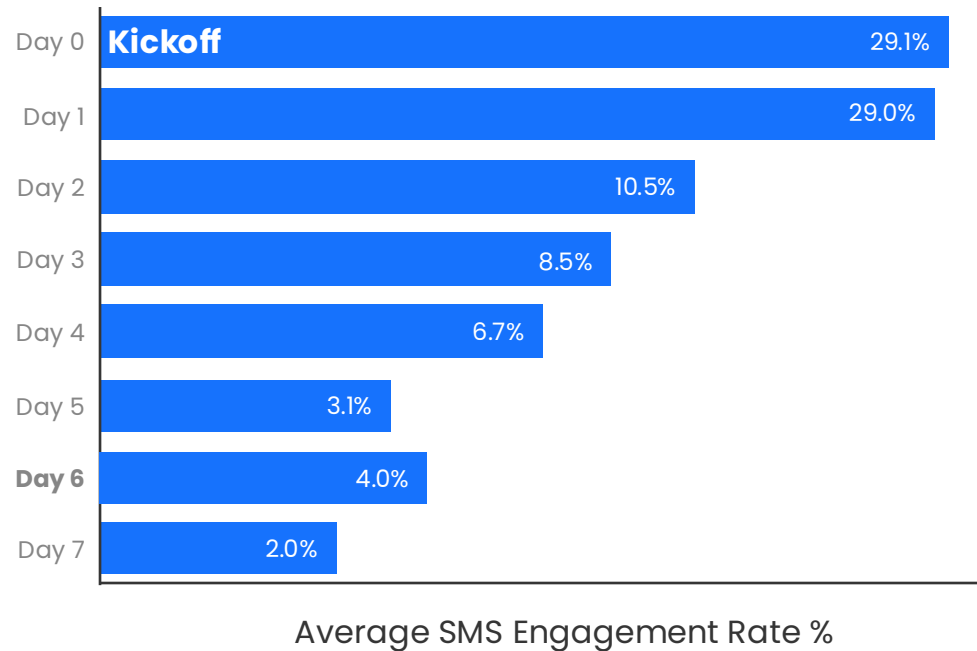


When shoppers engage with Drips' conversational AI to schedule a call, they preferred late morning and afternoon calls most (based on their local time zone).

This pattern is likely because late mornings and afternoons tend to be less busy for this audience.

AVERAGE SMS ENGAGEMENT RATE PER DAY

Cadence of Engagement

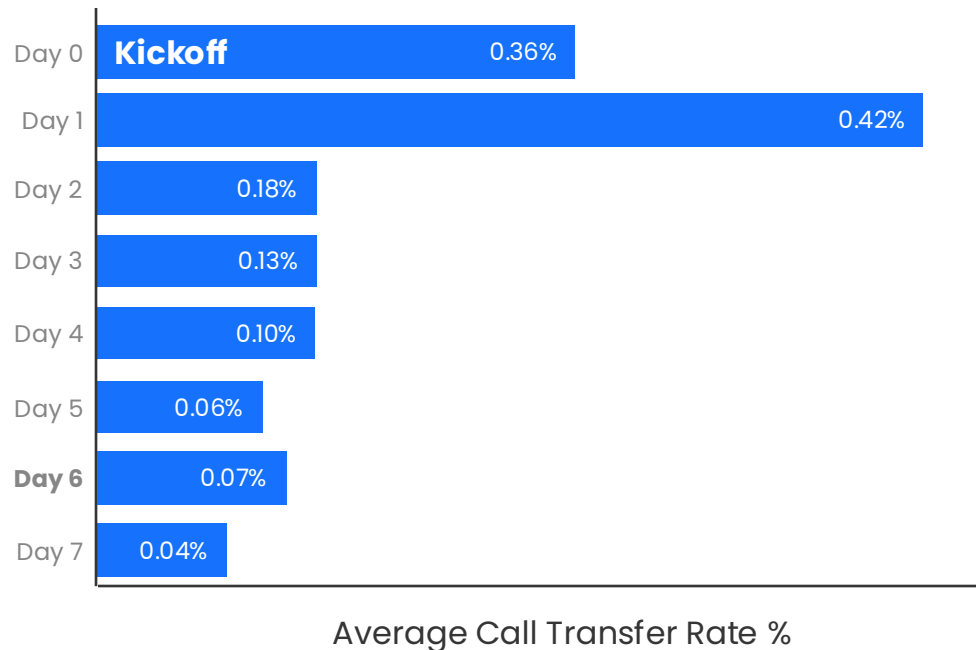


For **SMS outreach driving inbound calls**:

- People respond most on **Day 0 (kickoff) and Day 1**.
- Engagement Rate decreases from **Day 0 to Day 5**.
- The higher response rate on **Day 6** might be due to the campaign's end and the associated urgency (many AEP programs run for more than 5 days).

AVGERAGE CALL TRANSFER RATE PER DAY

Cadence Of Transfer



For outbound dialing calls, persistence is key to maximizing engagement:

- **Day 0 (kickoff) and Day 1** work the best, with transfer rates increasing from Day 0 to Day 1 before gradually declining.
- **Continued follow-ups remain valuable**, as Day 6 slightly outperforms Day 5.

This trend highlights the importance of sustained outreach efforts to capture opportunities beyond the initial contact attempts.

** Note: There are days with numbers larger than 10, like day 13, day 29, and so on, but all of them are under 25 times of entries so they're not considered here.*

Performance by Location



Members are more inclined to speak with an agent in these states...

Best

Texas

Highest number of overall transfers.



Second highest MA industry growth (1.4%)

Runner Up

California

21.4% increase in agent conversations from prior year.



Seventh highest MA industry growth (0.8%)

Honorable Mention

New York

41.8% increase in agent conversations from prior year.



Highest MA industry decline by volume (-2.5%)



Geographic performance can vary, and results may change for different campaigns. The important thing is to **track performance and adjust accordingly.**

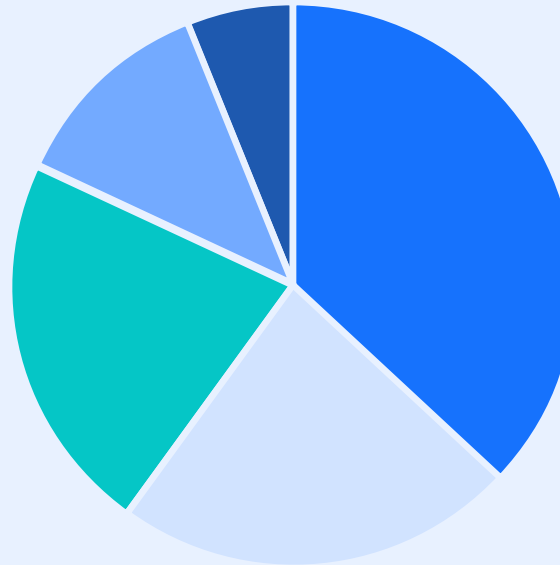
25-AEP TOP RESPONSE TRENDS

Response Insights

The key goal across AEP programs is connecting beneficiaries with licensed agents. Most responses revealed that shoppers either needed more time or wanted additional information before committing to a call.

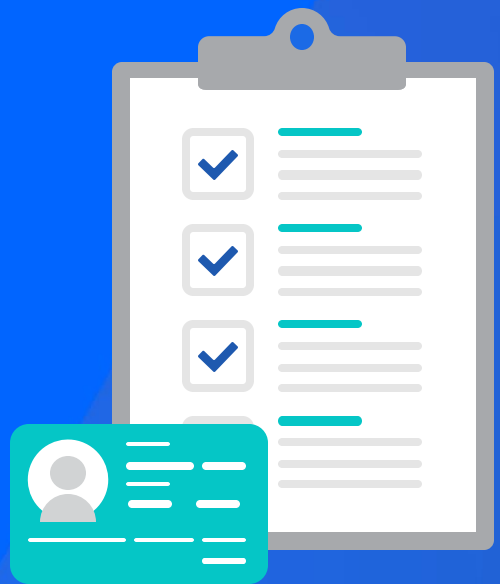
By analyzing these responses at scale and in real-time, Drips enables more contextual and timely conversations and simplifies follow-up management.

We took the most common responses and grouped them into the following categories:



- 37% of shoppers needed more time before jumping on a call with an agent.
- 23% of shoppers wanted additional information or had specific questions about their options.
- 22% of shopper responses were unique in nature.
- 12% of shoppers were ready to schedule time to speak with an agent.
- 6% of shoppers responded with feedback that provided business insights.

Broker vs. Health Plan



It's all about how you say it™

2025 AEP Data Sources

18

Total AEP programs designed

Total AEP Programs

10

Broker

8

Health Plan

265

Individual sub-programs managed across the early, middle, and late AEP periods

Total AEP Programs

196

Broker

80

Health Plan



TAKE AWAY – HEALTH PLANS
SIGNIFICANTLY OUTPERFORMED BROKERS

2025 AEP Performance Health Plans vs. Brokers

Health plans design, develop, and manage plan offerings in-house. They benefit from direct engagement with leads and dedicated branding in their respective service areas.

Brokers offer plans on behalf of their health plan partners, offering a differentiated service model to satisfy plan needs across multiple health plans.



Broker Programs had a

145% Lower
Disqualification Rate



Health Plan Programs had a

17.6% Higher
Conversion Rate



Health Plan Programs had a

96% Higher
Engagement Rate



Health Plan Programs had a

117% Higher
Connect Rate

TAKE AWAY – HEALTH PLANS IMPROVED THEIR PERFORMANCE YOY

24 vs. 25 AEP Performance for Health Plans YoY



Conversion Rate

100% Higher

Conversion Rate YoY



Connect Rate

23.1% Higher

Connect Rate YoY



Engagement Rate

5.7% Higher

Engagement Rate YoY



Disqualification Rate

15.8% Lower

Disqualification Rate YoY

TAKE AWAY – BROKERS IMPROVED THEIR PERFORMANCE YOY

24 vs. 25 AEP Performance for Brokers YoY



Conversion Rate

240% Higher
Conversion Rate YoY



Connect Rate

6.4% Higher
Connect Rate YoY



Engagement Rate

17% Lower
Engagement Rate YoY



Disqualification Rate

43.6% Lower
Disqualification Rate YoY

Lower engagement rate coupled with improved connect and conversion rates signal higher intent agent conversations took place.

Looking Forward



It's all about how you say it™

Challenges Ahead

Challenges for Medicare Marketing and Member Retention in 2026

As the Medicare Advantage landscape shifts, plans and brokers must navigate a changing environment marked by regulatory scrutiny, cost pressures, and evolving member expectations. These challenges impact marketing, engagement, and retention strategies.

Member Retention

With tighter regulations on plan marketing and a slowdown in new enrollments during AEP, retaining existing members has become a top priority. Discussions around potential changes to default enrollment structures could influence plan design, marketing strategies, and member expectations. Prioritizing early engagement, clear communication on network access, and proactive customer support will be essential for maintaining member satisfaction and loyalty.

Increased Scrutiny on Marketing and Broker Practices

CMS oversight is tightening around marketing materials, broker commissions, and enrollment disclosures. Plans must ensure transparency and compliance to build trust and avoid penalties.

Shifting Member Priorities and Engagement Fatigue

With changes in cost-sharing, provider networks, and plan structures, members may be less engaged with marketing efforts and require more personalized outreach to reinforce plan value.

Cost of Outreach

Plans and Brokers must focus on cost-effective retention efforts such as digital engagement, personalized messaging, and loyalty-building initiatives.

Provider Network Adjustments and Care Access Perception

Changes in provider contracts, prior authorization, and network availability may create confusion for members, requiring enhanced communication and transition support to prevent dissatisfaction.

AEP and Beyond

Brokers and Health Plans can focus on engagement, member experience, and proactive support to drive retention.

Make Finding the Right Coverage Easy

- Avoid aggressive tactics and create an excellent experience.
- **Consider:** Thoughtful permission-based outreach that invites interested beneficiaries to engage with you upon selection or renewal.

Strengthen Onboarding and Early Engagement

- Members who use their benefits early are less likely to churn.
- **Consider:** Proactive outreach within the first 90 days to ensure members understand their plan, costs, and use their benefits.

Proactively Address Provider Network Changes

- If networks change, members should hear from the plan first rather than discovering disruptions on their own.
- **Consider:** Helping members establish a provider relationship to avoid frustration.

Elevate Customer Service and Member Support

- Retention is often linked to ease of accessing care and resolving issues quickly.
- **Consider:** Two-way engagement channels to manage follow-up and maintain service excellence on the member's time.

Build Loyalty Through Year-Round Communication

- Plans should maintain consistent engagement beyond AEP to build loyalty and inform business decisions.
- **Consider:** Targeted retention campaigns throughout the year to uncover barriers for hard-to-reach members.



**It's all about
how you say it™**

drips.com

It's all about how you say it™

© 2025 Drips All rights reserved