



At A Glance

- Sixteen Texas-based hospitals, which comprise the CHI St. Luke’s Health, CHI St. Luke’s Health Memorial and CHI St. Joseph health systems.
- Presence in Houston, Bryan/College Station, East Texas and Brazos Valley region.
- Strong alliance with Texas Heart Institute and Baylor College of Medicine.

The Situation

In fall 2017 Catholic Health Initiative’s (CHI) Texas Division decided to launch a communication initiative to increase patient awareness of Medicare Advantage (MA) participation. CHI’s goal was for each employed PCP be assigned 100 patients newly enrolled in an MA plan. At the same time, CHI wanted to term a payer contract (effective December 31) held by a small number of PCPs yet continue the contract with specialists and hospitals. These concurrent actions triggered several challenges across the enterprise that required quick organization, education from top to bottom, and targeted external communication that assured compliant Medicare insurance messaging.



The Strategy

With Medicare’s annual enrollment period (AEP) closing in fast, CHI Texas needed to establish itself as the “go-to” resource for providing insurance information and protecting patient relationships.

CHI Texas immediately assembled a cross functional team to support timely decisions and share information across the organization while MCUSA charted a project plan, timeline and proposed budget to execute CHI’s goals in a stepwise fashion. The plan included:

- Launching a Medicare insurance helpline as the conduit for patient retention and MA plan visibility. A dedicated line would provide consumers a one-stop shopping experience for information, plan comparisons and enrollment assistance.
- MCUSA Consulting analyzing patient data to determine and propose the scope of patient outreach.
- Conducting significant cross-training with CHI staff, key affiliates, call center representatives and agents.
- Ensuring helpline services and infrastructure are sustainable for continuing the initiative in 2018 and beyond.

The Implementation

Based on MCUSA’s recommendations and ongoing support from CHI Texas leadership, the following activities were accomplished:

- ✓ Held weekly calls with stakeholders to review activities including patient communications and timelines, trouble shoot issues and report outcomes.

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About MCUSA Consulting

MCUSA Consulting has a proven track record for developing innovative Medicare insurance solutions tailored to the needs of healthcare organizations and the Medicare patients it serves.

Included in the MCUSA portfolio of services is a Medicare insurance helpline (served by MedicareCompareUSA) that helps Medicare beneficiaries select a health plan that is accepted by their existing hospital and doctors, thus assuring continuity of care and preserving the trusted relationships many providers have built up over time with their patients. MCUSA Consulting also helps hospitals, health systems and physicians with turning 65 patient communications, health plan contract termination support, Medicare strategy and Medicare compliance audits. With its strong foundation and impressive track record, an increasing number of hospitals and doctors are looking to MCUSA Consulting as an indispensable part of a proactive patient-communication and population-management strategy.

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- ✓ Recruit and contract affiliate agents to represent CHI Texas accepted plans.
- ✓ Provided employee training with special emphasis on clinics with patients affected by the contract termination.
- ✓ Held health system orientations with call center and agents to review markets, objectives and geographic boundaries.
- ✓ Deployed dozens of licensed phone agents and local affiliate agents to support face-to-face consultations.
- ✓ Coordination of MA plan affiliation announcement with key MA partner.
- ✓ Analyzed patient data and presented insurance demographics report for baseline.
- ✓ Assisted CHI in development of patient communication materials and content via website and direct mail announcing the new resources including the Medicare helpline. Secured external campaign funding.
- ✓ Created and managed a high-touch campaign for 1,700 patients affected by the MA contract termination.



The Results

The activity largely took place between October 1 and December 31, 2017, and was challenged by two mitigating factors. The first was the absence of an existing Medicare insurance helpline on which these urgent initiatives could have more easily been built. The second was Hurricane Harvey hitting Houston and surrounding areas a month prior to the AEP. Catastrophic flooding displaced tens of thousands of residents, which made mail delivery unpredictable, phone contact more difficult, and presented challenges for consumers to focus on their 2018 health plan needs.

The termed MA plan also threw an unexpected curve. After receiving CHI's year-end termination notice, the plan reassigned members to new PCPs effective December 1. This created significant patient confusion and stress, particularly for those under a plan of care, needing prescriptions refilled or had doctor appointments scheduled in December. Despite these challenges, extensive outreach was performed successfully to engage Medicare patients and assist them with plan comparisons and enrollment. A large percentage of support was provided telephonically; and, as a result, 80 percent of the enrollment took place over the phone.

In total, all patients affected by the plan termination received multiple touches and had information to make an informed alternate plan decision. Some patients chose to use independent brokers, others went plan direct, and still others turned to MedicareCompareUSA, which accounted for nearly 1,000 patients making a new health plan selection. Of note, 99 percent of patients selected Medicare Advantage.