LINKEDHEALTH

Direct Enrollment: Not as Simple as it Sounds

Background

Carriers selling on-exchange, tax credit eligible plans today are challenged with finding the most effective sources of new enrollments. Most receive enrollments through healthcare.gov and/or state based exchanges, traditional broker channels, various private exchange models, and direct-to-consumer. Selling directly to consumers can be effective but in the world of ACA has been made more complex and expensive due to the "Direct Enrollment" process required by the Federal Marketplace.

The Challenges

The first open enrollment encountered basic technology challenges. During the second, two key questions continued to surface from our clients:

How do we balance call center expenses and deliver top notch customer service?
Managing a call center with the volume of an open enrollment period is challenging. Call centers have tried different approaches but most changes have led either to longer call times or resulted in shortened call times but an increase in the number of calls per sale. A few data points:

- Volume in the last 5 days of open enrollment equaled the first 25 days
- Volume in the last 24 hours of open enrollment equaled the previous 96 hours
- Volume on December 15th was 11 times the daily open enrollment average

What can we do to improve the eligibility determination process and reduce fall-off from incomplete enrollments?
Carrier shopping sites with Direct Enrollment capability continue to struggle with losing people during the "Double Redirect" process. This process requires a consumer to be redirected from the carrier's shopping site to healthcare.gov to determine eligibility, then redirected back to the shopping website to complete enrollment.

- 90% of consumers that selected a plan reached the Federal Marketplace through Direct Enrollment but only 31% completed their official eligibility from the Federal Marketplace
- Fall-off at most steps in the process is less than 10% versus the 58% of consumers that began the eligibility process and failed to complete at healthcare.gov

It's easy to understand the problems, but difficult to determine where to start in order to improve the process.

Solutions

Open enrollment 2015 provided some key learnings on how to improve the process for on-exchange enrollments and help convert shoppers to members. Based on LinkedHealth's performance data and client feedback, the following are a few key solutions that helped deliver the best results.

A. Direct Enrollment: Agent Path

Enables agents to determine eligibility and enroll consumers in on-exchange plans using a more efficient online system. Monitoring shows that the agent path through healthcare.gov reduces call time between 20 and 35 percent. Clients also valued the ability to look up completed applications when reconciling enrollments and commissions.

B. Consumer Support Tools Used Throughout the Process, Including After the Redirect to the Federal Marketplace

LinkedHealth clients found success using several tactics to "recover" abandoned applications and increase the number of enrollments. Text recovery, email recovery, contextual recovery, in addition to pop up/help boxes that support the user while at healthcare.gov, improved the conversion rate throughout the application process.

C. Consumer / Agent path

Enables consumers to complete their eligibility determination without agent assistance, and then have an agent complete the consumer's enrollment during off peak times. This model can improve consumer self-serve conversions by 20% and/or reduce call center time by as much as 25% based on the average consumer call.

Another Key Learning: "There's More Than Meets the Eye"

Healthcare.gov integration isn't a "one and done". A significant amount of time and resources (both technical and compliance related) are required to support and maintain the integration. There's no better example than CMS's recently announced support of Direct Enrollment during SEP and the support of Change in Circumstance. What appears to be a simple change or update often takes considerably more resources than anticipated.

Conclusion

The Affordable Care Act has forever changed the healthcare industry and the way carriers must think about member acquisition. As the landscape surrounding ACA evolves, carriers continue to focus on new member acquisition strategies. The most basic of which is to support and facilitate the enrollment of consumers who've already chosen the carrier's plan. Leveraging proven technology solutions that increase tax credit eligible enrollments is critical for success. However, the tools are new, complicated to implement and difficult for carriers to support. The

true winners during open enrollment 2016 will be those who embrace the technologies available to enroll new members.

About LinkedHealth

LinkedHealth (www.linkedhealth.com) provides carriers with a Direct Enrollment solution for tax credit eligibility and enrollment into Federal Marketplace plans. In addition to a cloud based, SaaS integration platform, LinkedHealth offers a pure API integration option for those carriers with a desire to control the full user experience. To learn more about the LinkedHealth enrollment platform, please visit www.linkedhealth.com or text "link" to 878787 and view a short video from your mobile device.