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BACKGROUND

The AEP scramble for Medicare Advantage Organizations

Each year Medicare Advantage Organizations (MAOs) scramble to get plan materials ready for the Annual Enrollment Period (AEP), which runs from October 15-December 7. During this short window, Medicare beneficiaries have the option to change their current plans and coverage for the upcoming year should they choose. MAOs race against the clock to ensure their customers have all the information they need to make informed choices during this critical period.

Every spring, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency that regulates Medicare and Medicaid organizations, publishes updates to the regulatory model documents that MAOs leverage to create important plan documents including the Annual Notice of Change (ANOC), Evidence of Coverage (EOC), and Summary of Benefits (SB). MAOs update their plans and associated materials to accommodate the CMS updates before releasing them to the public. Due to the time-sensitive nature of the AEP and the complex nature of the documents and plan offerings, MAOs face intense pressure in a short amount of time to make these changes accurately and efficiently. Failure to do so can result in penalties, fines, and have a detrimental impact on a plan's star rating.



INTRODUCTION

Vantage Health Plan doubles its support of MAPD plans in Louisiana

Vantage Health Plan was born in Louisiana in 1994. Created by physicians who believed patients deserved excellent healthcare coverage, Vantage provides affordable, approachable health insurance. Committed to local customer service and satisfaction, Vantage has seen their membership and provider network grow steadily for more than 20 years.

In 2019, Vantage merged with the largest health insurer in Louisiana, strengthening the breadth and reach of both companies. Though the bulk of their plans are still located within Louisiana, Vantage now also manages multiple plans in Mississippi and Arkansas.



CHALLENGE

Managing double the plans with the same team

After the merger, the number of Medicare Advantage plans under Vantage's management more than doubled to over fifty across three states with several plan variations to manage. The team had always relied on Word documents and manual processes to create the ANOCs, EOCs, and SBs, however with the increased number of plans under management, the approach was no longer sustainable.

The team was also concerned with the quality assurance process given the increase in plans, states, and variations to manage. Their manual, time-consuming process put the team at risk of human-introduced errors and the current Quality Assurance (QA) process proved unworkable at this new scale. Vantage needed to dramatically improve their back-office function to meet the strict deadlines imposed by the CMS for the AEP.



SOLUTION

Automating AEP materials production

Vantage wanted to leverage automation to simplify their AEP materials production process. They researched several software options but found them lacking. One tool offered limited flexibility; another required coding that would require a technical resource to support. The team wanted a software solution that was accessible to business users, which offered both structure and flexibility to accommodate their plan requirements. After their search, Vantage chose Messagepoint Healthcare Touchpoint Exchange.

Messagepoint Healthcare Touchpoint Exchange is a purpose-built solution that leverages the Messagepoint platform as its foundation. A cloud-based SaaS solution, Messagepoint Healthcare Touchpoint Exchange enables MAOs to empower their business teams with control over the plan updates while accelerating and streamlining the creation and annual update of ANOCs, EOCs, and SBs. Messagepoint also has a team of Medicare Advantage experts supporting their customers, providing Vantage the best of both worlds – the technology they needed for automation and expert guidance and support to help ensure success.

Empowering the business team

Vantage wanted a software solution that added value, not extra work; one that was user-friendly and easy to learn. “Whenever we looked at Messagepoint, we saw the potential for our actual users to learn it, and to grow into it. We wanted something that people who were not programmers could understand and develop and use,” says Jessica Self, VP of Monroe Operations at Vantage.

Pre-built model documents accelerate the process

Messagepoint updates the exchange with the latest CMS model documents each year. This automatically gives clients a major head start because they aren’t starting from scratch every year. They can sync annual updates to accelerate materials readiness. “The CMS model updates coming from the Messagepoint exchange gets us 65% of the way there,” says Self. “From that point forward, our plan experts take it to completion.”

Seamless Incorporation of Plan Benefit Package (PBP) Data

“The ability to automate the incorporation of the PBP data in the document creation process was really important,” says Self. “It’s vital that our materials reflect what we commit to and submit to CMS.” Messagepoint Healthcare Touchpoint Exchange loads the PBP data directly into the plan documents, ensuring the information used to create plan materials is fully compliant with Vantage’s bid submission. “Accuracy is ensured by having the same data objects pushed into many different locations in the same plan’s documents.”

Self says one of the reasons Vantage chose Messagepoint was its ability to accommodate variations within their plans. “Humans can’t catch all of those different variations within plans, not 100% of the time. The PBP import has been invaluable.”

Quality Assurance

The QA Module gives Vantage the ability to annotate documents, post changes, and track reviews with ease. Previously, the QA process involved an email chain with Word attachments, or group editing while screensharing on conference calls. The ability to document which changes were made when, and by whom, has vastly improved visibility and transparency. “The QA module has been really handy for an audit trail,” Self reports. “With so many plans and variations in play, the QA process is critically important. It comprises 20% of the process because it is so important that we ensure quality in the documents including layout and design integrity.”

Expert knowledge backing the solution

Because AEP deadlines are fixed and the timelines are tight, any questions Vantage had about their new SaaS solution needed to be answered quickly. Self was impressed with the responsiveness of Messagepoint’s team. “We relied on them heavily. We had a really good relationship with the servicing team, and are very pleased with their speed and attentiveness.”

Agility in the face of change

When CMS made major changes to the ANOC and EOC documents for the AEP 2023 season and announced these updates relatively last minute, many MAOs were in a panic. “Accommodating the scope of the CMS changes for the 2023 AEP without Messagepoint would have been very, very difficult,” says Self.



RESULTS

Vantage leveraged Messagepoint's purpose-built automation to manage the massive increase in their AEP materials production process.

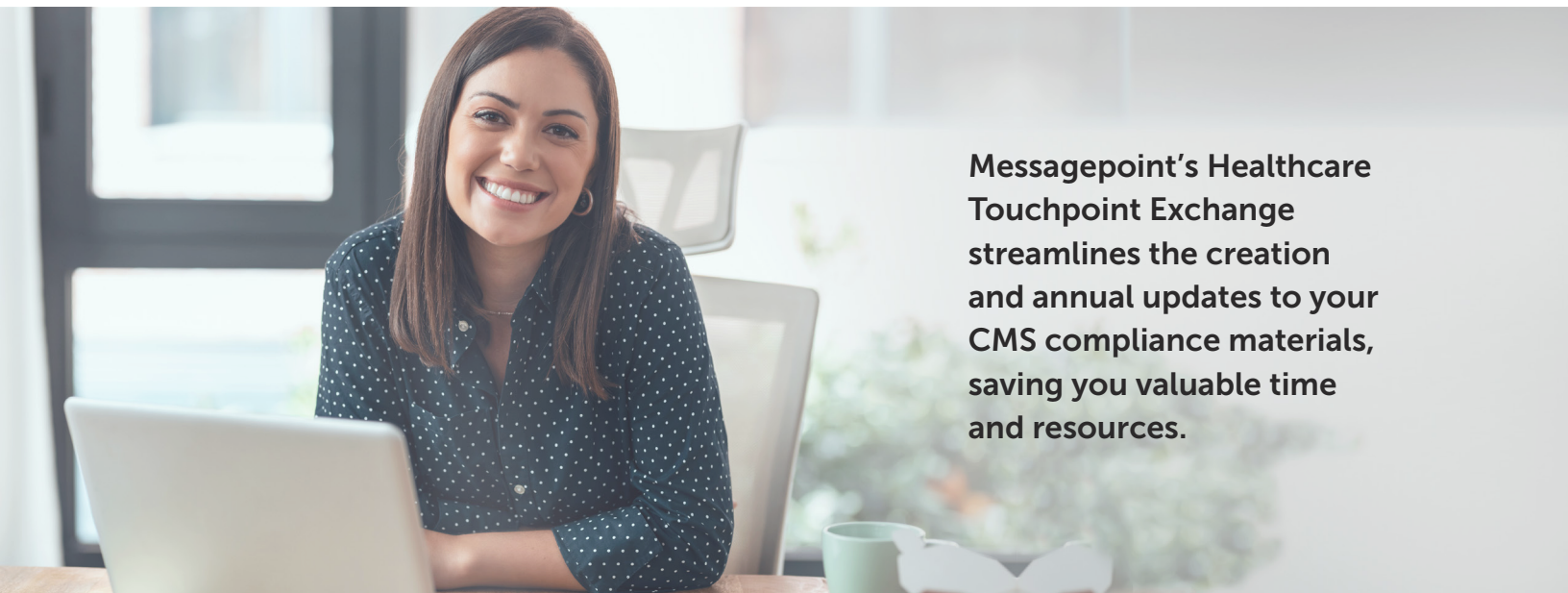
With twice as many plans under management, Vantage needed help to reign in an increasingly unworkable process. Messagepoint's automation helped them navigate the tight timelines and strict deadlines imposed by the enrollment period. "We manage plan documents for two companies, three products, over fifty plans, across three states with a very small team. We're proud of what we can accomplish, and it would not be achievable without Messagepoint in place."

With the automatic incorporation of the CMS model changes, PBP imports, version control, and a robust QA module, Messagepoint helped Vantage cope with the doubling of their workload and to prepare for the future. Vantage appreciated the technical tools, flexibility, and excellent customer service Messagepoint provided. "That is where we really felt Messagepoint made the difference."



Benefits

- + Vantage doubled the plans (to over 50) and materials under management with the same team
- + The team seamlessly accommodated the extensive CMS model updates for AEP 2023
- + Business users were able to manage the content, data and plan variations without IT
- + The solution enabled them to accommodate many plan variations
- + The QA module provided transparency and an audit trail
- + Scalable for potential future expansion and growth



Messagepoint's Healthcare Touchpoint Exchange streamlines the creation and annual updates to your CMS compliance materials, saving you valuable time and resources.

To learn how Messagepoint can help you with pre- and post-enrollment materials creation, contact us today.

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