

AEP 2026:

# PREPARE FOR IMPORTANT CHANGES

This year's AEP brings important changes to the Medicare landscape. Use this guide to understand the changes so you can shift your strategy to help reduce client disruptions.

## Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Medicare

The IRA, passed in 2022, was designed to benefit several populations — including Medicare recipients. 2025 brought significant changes for Medicare prescription drug plan coverage, and these changes will continue to evolve in 2026 and beyond. Three key changes to note:

1

“Donut hole” coverage gap phase eliminated, annual max cap of \$2,100 on out-of-pocket costs

- Member payments for out-of-pocket prescription drug costs can be spread out over a year

2

Part D redesign changed government reinsurance structure

- Part D plans usually pay 65% of applicable drugs and 75% of all other covered drugs during the initial coverage phase
- Part D plans pay 60% during catastrophic phase, up from 20% prior to 2025

3

The Manufacturer Discount Program changed costs and liability for drug manufacturers

- Drug manufacturers are required to discount brand-name drugs 10% during initial coverage and 20% during catastrophic coverage phase

Source: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/final-cy-2026-part-d-redesign-program-instructions>



## AEP 2026: PREPARE FOR IMPORTANT CHANGES *(cont.)*

### **Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Medicare**

The IRA's changes have already started affecting carriers, plans and consumers. Some possible carrier changes have:

- Higher variance in how many plans change and how much they change
- Carriers cutting back plans or benefits to manage operating costs
  - Copays may increase on brand drug tiers
  - Some plans may add a Part D deductible
  - Benefit reductions may come from supplementals like fitness benefits or give-backs
- Carriers leaving poor-performing market areas completely

### **How to Prepare**

Preparing for AEP means scaling your business capacity. We have a few ideas to get you started.

- Maximizing administrative staff who can:
  - Run retention campaigns — contacting clients to do prework and updates
  - Recover “lost leads” or work with current leads to obtain Permission to Contact
- Hiring downline or licensed-only agents (LOAs) who can:
  - Run client appointments and write business on behalf of your agency
  - Help prospective and current clients shop and enroll
- Using a combination of virtual and face-to-face meetings
  - Increases your capacity while allowing clients to choose their preferred format
- Using LeadCENTER to plan your lead generation strategy early
  - Choose from many lead types and target audiences, and create your own campaigns
- Leveraging your Personal Agent Website
  - Help your clients keep their relevant data updated
  - Offer prospects the value of a PlanEnroll profile

**Integrity offers tools and resources to help you better manage and serve your clients compliantly for a smoother AEP. Check out our AEP Preparation Kit for a comprehensive strategy you can use heading into any AEP season.**