

New Data on the Importance of Agents and Brokers in the Marketplace

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a [trends report](#) that details the impact agents and brokers have on consumer enrollments through the Federally-facilitated Marketplace (FFM).

The report is part of a larger information sharing effort announced by CMS today in [this official press release](#).

Below are some of the highlights from the agent/broker section (pages 5-7) of the [trends report](#):

- For plan year 2018, 49,100 agents and brokers registered with the FFM.
- These agents and brokers supported 42 percent of overall Marketplace enrollments (3,660,668 health plan enrollments during the Open Enrollment period).
- To date, CMS has implemented 93 percent of recommendations received via survey responses from our agent and broker partners.
- In responding to a recent survey, agents and brokers expressed increased satisfaction with communications, training, registration, and consumer-facing tools like Find Local Help. Of 5,000 survey respondents, 85 percent reported that they are likely to participate in the Marketplace for plan year 2019.

A few ongoing concerns for agents and brokers are frustrations with the online HealthCare.gov consumer application and enrollment process, the burden of establishing annual authorizations to represent their clients with the call center over the phone, and the shortage of agent/broker-focused customer service resources with the ability to resolve complex consumer issues.

CMS is working to address some of these concerns. Notably, for plan year 2019, CMS is launching new capabilities with its private sector direct enrollment (DE) partners, including both approved carriers and web-brokers. Agents and brokers working with CMS-approved DE partners will have access to new enrollment and client management portals and services, making it easier to assist clients with eligibility determinations, plan selections, and year-round account management for Marketplace coverage, while reducing the need to use HealthCare.gov or the Marketplace Call Center.