

2026 EDITION

CMS Call Center Monitoring Study

Secure 5-Stars with LanguageLine Solutions® –
Your Trusted Partner





Partner with LanguageLine Solutions

The road to a 5-Star CMS rating is paved with clear communication. At LanguageLine, we don't just facilitate calls; we help you secure the federal funding and market prestige that come with top-tier performance.

Our proven **5-Step Methodology for 5-Star Success** is engineered to ensure every interaction—whether with a CMS test caller or a prospective beneficiary—is flawless, empathetic, and compliant, regardless of the language they speak.

Our 5-Star Success Framework

Our comprehensive approach doesn't just provide a service; it provides a competitive advantage through:

- **A Dedicated Line for Seamless Call Management:** Eliminate routing errors and long wait times. You get a direct, prioritized path that ensures your callers are connected to the right resource instantly.
- **Customized IVR Call Trees:** Experience a frictionless “front door.” We help you design an intuitive, language-specific IVR that guides callers efficiently, reducing abandonment rates and improving the caller's first impression.
- **Targeted Training for Your Call Center Agents:** Empower your team with the confidence to handle multilingual calls. We provide your agents with the specific tools and “soft skills” needed to partner effectively with interpreters, ensuring every call feels smooth and professional.
- **Expert Linguists with Specialized CMS Training:** Protect your compliance and your rating. Our interpreters undergo specific training on Medicare terminology and CMS-monitored call protocols, ensuring they understand the technical nuances and high stakes of every interaction.
- **Bi-Weekly Strategic Check-ins:** Gain a partner, not just a vendor. Frequent sessions with your LanguageLine Account Executive ensure your strategy is evolving in real-time, allowing us to pivot quickly based on performance data and upcoming CMS windows.



In This eBook, You'll Discover:

- **2027 Star Ratings Roadmap:** Get ahead of the curve with a breakdown of the latest CMS proposed updates to MA and Part D quality measurements. We've included a direct link for you to submit public comments, ensuring your organization's voice is heard before these high-stakes changes are finalized.
- **The CMS Monitoring Blueprint:** Demystify the Call Center Monitoring Study. We reveal exactly what auditors are looking for—from interpreter availability to information accuracy—so you can eliminate the “surprises” that lead to rating drops.
- **The 5-Step Formula for 5-Star Success:** Gain exclusive access to LanguageLine's proven methodology. Learn the strategic framework currently used by the nation's most successful health plans to maintain top-tier ratings and secure maximum federal funding.
- **Actionable Performance Optimization:** Move beyond theory with practical, “day-of” tips to optimize your call center's success. You'll walk away with immediate steps to reduce wait times, empower your agents, and perfect the customer experience during the critical measurement window.

Proposed Changes to Star Ratings

On November 25, CMS released its [proposed rule](#) for the 2027 Medicare Advantage and Part D programs, outlining changes to how Star Ratings are calculated, how members can enroll or change plans, and how Part D benefits are structured.

Notably, it proposes to remove 12 Star Ratings measures, including the measure impacting interpreter accessibility: Call Center Foreign-Language Interpreter and TTY Availability beginning with the 2028 Star Ratings. CMS explained that performance on these measures is already high and based on a small number of test calls, which means even minor changes can disproportionately affect a plan's rating.

If these measures are removed, CMS indicated it would continue to monitor plan performance and compliance through other oversight activities, and customer service and member experience would still be reflected in Star Ratings through CAHPS survey measures.

CMS also proposed not to implement the Excellent Health Outcomes for All (Health Equity Index) reward which was designed to encourage Medicare Advantage plans to improve outcomes for members with social risk factors such as low income, dual eligibility, or disability.

CMS' public comment period closes at **5pmET on January 26, 2026**. If you would like to submit a comment, you can do so before the deadline here: [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)



Impact of Interpreter Services on Star Ratings

Ensuring fast access to on-demand professional medical interpreters isn't just a "nice to have" for Medicare plans—it's a strategic advantage. Interpreter access improves member satisfaction and operational efficiency by resolving issues correctly on the first contact, and it supports revenue growth: plans that earn at least four stars receive a 5% bonus from CMS. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, in 2025, this equates to approximately \$12.7 billion in Medicare Advantage (MA) quality bonus payments – nearly \$1 billion more than 2024.

The CMS Call Center Monitoring Study

CMS monitors the call centers of Medicare plans annually from February through end of May/early June to ensure Medicare Part C and D Plans enable timely access to interpreters and the accuracy of information provided by customer service agents in all languages.

Part of this study measures performance in assisting callers in their preferred language. The "accessibility" data obtained from these test calls is used by CMS in the calculation of a plan's star rating. The "accuracy" data is used for compliance purposes and does not impact a plan's star rating.

The Accuracy and Accessibility Study

This includes measuring both the availability of an interpreter and the accuracy of the information provided by the Medicare plan customer service representatives (CSRs) in these languages: Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, French, Vietnamese and Tagalog. Test calls are made from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time, according to the service areas of the plans. For plans with a service area exclusively in Puerto Rico, English is tested as a foreign language.

The following requirements must be met by plans to ensure success in the CMS Accuracy and Accessibility study:



Once the CMS test caller initiates a call, a **maximum of 10 minutes** is allowed to navigate the interactive voice response (IVR) process, including any “hold” time, **to reach a live customer service representative.**



The next measure is “complete” once the CMS test caller has an interpreter on the line and **an introductory question is answered before beginning the first of three survey questions within eight minutes of reaching a plan CSR.** Depending on the type of plan, this question is typically, “Are you the right person to answer questions about xx plan?”



The final measure includes **three survey questions** asked of the plan CSR by the test caller. Each of three questions is allowed a **maximum of seven minutes.** The questions are taken from CMS publications such as [Medicare and You](#) and plan-specific benefit information. This measure does NOT impact a plan’s Star Rating.



Recommendations for a Plan's Success: The 5-Step Formula for 5-Star Success

We've helped many of the largest and most successful Medicare plans achieve success in the CMS Call Center Monitoring Study by partnering to execute a very strategic set of steps. This method has worked very well for our clients who take advantage of this collaborative and unique approach.

The best news is these strategies are provided to our clients at no charge! In fact, following our steps will likely help your organization save money due to increased efficiencies because of shorter call-handling time.

Step 1: Dedicated CMS-specific line

Working with your LanguageLine Account Executive, LanguageLine can create a dedicated, streamlined toll-free number to make sure the calls coming into your prospective beneficiary line are quickly connected to a LanguageLine® CertifiedSM Interpreter.

Step 2: CMS Call Tree (ie: IVR in tested languages plus an option for "all other languages")

Empower your agents to quickly connect to a LanguageLine Certified Interpreter in the desired language without delay by utilizing our "CMS Call Tree." Our high-performing Medicare plan clients have shaved seconds off their connect time by taking advantage of this feature.

Let LanguageLine take care of this for you. We can have the IVR set up for you within 48 hours so you can immediately start reaping the benefits. Once set up, your Account Executive can create custom Quick Reference Guides to help your agents learn which number correlates with which language – further expediting your connection time when you have a caller with limited English proficiency (LEP) on the line.

Step 3: Share your plan job aids to get your plan names and terminology in front of our interpreters

Let us help you! Are you training your agents using plan job aids, a list of commonly asked questions and answers, plan names and prescription drug names? By sharing these essential resources with LanguageLine, our training and quality assurance teams can add them to our interpreter resource library, utilize the content in our interpreter training and related assessment, coaching, and in our ongoing professional development training program.

Step 4: Train, Train, Train!

Make sure your call center agents receive our proprietary CMS Call Center Agent Training. This training will provide essential tips for success in reducing errors and ensuring a smooth and efficient call flow.

The training can be delivered remotely in under 30 minutes by your LanguageLine Account Executive, or you can choose to have training materials provided to you to share with your teams. The training covers:

- CMS Requirements and the Accuracy & Accessibility Study
- Tips to Optimize LanguageLine Support when every second counts!
- How to Partner Effectively with an Interpreter

Step 5: Partnership: Bi-Weekly Strategic Meetings

Regularly scheduled, brief "Touch Base" meetings with your dedicated Account Executive ensures ongoing collaboration, shared learnings, faster resolution and reduces risk. These quick, frequent meetings contribute to a plan's success by improving the service your organization provides to your callers with LEP.

Tips for Success for your Call Center Agents

- 1 Confirm that the call centers are aware of the test period and are open and staffed appropriately from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. across time zones served by the plan.
- 2 Know how to quickly access a LanguageLine interpreter and have easy access to a Quick Reference Guide (QRG) providing the toll-free number, Client ID, and any additional information your plan requires.
- 3 Remain on the line once an interpreter is connected.
- 4 Agents should be educated on how to partner effectively with an interpreter. To learn more or for a complimentary training, please contact your LanguageLine Account Executive or 1-800-752-6096.
- 5 CMS recommends that the CSR notate on the beneficiary's call center record their preferred language, if other than English.
- 6 Practice conferencing in an interpreter in advance of the test period.
- 7 Do not make internal test calls in the tested languages during the test period!



Partnering with
LanguageLine is like
hanging a sign that says,
"240 Languages Spoken Here."



Tips to Optimize Support from LanguageLine Solutions:

- ✓ **Meet LanguageLine Account Executives, our CMS Specialist, and Medicare plan representatives** prior to the start of the study period. Working together, they can proactively address any needs they identify such as consolidating accounts for tracking purposes, reviewing call flows to make sure they are streamlined, and securing plan-specific information to share with interpreters for training purposes.
- ✓ **Work with LanguageLine to set up a dedicated CMS line** for enhanced tracking and reporting and an IVR call menu in the 6 tested CMS languages to expedite access to the interpreter in the selected language.
- ✓ **Share plan resource materials** such as plan job aids with your LanguageLine Account Executive. These materials can be shared with LanguageLine's interpreters and housed in our CMS Interpreter Resource Library for training purposes.
- ✓ **Identify any issues as soon as possible.** Contact your LanguageLine Account Executive or Customer Service, or submit a Voice of the Customer feedback form, as soon as an issue occurs so that it can be resolved in anticipation of additional test calls.
 - [Voice of the Customer Feedback Form](#)
 - Call 1-800-752-6096 or [email](#) Customer Service
- ✓ **Ask LanguageLine for additional training for call center staff.** LanguageLine can also provide quick reference guides and best practices for partnering with an interpreter.
- ✓ **Conduct weekly or bi-weekly meetings** with your Account Executive to review the calls, and discuss any improvements needed.



LanguageLine
Solutions®

**For More Information or to get set up for
5-Star Success in the CMS Call Center Monitoring Study,**
contact your Account Executive or call 1-800-752-6096