

# Preparing for AEP 2020

Essential steps Assurance agents can take to prepare for this year's Medicare Annual Election Period (AEP)

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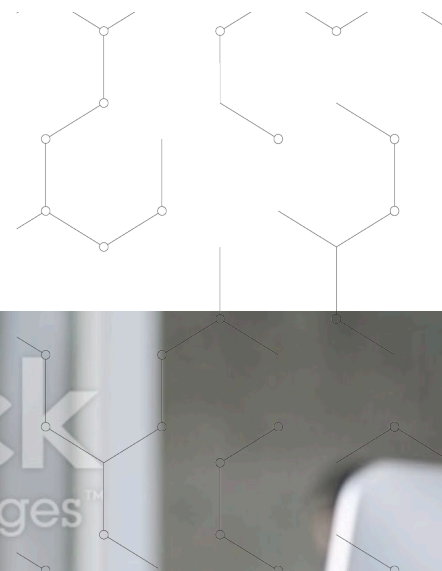


## **AEP begins in six months — Agents should start preparing today**

The 2020 Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) begins October 15, 2019, and runs through December 7, 2019. Plans sold during this time will go into effect on January 1, 2021.

Medicare Advantage presents a seemingly endless variety of complexities and challenges. AEP is often a very busy, complicated and demanding selling period for all agents, especially those who are new to AEP. There are many varying regulations, specifications, and carrier options, not simply on a state-by-state level, but often occurring between counties.

While this can be a financially lucrative time for many agents, it's also a very stressful and challenging period. In order to succeed during AEP, agents must do as much preparation and planning as possible.



## The Essentials



There are three basic items every Assurance agent must have in order to be properly qualified to sell during the 2020 AEP.

- ☑ AHIP certification
- ☑ Ready to Sell (RTS) status in 3+ states
- ☑ Errors and Omissions (E&O) Insurance

Agents are allowed to take the exam up to three times per registration. If an agent fails all three attempts, they will have to register and pay again. Many carriers will not accept three failures in a given year, so it's essential that agents study and prepare as much as possible before taking the exam.

### Once you pass

Once an agent passes the exam they will receive an AHIP certification. Agents are responsible for sharing a copy of this with Assurance. This can be emailed to your Onboarding Service Manager. Agents should also keep a copy of this certification for their records.

Once agents are AHIP certified, they can approach MA carriers and apply to be credentialed. This process typically involves a brief, carrier-specific exam. For a list of the MA carriers, please see the Resources and Links page at the bottom of this document.

Each carrier will track agents' progress and update their status within their system. There is no need for an agent to notify Assurance of their status with specific carriers.

## AHIP Certification

America's Health Insurance Plans, or AHIP, is a national healthcare organization that verifies an agent is certified to sell Medicare Advantage (MA) in compliance with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

In order to obtain this certification, an agent must pass the AHIP exam. The AHIP exam is a 50-question, open book exam administered online. Most agents typically require 1-2 weeks of consistent study in order to properly prepare for this test. Agents who are less experienced with MA may want to plan a little extra time to study.

### Taking the exam

Assurance has partnered with AmeriLife to offer the 2020 AHIP certification exam for \$125. That's a \$50 discount from the standard price. To access this offer go to the following URL and complete the registration:

<https://www.ahipmedicaretraining.com/>





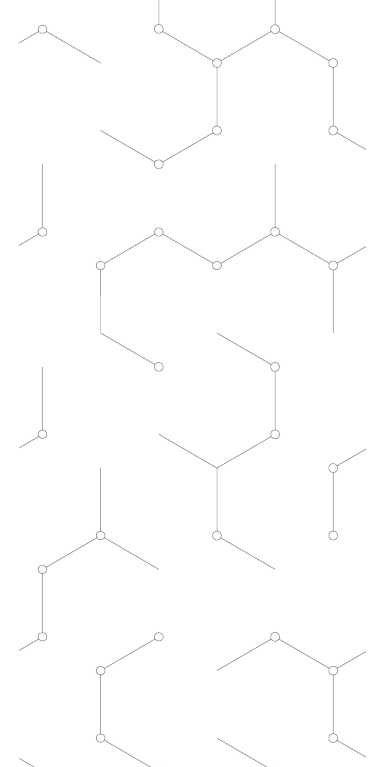
## Ready To Sell

The National Insurance Producer Registry (NIPR) maintains a database that contains information about insurance agents and brokers, separated by state Departments of Insurance. The NIPR data contains every agent's National Producer Number (NPN), Lines of Authority, and state licensures.

In order to be licensed to sell in any state, agents must purchase or renew a license through NIPR. The process is very straightforward: agents simply go to NIPR.com and complete the application requirements for the state in question. Once the application is approved, the agent will be Ready To Sell (RTS) in that state.

If an agent is unsure about their license or RTS status in a state, they can search the NIPR database.

NIPR licensure usually happens quickly, but Assurance highly recommends agents get their licenses ready and organized as early as possible.



## E&O Insurance

Errors and Omissions (E&O) Insurance is a type of liability insurance that protects the insured against any claims, and also covers legal fees involved in trying the claim.

As independent contractors, all ASSURANCE agents are responsible for having up-to-date E&O coverage. There are many E&O carriers on the market and agents are encouraged to shop for a plan that works best for them.





In addition to the above, agents who possess the following do best during AEP

## Extra qualifications for greater success

### NIPR RTS status in 10-states

The math here is very simple: the more states an agent has RTS status in, the more opportunities they have to sell. If an agent is thoughtful in obtaining licenses, they can begin selling at the start of the day on the East Coast and keep selling until the day ends in Hawaii.

Agents who really want to succeed during AEP are encouraged to get as many state licensures as possible.



### Enjoy the senior market

Remember that the AEP market consists of seniors aged 65 and older. Many of these have complicated medical histories, are on various prescription medications, and see a host of diverse doctors and specialists. Agents must be comfortable speaking to the needs of older populations.

Additionally, call times during AEP are much longer than in other settings. Agents should be prepared for longer and more deliberate conversations during AEP.

### One year's telephonic sales experience

Agents will be wearing their headsets a lot during AEP, and those who are experienced and comfortable selling a complex product over the phone will succeed.



## Contact Us

Agents who have questions, want to submit certifications, or just need a little guidance along the way, can reach out to any of the following Partner Onboarding & Success Managers:

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Part one of a multi-volume series dedicated to helping agents succeed during AEP 2020.

Future installments will showcase tips and tricks from experienced Medicare agents, address ways agents can prepare themselves for AEP, and take a closer look at the senior customers you'll be selling to.

## Links & Resources

For the 2020 Medicare Advantage AEP, Assurance agents can be credentialed with the following carriers:



Agents can apply for state licenses, residential and non-, via The National Insurance Producer Registry (NIPR):

[www.NIPR.com](http://www.NIPR.com)

General information about Medicare Advantage or Medicare Supplemental can be found at:

Medicare.gov

<https://www.medicare.gov>

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services:

<https://www.cms.gov>

