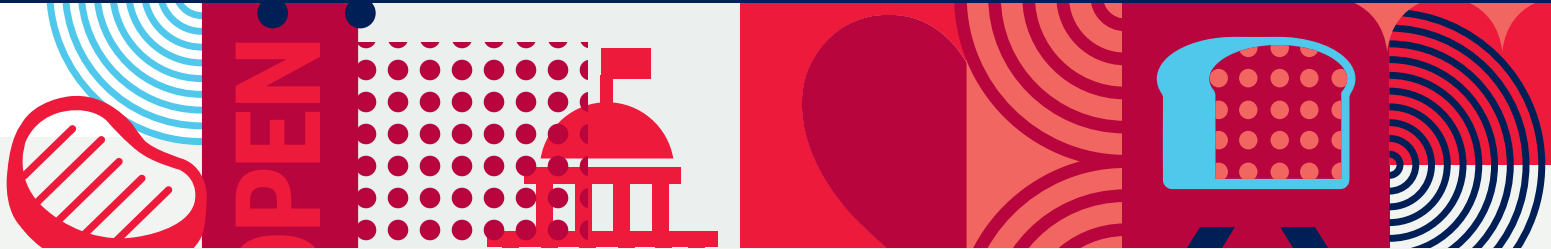


An Independent Grocers Guide to Payment Technology for Medicare Advantage Healthy Benefit Cards



Medicare Advantage healthy benefit cards offer a convenient way for eligible individuals to pay for groceries and over-the-counter drugs with their healthcare benefits. More than 30 million Americans are now enrolled in Medicare Advantage programs, and at least 5 million participants are now receiving healthy benefit cards through their health plan.

As an independent grocer, understanding and implementing the necessary payment technology to accept these cards is essential for providing a seamless experience to your customers. This resource is designed to help retailers better understand the healthy benefit card technology, as well as the process and requirements for accepting these cards, focusing on how Medicare Advantage plans from Humana, United Healthcare, and others contract with payment networks such as Solutran, Nations Benefits, and INCOMM.

UNDERSTAND THE COSTS

Ask card payment network providers how much the fees will be for accepting these cards. Will there be a fixed per transaction fee or a combination of a transaction and a percentage of the shopper basket fee? Will there be monthly fees for settlement and reporting? Work with the health insurance provider and card network provider to determine how many cards may be distributed in your market area. While every customer is important, will the cost of implementing card acceptance provide a return on your investment?

UNDERSTAND THE PARTNERSHIPS

Familiarize yourself with the relationships between Medicare Advantage plans, such as those from Humana and United Healthcare, and payment networks like Solutran, Nations Benefits, and INCOMM. This will help you understand the technology infrastructure and support needed for independent grocers to begin accepting these cards.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT POS PROVIDER

For independent grocers considering replacing their current POS system, selecting a POS provider that is compatible with the chosen payment network provider's technology is crucial. Look for providers with success in implementing and supporting this new payment technology. Consider reaching out with your POS dealer to POS manufacturers to request support for these cards. Examine the costs associated with adding the capability to accept these cards.

UNDERSTAND THE REQUIREMENTS

Familiarize yourself with the specific requirements for accepting Medicare Advantage healthy benefit cards. These may include compliance with certain security standards, processing guidelines, item eligibility requirements and reimbursement for transactions completed with the cards.

TRAIN YOUR STAFF

Ensure your staff is trained in how to process transactions involving Medicare Advantage healthy benefit cards. Just as there are certain steps during a transaction to process WIC and SNAP transactions, Medicare Advantage cards may involve new cashier steps in making sure all card payments work correctly. This includes understanding the card types, transaction processes, and any specific steps required for processing these transactions. Use NGA's signage until you are able to accept these cards.

INTEGRATE PAYMENT TECHNOLOGY

Your POS provider will need to integrate the necessary technology for accepting Medicare Advantage healthy benefit cards. This may involve installing new modules or plugins and configuring your system to recognize and process these transactions. Your third-party payments processor may also need to be involved.

TEST THE SYSTEM

Before rolling out the updated payment system to customers, test the functionality to ensure that transactions involving Medicare Advantage healthy benefit cards can be processed successfully. This may involve running test transactions, testing for item eligibility conflicts with other existing payments, and verifying that the system is working as intended.

STAY INFORMED ABOUT CHANGES

Keep up to date with any changes to Medicare Advantage healthy benefit card requirements or payment technology. This will help you maintain compliance and ensure your payment system continues to function correctly.

Accepting Medicare Advantage has become a critical competitive need for independent grocers. NGA is actively working with Medicare Advantage plans and technology providers seeking new capabilities for independent grocers to accept these cards. We have explicitly asked the key stakeholders to fix this problem by Q3 and many technology providers are being to roll out capabilities with Solutran, Nations Benefits, and INCOMM.

