2025 EDITION

CMS Call Center Monitoring Study

Elevate Your Star Rating with LanguageLine Solutions® – Your Trusted Partner

Partner with LanguageLine Solutions

LanguageLine Solutions is dedicated to helping our clients achieve five stars in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Call Center Monitoring Study. We recognize the critical role these test calls play in securing additional federal funding, effectively marketing your plans, and delivering an outstanding experience for your members and prospective beneficiaries.

With LanguageLine's proven **5-Step Methodology for 5-Star Success**, your organization can achieve top-tier performance, whether you're assisting a CMS test caller or a prospective beneficiary.

Our comprehensive approach includes:

- A dedicated line for seamless call management
- Customized IVR call tree
- Targeted training for your call center agents
- Specialized CMS-specific interpreter training
- Regular bi-weekly check-ins with your LanguageLine Account Executive

In This eBook, You'll Discover:

- Key components of the CMS Call Center Monitoring Study
- An overview of LanguageLine's 5-Step Methodology
- Actionable tips to optimize your success

Impact of Interpreter Services on Star Ratings

Ensuring fast access to on-demand professional medical interpreters improves equity, quality of care, and efficiencies. It also maximizes reimbursements, as plans that secure at least four stars receive a 5% bonus from CMS. In 2024, this equated to approximately $11.8 billion in Medicare Advantage (MA) quality bonus payments – $1 billion less than 2023. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), the decrease in estimated bonus payments is due to a star-rating decline following the expiration of COVID-19 pandemic-era policies which temporarily increased star ratings for certain plans.

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 effective communication and ensure quality for seniors across all languages by placing test calls to prospective beneficiary call centers.

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:

10 MIN — 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.**

8 MIN — 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?"

7 MIN — 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 Methodology 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® Certified℠ 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 expending 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 "Touch Base" 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.

You choose the cadence of these meetings. Can't make a meeting? No problem. Our Account Executives can provide you with the information you need whether it's detailed reporting, resolutions, or tips shared by other clients.

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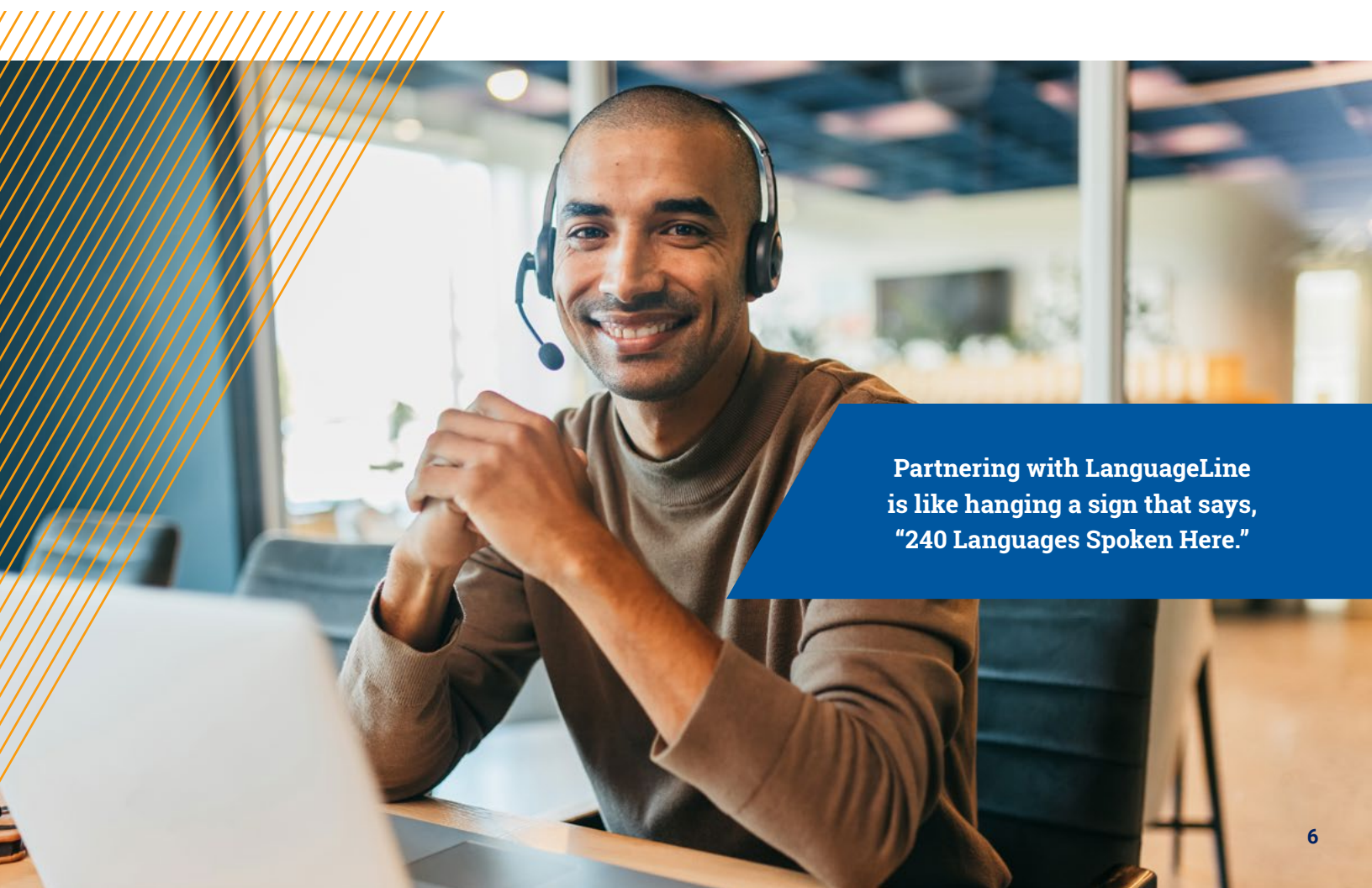
Partnering with LanguageLine is like hanging a sign that says, "240 Languages Spoken Here."

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 securng 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.

We're the trusted language solutions provider to over 80% of 5-Star Plans

Understanding of CMS Requirements CMS

LanguageLine's CMS specialist works throughout the year to stay on top of changes in the process, including languages to be tested, timers, and cut points. This information is shared internally and with our clients to optimize their success.

Optimized Interpreter Staffing

LanguageLine's Workforce Management Team ensures appropriate interpreter staffing levels for CMS targeted languages during the test period.

CMS-Specific Interpreter Training and Ongoing Quality Assurance

LanguageLine's Training Department incorporates the meaningful use of Medicare- and plan-specific terminology into the training and assessment provided to our interpreters. LanguageLine's Senior Language Specialists monitor calls and conduct coaching to ensure the highest level of interpreter quality.

Dedicated CMS Line

LanguageLine provides clients with the option of creating a dedicated CMS line for streamlined calls and enhanced tracking and reporting.

Real-Time Process Improvement

LanguageLine works with clients as quickly as possible to identify problems and escalate resolutions to ensure your ongoing success.

LanguageLine Solutions ®

For More Information

Contact your Account Executive
or call 1-800-752-6096