



# Silver State Health Insurance Exchange

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## AGENDA ITEM

☐ For Possible Action

☒ Information Only

**Date:** June 23, 2022  
**Item Number:** V  
**Title:** Marketing and Outreach Report

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board and the public with an overview of our Off-Season Marketing & Outreach Campaign for Nevada Health Link.

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## GENERAL COMMENTS

### **General Comments: Marketing & Advertising**

The period after open enrollment has been a time for the Exchange, The Abbi Agency (TAA), the Exchange's marketing and outreach vendor, and Marketing for Change (M4C), a subcontractor to TAA and research team for the Exchange, to dive deeper into the Nevada Health Link (NVHL) audience and better understand the customer journey and the customer's level of understanding, needs and wants when it comes to health insurance coverage. Marketing for Change conducted several research studies in the off-season (not open enrollment, or Jan. 15 - Nov. 1) to drive this better understanding of the Nevada consumer.

The Exchange Communications team and The Abbi Agency have worked together to message the Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to target audiences that have experienced qualifying life events.

This campaign featured updated landing pages in both English and Spanish, a revised creative concept with clear and concise messaging, digitally focused advertising, and a robust community outreach program.

Additionally, throughout this timeframe, TAA worked closely with the Exchange and statewide key stakeholders/partners to develop and support messaging on the Unwinding of the Public Health Emergency (PHE) as well as materials to convey the positive impact of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) subsidy increase and expansion for more Nevadans.

Lastly, TAA and Ericka Aviles Consulting (EAC), subcontractor of TAA that focuses on Hispanic media and outreach, put together an Off-Season Content Plan that is both robust and engaging. This content is founded in keyword research and depicts the relevant health-related content topics and themes to highlight along with the partners to best engage. This strategic plan allows the community outreach and public relations teams to work in lockstep with the social media digital content team and ensure that Nevada Health Link is highlighting items in their blogs and email newsletters that resonate with their audiences and position the brand as a thought leader.

## **General Research & Insights**

In support of marketing efforts, multiple research studies were conducted. Marketing for Change designed and fielded three quantitative surveys immediately following the end of Open Enrollment in January 2022 in order to get a snapshot of three audiences (current Nevada Health Link customers, potential customers, and the general population). Marketing for Change fielded a Targeted Custom Survey (N=800) of Nevada Health Link's potential customers (e.g., the uninsured, self-insured, current Medicaid recipients) with the goal of understanding profiles of potential customers, assessing awareness, understanding and interactions with Nevada Health Link, identifying motivators and obstacles for purchasing health insurance and evaluating the Open Enrollment advertising campaign. The second survey fielded was the Bi-annual Pulse Check Survey (N=1,006) that surveyed the general population of Nevada to understand if views on Nevada Health Link had changed since the last Pulse Check survey in June 2021 based on the Open Enrollment campaign. The third and final survey was fielded among current Nevada Health Link customers (N=1,064) in order to assess current customer satisfaction, their shopping and purchasing experience and the Open Enrollment campaign.

Marketing for Change then conducted follow-up qualitative interviews (N=21) from both the Targeted Custom Survey and the Current User Survey to further understand and investigate the quantitative findings. Marketing for Change designed pilot user experience testing for June 2022 after hearing about some customer struggles and barriers to purchasing insurance from Nevada Health Link in the follow-up of current user interviews. This research will lay the foundation to a bigger study in 2022 with the goals of optimizing the shopping experience.

Marketing for Change conducted exploratory research with the Hispanic/Latino audience in Nevada (N=40), which included a series of focus groups and a follow-up bulletin board study. The study was designed to understand the barriers/motivators to securing health insurance and shopping on Nevada Health Link, explore dynamics around trust in Nevada Health Link and government-subsidized health

insurance for mixed (documented and undocumented) households, examine recent health insurance considerations and purchasing experiences, investigate the potential needs the audience believes health insurance can fulfill and gather reactions to exploratory creative messaging.

Throughout the year, M4C continuously analyzed Sisense (the Exchange's program used to create data reports) data to monitor performance metrics associated with enrollment data. Analyses included examination of demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic correlates of enrollment at NVHL. Specifically, Marketing for Change explored how variables such as race/ethnicity, family size, household income, county of residence, and age were associated with levels of new enrollees and active re-enrollees during the 2022 Open Enrollment Period. In addition, analyses compared differences in patterns of enrollment between the 2021 and 2022 open enrollment periods. Findings provided key insights into population differences and shifts among NVHL consumers, as well as informed future targeted marketing efforts.

### **The American Rescue Plan: Marketing & Outreach**

Over a hundred thousand Nevadans currently benefit from access to affordable health insurance options through Nevada Health Link, thanks to two policies: the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). These policies ensure that consumers have the security of affordable, comprehensive health coverage when consumers lose their jobs or income during the pandemic, assuring access to health care when they needed it the most. The Abbi Agency and Nevada Health Link together built a fact sheet familiarizing key stakeholders with the work that Nevada Health Link does, the number of Nevadans that are enrolled, the recent successes of the last Open Enrollment Period and the affects the ARPA expiration could potentially have on Nevadans. This fact sheet was a tool for Nevada Health Link to share in attended conferences in Spring of 2022 in Washington D.C. and Philadelphia.

### **The Unwinding of the Public Health Emergency: Marketing & Outreach**

The Abbi Agency worked together with Nevada Health Link and the Nevada State Medicaid office to put together a marketing and outreach plan that targets first the general public and then will focus on those Nevadans potentially losing their Medicaid benefits. The goal is to support their partners at the Medicaid office by amplifying the message to update all personal information so that their consumers are reachable and don't experience a lapse in coverage. The next phase of this program is to provide those that are losing their coverage with easy enrollment information through Nevada Health Link to prevent a gap in coverage. The total number of individuals is estimated to reach the tens of thousands.

### **Special Enrollment Period: Campaign Overview**

The overarching goal of this Special Enrollment Period was to have a targeted campaign that spoke directly to the identified target audiences that had recently gone through a qualifying life event. The campaign creative is heavy on clear and distinct messaging and uses bold colors from the branded

color palette to draw attention.

The target audiences identified for this campaign were as follows: Those that were recently married or divorced, moved to Nevada, experienced a change in income or change in employment status, birth, loss of health coverage, turning 26, and gaining U.S. legal status.

### **Special Enrollment Period: Paid Media Strategy**

The Abbi Agency (TAA) is committed to reaching Nevadans from all backgrounds and communities on behalf of Nevada Health Link. More diverse than ever, Nevada has robust Asian American Pacific Islander, African American, Native American, and Hispanic communities. Our 2022 Special Enrollment Media Plan takes a digital approach with highly effective tactics to reach these historically underserved communities, as well as the remaining communities in Nevada.

Overall, TAA and the Exchange allocated the spend broadly across a diverse range of media channels to ensure Nevadans were reached on the digital platforms that they frequent. Google Search and Display are used to build awareness of Nevada Health Link and the Special Enrollment Period (SEP) through exposure to its SEP campaign. Paid social media placements similarly moved individuals from initial exposure to consideration by using specific targeting of life events. As users landed on NevadaHealthLink.com, the digital ad experience was able to retarget them in the future. Each of the digital platforms had retargeting ad sets and creatives, ensuring that individuals who had shown interest in Nevada Health Link enrollment were nudged again. This combination of channels and tactics generated awareness and consideration of the target audiences.

### **Special Enrollment Period: Paid Media Tactics**

**Connected TV/OTT** The team worked with connected TV partners to reach Nevadans through their televisions.

**Google** This expansive network was the second largest media channel, which can be attributed to Google's reach. The Google SEM campaigns ran on Google's search engine as well as their extended reach network. The Exchange geotargeted the SEP campaigns to Nevada, however, it was expected this market share in Nevada to hold true. Additionally, Google's display network was leveraged to reach individuals across the internet, on sites such as news, shopping, sports, weather and more. Finally, the YouTube network was used to reach Nevadans with engaging video content. Nevada Health Link's ads ran on the YouTube platform, as well as their streaming services YouTube TV/Movies, and their extended video network. YouTube's extended video network reaches viewers across the web, on sites like Fox News, AccuWeather, and ESPN.

**Radio Streaming** Spotify streaming ads were also leveraged to reach those that have had qualifying life events and would qualify for a special enrollment period by utilizing general awareness messaging for the campaign.

**Paid Social Media** A strong mix of social media platforms are being used to reach Nevadans where they are, so to speak. TAA leveraged messaging on each platform that is appropriate for the demographic present.

- Facebook: One of Nevada Health Link's broadest awareness platforms, as nearly 70% of US adults use Facebook daily, spending an average of 38 minutes on the platform daily. Both Spanish and English language audiences were reached.
- Instagram: Skews slightly younger than Facebook. As well, demographically, the Spanish Language audiences are more active on Instagram than on Facebook.
- Twitter: Twitter's demographic skews younger, is more diverse than Facebook and Instagram, and has a more even user distribution between Males and Females. This platform will help Nevada Health Link reach minority communities including African American, Latinx and LGBTQ+.
- LinkedIn: Nevada's self-employed, gig and contractor populations were reached. A broad range of appropriate job titles such as hairdressers, rideshare drivers or tradespeople were targeted throughout SEP.
- TikTok: A younger audience was reached with this platform. This platform is highly popular with the Gen Z audience but is growing in other audiences. There are over 700k TikTok users in Nevada, with 70% of them over the age of 20.
- Pinterest: The Pinterest audience demographic skews heavily female. This was leveraged by reaching family decision makers that are the mom/wife role.

**Print** TAA and Exchange worked with a few print partners during this time period. They had placements with the Vegas Chamber and the Carson Valley Mailer (Chamber), along with Nevada Physician Magazine.

### **Off-Season Content Strategy**

In the post-open enrollment period, The Abbi Agency and Nevada Health Link developed a robust content strategy that provided relevancy for NVHL, supported NVHL in being a thought-leader in healthcare, and supported all partner agencies. Backed by keyword and search intent research, this off-season content strategy has been a key component in boosting Nevada Health Link's organic search ranking and overall domain authority, while answering health consumers questions quickly and efficiently.

### **The Challenge**

As Nevada Health Link's Open Enrollment Period closes, the Exchange can avoid losing content momentum by enacting a content strategy that engages consumers (especially new enrollees) in relevant health information that inspires them to live healthy lives and use their new insurance coverage in the most impactful ways possible.

### **The Solution**

An off season content strategy that leverages performing keywords at NevadaHealthLink.com, as well as attainable keyword optimization on key topics, will increase interaction with Nevada Health Link during this special enrollment and off season period but also increase sustainable organic search performance by identifying and using keywords in Nevada Health Link's content to online boost search results. . Content that is formatted to perform well in search, answer key health questions

efficiently and directly, and inspire the insured to live healthy lifestyles will create long-lasting organic search equity on NevadaHealthLink.com.

### **A Themed Strategy**

The Abbi Agency proposed a steady cadence of content across five content categories to appeal to a wide range of Nevada Health Link readers and give them a steady stream of useful, actionable and inspiring content.

- Partnerships: Any new or existing Nevada Health Link partnerships that amplify the services or reach of the state exchange.
- Events: Health events where Nevadans can connect with Nevada Health Link in person or the Exchange's partners.
- Health Information: Overall health information that is relevant to, and actionable for the Nevada Health Link audience.
- Themed days/months: Leveraging days or months such as "Diabetes Awareness Month" to deliver important themed health content. Here we will also incorporate multicultural dates important to diverse communities.
- Special Enrollment Period: Do you qualify? How to enroll. What to know.

### **Public and Media Relations Overview & Strategy**

The Abbi Agency aligned with Nevada Health Link's goals of getting more Nevadans enrolled in health insurance through the Special Enrollment Period, aligning Public Relations efforts with relevant and newsworthy angles from the off-season content strategy and supported Nevada Health Link's key announcements.

After OEP wrapped in mid-January, TAA focused on pushing post-OEP messaging, which supported The Exchange's most successful enrollment to date. With over 100,000 consumers enrolled in health insurance by the end of Open Enrollment, TAA pushed out a statewide press release and individual media pitches around why this enrollment was so successful and the impact this has on Nevadans.

In February, TAA pushed out PR pitches surrounding topics of "what to do once you're insured," as many new consumers' insurance plans took effect starting February 1, 2022. Later in the month, Ryan High was announced as the new Executive Director (ED) and TAA implemented an immediate plan surrounding his new role, given the Executive Director of the Exchange has long had public facing recognition. This rollout plan helped introduce Ryan to the public and his continued support for ensuring all Nevadans have access to quality and affordable health insurance.

The new ED rollout plan included an immediate press release announcement which came from Governor Sisolak's office, follow-up pitches with media and interviews around Ryan's vision for the Exchange, crafting a new bio and doing a video introduction interview for NVHL's website.

After Ryan's announcement, which came shortly after the successful OEP announcement, TAA began outreach to prominent and top-tier national media to support why Nevada is a "model" state for Exchanges. This was tied to the messaging around the upcoming unwinding of the PHE and possible



ending of ARPA benefits. TAA generated leads with Washington Post and CNN for stories later in the year once more details are announced.

Also throughout the OEP, TAA focused on the small business demographic by partnering with a local Northern Nevada small business owner, Matt Morning of Kimera, who was a former enrollee on the Exchange. TAA drafted and placed an Op-ed in the local newspaper, Reno Gazette Journal on behalf of Matt, describing his positive experience with the Exchange and how it served as a lifeline for his family during a time he was not able to provide insurance through his business.

Through this ongoing partnership with Matt, he also agreed to filming a testimonial video of his story, which is currently in progress and will be used for various owned content on the website and social media.

In March, TAA sent out a press release on behalf of the Exchange highlighting the 12th Anniversary of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This garnered statewide coverage and reminded Nevadans of how the ACA has helped more Nevadans become enrolled in insurance and why this still matters today.

Other PR pushes included National Public Health Week in April, Small Business Week in May, Women's Health Month in May and PRIDE Month in June.

In early June, TAA sent out a press release to statewide media announcing Janel Davis' and Katie Charleson's new promotions. With Janel having a longstanding relationship with statewide media over the past 7 years through her communications role, it was necessary to inform the media of Katie's new role as Communications Officer.

Ericka Aviles Consulting (EAC) provided a Hispanic Marketing, Media and Community Outreach strategy plan; identified and facilitated interviews and media opportunities (print and broadcast); identified/connected with stakeholders and community groups targeted to Spanish speaking populations in Southern & Northern Nevada; and translated marketing materials.

- EAC secured media opportunities and partnerships that targeted other minority demographics in the community including with AAPI and Black and African American community.
- EAC also included Nevada Health Link messaging in organization communication channels to partners including Latinas in Power, EAC social channels and newsletter.
- EAC secured an op-ed in Las Vegas PRIDE Magazine, which ran in June in honor of Pride Month, and supported messaging around health equity and health disparities in the LGBTQ+ community.

### **Special Enrollment Period: Event Outreach and Community Relations**

During the off-season period from the second half of January through June, the community relations and event outreach teams were focused on enriching the off-season content plan through community outreach, attendance of events and key sponsorships.

Ericka Aviles Consulting researched and provided Hispanic | Latino collaborations with organizations serving underserved communities by facilitating and securing tabling events and sponsorships targeting those communities.