

Steering Committee Meeting Summary

JUNE 25, 2024, 3:00 – 4:30 PM CENTRAL TIME

Summary of Meeting Themes:

- Mathematica provided an update on the transition from the SIS (Supports Intensity Scale) to the interRAI-Intellectual Disability (interRAI-ID) assessment for the ID waiver. The new tool for children is called the Children and Youth Mental Health Assessment (ChYME-DD). Iowa HHS will ask members to take the interRAI-ID or ChYMH-DD assessment over the phone. These assessments are voluntary. Testing both assessments at the same time will help Iowa HHS make sure both assessments find the same needs for help and services.
 - Committee members asked whether this assessment process would be anonymous and noted that people might be nervous about taking additional assessments. The information will be looked at in aggregate and will not impact access to services. All personal information will be kept private and safe, stored on a secure, protected network.
- Mathematica shared a summary of the feedback received on the concept paper. Iowa posted the concept paper publicly in April 2024 and took in feedback through the end of May.
- The Mathematica team also shared draft definitions for the system navigator role and the hub and spoke model. Committee members provided the following feedback on the proposed process and roles:
 - Educate and train system navigators to understand the many complex systems.
 - Plan for staff turnover and think about how to bring new staff up to speed.
 - Clearly define roles to make sure that multiple entities are not tasked with the same jobs.
 - Use performance measures for tracking and accountability.
 - Fund resources, such as translation and access services, to make sure that the navigator can serve a wide population.
- Finally, Mathematica shared examples of how other states structure their tiered budgets to pay for services. After discussing examples of how some states adjust tiered budgets based on living situations, committee members shared points for consideration:
 - Tiers should have clear criteria, use a person-centered approach, and promote choice.
 - Tiers need to be clearly communicated so that people can understand their services.
 - Consider social and environmental factors (socioeconomic status), which impacts the assistance that people need.
 - Think about how family living situations are included in the tiered system, as families often provide key natural supports and are unpaid.
 - Using living situations to set a budget could allow flexibility to meet varying levels of need. However, there is also concern that tiered budgets may not be nimble enough to adjust to changes in living situations, as people may live in different settings briefly before finding a good fit.

- Tiers should be set up to support more independent environments and a person's residential choice. For example, some people are only in residential care because they face challenges finding the hourly services they need because of workforce shortages. People may not want to live in groups of four or five and may do best living alone or with fewer roommates. For example, it is very important that tiered budgets do not limit funding (which could be perceived as penalizing) for those who choose to live alone, or with family versus a group living situation.
- Streamline the budget process so that it is flexible when people's needs change. For example, it is important that people can have re-assessments quickly when they have major changes in their health or living situation because people might need more services right away.
- The steering committee also discussed examples of how other states use budget guardrails. Budget guardrails are an approach some states use to specify how much budgets can change (go higher or lower) from year to year. The steering committee members shared the following feedback:
 - Currently, a person's approved waiver services can go down quite a bit from one year to the next; it is hard and stressful for people to manage these big changes.
 - People should not have their budget lowered because of workforce shortages that lead to a lack of network access. It may appear that people do not need the quantity or level of services they have (the technical term for this is under-utilization), but that is because they cannot access needed services.
 - Having a wide budget range that determines the next year's budget could create an incentive to spend to the upper limit.
 - Make sure that the tiers are carefully planned and calculated, using the most accurate information on things like reimbursement rates.
 - Committee members discussed the needed balance between offering a simplified tiered budgeting approach and one flexible enough to be "fine-tuned and useable".
 - Committee members also stressed that it is crucial to communicate any changes clearly. The language and concepts are complex, but explaining tiered budgets in a way that people can understand is key. Iowans' primary concern is keeping access to their services.
- The next steering committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 30.