

# Updates on HOME activities

## **JUNE 2025**

Over the last few months, the HOME Project team has made progress on key items.

- Drafted updated waiver amendment language for the Waiver Priority Needs Assessment (WPNA) and developed a plan for managing waitlists in the future.
- Continued building core assessment items for both children and adults.
- Continued discussions on improving quality management processes. Began creating a centralized system to track long-term services and supports (LTSS) quality measures and quality improvement activities.
- Interviewed Iowa HHS staff to gather feedback and propose strategies to improve provider capacity.
- Hosted a HOME Services and Provider Workgroup Meeting to review provider qualifications and a plan for effectively communicating with providers about HOME.

## **APRIL 2025**

Over the last few months, the HOME Project team has made progress on key items.

- Refined the draft of the expanded Waiver Priority Needs Assessment (WPNA) with questions to assess risk of institutionalization.
- Outlined implementation steps for the proposed new waivers, including the WPNA, future assessments, provider reimbursement tiers, and individual budgets.
- Created a testing plan for Iowa HHS's use of InterRAI, including assessing validity and reliability of the core assessment items for all waiver members.
- Planned for 2025 waiver activities to prepare for the future HOME waiver launch, including reviewing administrative code for needed updates before implementation.
- Developed case manager training on proposed new waivers.
- Created managed care organization (MCO) case management ratio reports and reviewed with all MCOs.
- Gathered input from the Services and Provider workgroup on revisions to provider qualifications for future waivers. Providers and MCOs participate in this workgroup to advise on key topics.

## **DECEMBER 2024**

Over the last few months, the HOME Project team has made progress on key items.

- Continued planning efforts for systems changes, including:
  - Drafted updates for Medicaid HCBS informational materials to make them easier to understand.
  - Finalized risk of institutionalization waitlist screening questions and assigned weights for risk factors. These questions will help prioritize the new waiver waitlists based on individuals' needs.
  - Held a 30-day public comment period on using the interRAI tools for members on the intellectual disability waiver.
- Continued working on key components of the new waivers:
  - Shared draft waiver applications with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for preliminary feedback.
  - Created a draft base of the uniform assessment tool that future HOME waivers will use and refined it with a workgroup.
  - Developed trainings for case managers on Accessing Community Resources and knowledge checks for intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) training.

## **SEPTEMBER 2024**

Over the last few months, the HOME Project team has made progress on key items.

- Continued planning efforts for systems changes, including:
  - Conducted interviews with Iowa navigation organizations to help improve materials used to understand HCBS eligibility and services available.
  - Completed analyses to identify factors that predict the risk of institutionalization, which will help prioritize the new waiver waitlists based on individuals' needs.
  - Evaluated the new interRAI tools through an optional assessment with members on the intellectual disability waiver to make sure that the new tools show the same needs for help and services as the current tools.
- Continued working on key components of the new waivers:
  - Outlined the transition process from the Children and Youth Waiver to the Adult and Aging Waiver.
  - Launched new MCO case management ratios and requirements.
  - Developed and finalized certification and refresher toolkits for case managers.

- Conducted interviews with Integrated Health Home (IHH) care coordinators.

Based on feedback from lowans, the HOME project proposes to keep the current Elderly Waiver for members age 65+ who are not otherwise disabled. Services in the Elderly Waiver will not change at this time. Members on the Adult and Aging Waiver who have a disability will stay on that waiver after age 65.

## **JUNE – JULY 2024**

Iowa HHS asked members on the ID waiver to do an optional assessment using a new assessment tool. Iowa HHS plans to change the current assessment tools to the new tools to make the way we do assessments easier for people. This information will make sure that Iowa HHS finds the same needs for help and services with the new tool as we do with the current one.

## **JANUARY – JUNE 2024**

Iowa HHS conducted the Needs on Waitlist (NOW) Survey to improve access to Community-Based Services (CBS). We called people on waiver waitlists for home and community-based services (HCBS) to learn about their health conditions and support needs. Responses will be used to help improve the system and processes in the future. The survey was optional. Waitlist status will not be impacted.

## **MAY 2024**

Iowa HHS posted proposed changes to home and community-based services waivers outlined in the [concept paper](#) and hosted three listening sessions, with members and providers, to gather direct feedback on the proposed changes.

## **DECEMBER 2023**

Iowa HHS wrapped up the last of 15 [HOMETown Conversations](#) events in December. The HOME team held in-person events in 12 cities across the state as well as three virtual events, including one Spanish language event, to expand participation opportunities. Some 1,169 lowans, including 23 state legislators, attended a HOMETown

Conversation and shared their stories, input and ideas to improve community-based services in Iowa.

## **OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2023**

Iowa HHS leadership was on the road this fall visiting communities across the state for HOMEtown Conversations. Director Matney shared updates about the HOME project to hundreds of individuals across all in-person events and heard some great ideas from Iowans who use services, family caregivers, providers and advocates about how HHS can improve the state's CBS system. More information on HOMEtown Conversations dates can be found [here](#).

## **AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2023**

We completed interviews with individuals to help us better understand individual's lived experience on HCBS waiver waitlists. The information provided will be important to help us understand opportunities to improve based on Iowan's lived experience.

## **AUGUST 2023**

Iowa HHS announced HOME events coming to communities across Iowa during October and November. More information on HOMEtown Conversations dates and locations can be found [here](#).

We have been mapping out the waitlist process that Iowans currently navigate to get home and community services. This has helped us understand how Iowans interact with IA HHS and the waitlist process. It has also given us a clearer view of the internal systems used to support the waitlist. We now have a much clearer picture of how Iowans experience the process today - from application to a waiver program, through waiting for services, to waiver enrollment. This review that will allow us to identify where we can improve the process to make it easier to use in the future.

## **JULY-AUGUST 2023**

We surveyed Iowans who use community-based services, their caregivers, case managers and service providers. This helps us better understand your experiences with services and supports. We use the information you provided to identify opportunities to

improve how you receive services and supports. We want to thank everyone for the tremendous response in helping us understand how we can make services better for you. Well over 600 Iowans responded! Between July 10 and July 28, 254 people who use services and caregivers, 146 case managers, and 240 providers completed the survey. Findings from the survey results include:

Home-delivered meals, interim medical monitoring and treatment and nutritional counseling were the top services that people who use services and caregivers reported not being able to access.

Home and/or vehicle accessibility adaptations, assistive devices and nursing were the top services that people who use services and caregivers reported as not fully meeting their needs.

Lack of providers and staff turnover was one of the top barriers to accessing services, and the leading concern reported by people who use services and caregivers, providers and case managers.

## **JULY 2023**

HOME put out a survey to learn about people's experiences with community-based services. These services and supports help people live, work and help in their communities. Examples of these are case management, personal care and home health care, medical equipment, assistive devices and other services and supports. Through July 28, 2023, the survey was open for individuals who use community-based Medicaid services, caregivers (like family members or natural supports), service providers and case managers. The HOME team will use the information gathered from this survey to inform ways that HHS can make it easier for people to access the services they need to be healthy and independent.

## **JUNE 2022**

Click [here](#) to see what Iowa HHS achieved in the first year of the CBS evaluation.