

Steering Committee Meeting Summary

AUGUST 27, 2024, 3:00 – 4:30 PM CENTRAL TIME

Summary of Meeting Themes:

- Mathematica presented the following update on the waiver structure, which proposes to keep the current Elderly waiver for members age 65+ who are not otherwise disabled:

Iowa HHS has carefully considered the feedback Iowans have provided on the waiver redesign through HOME. As a result, HHS is making one change to improve the waiver structure. Originally, Iowa HHS proposed changing the current seven waivers to two waivers. Now, the proposal is to keep the Elderly waiver as-is and, starting in 2025, Iowa proposes to change the 6 current diagnosis-based HCBS waivers (the Intellectual Disability, Brain Injury, Health and Disability, Physical Disability, Children's Mental Health and AIDS/HIV waivers) to 2 age-based waivers. Iowa HHS proposes having one waiver for Children and Youth (up to age 21) and one waiver for the Adult and Aging population (ages 21 and older) to focus on the person and their needs across the lifespan.

Iowa proposes to keep the current Elderly waiver for people aged 65 and older who are not otherwise disabled. The services under the Elderly waiver would stay the same as they are now. In the future, Iowa HHS will look at including more services that help prevent or delay needing to move to an institution.

- Why is this the proposed approach?
 - Iowans were worried that removing the Elderly waiver, which has no waitlist, would create a waitlist for people 65 and older who need HCBS services for the first time. Iowa HHS was also worried that removing the Elderly waiver would take away an important current pathway to services. To address this, Iowa HHS proposes to keep the Elderly waiver so that Iowans 65 and older without a disability can still enter seamlessly and receive the level of support they have now.
- What does this mean?
 - People currently on the Elderly waiver will stay on the Elderly waiver and their services will not change.
 - The Adult and Aging waiver will serve disabled members ages 21 and older. When people on this waiver turn 65, they will stay on this waiver.
 - People age 65 and older who are not otherwise disabled and need HCBS for the first time will enter the Elderly waiver.
 - The services for people age 65 and older who stay on the Elderly waiver may be less robust than what is offered on the Adult and Aging waiver. Members enrolled on the Elderly waiver may apply to move to the Adult and Aging waiver if that waiver would better meet their service needs.
- In response to the update on the waiver structure, steering committee members provided the following feedback:

- The language used to describe and name the future adult waiver, which is currently called the Adult and Aging waiver, could be more clear to help lowans understand the difference between the adult and elderly waivers.
- It is important to create communications to help people understand the differences between the Adult and Aging waiver and the Elderly waiver, and to clarify that the Elderly waiver will stay the same.
- Next, Mathematica discussed the transition from the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) assessment to the interRAI assessment for the Intellectual Disability (ID) waiver:

Iowa HHS uses an assessment tool to understand the level of support that each person needs through their HCBS waiver. States use different assessment tools to collect similar details about a person's needs. Up to now, for the ID waiver, Iowa HHS has used a tool for adults and children called the Supports Intensity Scale. Iowa HHS learned that the company that makes the Supports Intensity Scale-Adult (SIS-A) and Supports Intensity Scale-Children (SIS-C) is changing their assessment tool. Iowa HHS is moving to a new assessment tool, called the interRAI, and has been testing it with lowans to ensure a smooth transition. Starting in 2025, Iowa HHS will switch to the interRAI assessments.

- After January, how will Iowa HHS use my results from the interRAI assessment?
 - In the same way that Iowa HHS used the SIS tools to understand the level of support you need, Iowa HHS will use the interRAI tools to understand your unique needs. You may remember your SIS 'score' helped determine what level of support you qualified for or what services you could receive. The interRAI scores will help Iowa HHS do the same.
 - The interRAI assessment tools will measure your needs and place everyone in a bucket, or "tier" of service needs. This means that people with similar levels of need get the same amount of services.
- How is HHS making sure the interRAI tools will work for lowans?
 - Iowa HHS asked members to help test the interRAI tools in May and June 2024. Members were assessed using the interRAI assessment tools. Iowa HHS then used a decision tree to sort items into categories with common features. See this [FAQ](#) to learn more and see an example decision tree. HHS reviewed member's responses to the interRAI assessment tools and matched them with their previous SIS-A or SIS-C scores. This helped Iowa HHS make sure the tiering and scores from the interRAI tools work the same way as the SIS tools.
- How will a change to an interRAI assessment affect my current tier?
 - Iowa HHS knows that change can be hard. Iowa HHS will phase in the new tool slowly. Because this tool is new for all of us, your tier based on your interRAI score will not change in the first half of 2025. However, if your condition changes and you need to move to a different tier, Iowa HHS will review your assessment and adjust your tier if needed. As more people take the interRAI assessments and Iowa HHS has better information to predict your needs, Iowa HHS will keep improving and adjusting the scoring process.
- Steering committee members gave the following feedback after learning about the SIS to interRAI assessment transition:

- It would be helpful to share information about public comment periods in more places and ways, as people were unaware of the current opportunity to provide feedback about the SIS to interRAI assessment transition.
- Committee members found the public comment page confusing to navigate. It was hard to see which documents to read or what kind of topics they should give input on in their comments. More explanation about how the public comment period works and the documents people should read to help them understand the changes would be helpful.
- At an upcoming meeting, HHS and Mathematica should give an overview of the comments received during this public comment period.
- Finally, Mathematica provided an overview of the social media campaign used to promote the frequently asked questions (FAQs). The committee shared the following feedback:
 - There is a lot of worry in the community about the upcoming restructure. It's important to share information in plain language so everyone can understand. Making short videos to explain changes might also be helpful.
 - The focus should be on making the materials accessible. Involving lowans with disabilities as messengers can help with this.
 - To avoid confusion, all information should be in one place and easy to follow.
- Mathematica will share plain language summaries of key takeaways with the steering committee, to make the meeting materials easier for the steering committee members to share with their communities.
- The next steering committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 24.

Additional Resources:

Link to [HOME website](#):

- Includes a timeline that shares the work on HOME since 2022
- Steering Committee slides and summaries are toward the bottom of the page

Link to sign up for the [HOME newsletter](#):

- HHS sends the newsletter every other month. It contains information on the HOME project and a spotlight on our partners, like you!

Link to [Facebook post about HOME FAQs](#):

- Please feel free to share this post with your networks
- There will be more Facebook posts in the future, and we will share those with you