

Brain Injury Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

April 25, 2025

Community Voices Members	Organizational Representative Members	Iowa HHS Brain Injury Program Staff
Tia Clark	Marsha Burrigh <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maggie Ferguson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Brenda Easter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Catherine Johnson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jim Pender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Andrea Gomez	June Klein-Bacon <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Toby Yak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Eric Lietsch	Brooke Lovelace <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Ashley Smith	Krys Purscell <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Jim Torner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Margot McComas	
Jordan True	LeAnn Moskowitz <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Zach Rhein	
	Angela VanPelt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Melissa Walker <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Committee Mission Statement: *To help Iowans by suggesting system changes that can stop brain injuries from happening and make things better for those who already have one*

Call to Order. Brenda Easter started the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

Welcome. Members introduced themselves.

Updates from the Iowa HHS Brain Injury Program.

Red Tape Reviews: Maggie Ferguson provided an update on work associated with Executive Order 10 to review existing administrative rules. Brain Injury Program staff will keep committee members informed as to when public comment periods are open.

- *Chapter 21. Central Registry for Brain and Spinal Cord Injuries*. This rule will be rescinded. It was discussed there is need for a desk guide or other resource document to ensure that details of the registry are retained.
- *Chapter 54. Concussion or Other Brain Injury Return-to-Play Protocol*. Additional updates may be made to this rule to align with current best practice.
- *Chapter 56. Brain Injury Services Program*. Updates to this rule are primarily technical updates to simplify language.

Needs Assessment & Listening Sessions: Ferguson shared an update on the process for completing a statewide brain injury needs assessment and hosting listening

sessions. It is planned to have information from those activities ready in time for the July meeting. At that time, the committee can begin discussion about developing the next state plan. If members have a recommendation of a community where listening sessions could be held, please contact Maggie Ferguson at brain.injury@hhs.iowa.gov. Currently, the plan is to utilize support group meetings as these are convenient means of reaching people with lived experience.

Committee Member Recruitment: An application for lowans who are interested in serving on this committee is going through the approval process. When it is complete, a link will be posted on this committee's webpage and disseminated to committee members and other partners to help with recruitment efforts.

TBI Grant Updates: Jim Pender provided an update on grant activities, as outlined in the program report.

Other Updates of Potential Interest: Pender provided an overview of current changes that have been happening on the federal level, including the Administration for Community Living being dissolved and that agency's Brain Injury State Partnership Program forecasted to move to the Child and Families Administration.

Information sharing from committee members.

Brooke Lovelace shared that the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council will be hosting a Dementia Friendly Iowa training in partnership with Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging. To register: <https://tinyurl.com/dementia-friendly-workshop>. September 18-19, 2025 is the annual Make Your Mark conference. To register visit <https://capture.zoom.us/meeting/register/Yn6MYXZLSZaPsn6m6JYorw> <https://www.iowaddcouncil.org/mym-conference>. The conference is also accepting applications for sponsors and speakers. The DD Council is also working on a new state plan and a public comment period. Aging and Disability Services town hall meetings are currently being held and individuals who are impacted by these changes are encouraged to attend to learn more and ask questions.

June Klein-Bacon shared the Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa (BIAIA) is now an affiliate of the Brain Injury Association of America. As such, the organization will be going through name and rebrand, officially launching July 1.

Klein-Bacon also shared the Mental Health and Disability Services (MHDS) Commission is sunsetting and a final report will be posted soon. Advocacy for building brain injury informed practices across the agency will continue.

BIAIA is currently seeking feedback on the [organization's website](#). To participate, visit [BIAIA Website Feedback Survey](#)

Marsha Burright commended the DD Council for the content posted on social media and via email updates.

Jim Torner reported that suicide prevention research at the Injury Prevention Research Center is concluding.

Torner attended the National Academy of Neurology conference session on sports concussion. There has been a lot of focus on sleep and sleep disorders after concussion. There was a discovery of a lymphatic system in the brain and sleep is a driver of that system.

Torner also acknowledged that while work continues at the University of Iowa Injury Prevention Research Center, the future of federal funding is creating some uncertainties.

Krys Purscell shared here were changes made to the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act for Independent Living, which still needs to be passed by Congress. Purscell also shared links to research she has found interesting.

- <https://ideas.ted.com/what-if-we-could-inoculate-people-against-depression-and-trauma/>
- <https://rebecca.brachman.org/research-projects>
- <https://tbirehabilitation.wordpress.com/tag/mental-illness/>.

Catherine Johnson shared that Disability Rights Iowa is moving to a different location in the same building. May 5, 2025 will be the official start date in that new location.

Brenda Easter was invited to attend a 2-day meeting of researchers studying the consequences of repetitive head impacts. She will share any follow up information that is received.

LeAnn Moskowitz shared several updates. [Hope and Opportunity in Many Environments \(HOME\) project](#): The current seven waivers will be consolidated into three waivers: adults with disability (ages 21+ with a disability determination of one of the current disability criteria currently recognized), child/youth waiver (up to age 21), and elderly waiver. The concept paper has been published and the Division of Medicaid is currently looking at public facing materials that need to be updated for accessibility and rewritten to make content easily understood. Member and provider communication plans are being drafted. Waiver amendments will be submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid in August 2025, after a public comment period in July 2025. After the amendment application is accepted, the new waivers will be shared for public comment and listening/feedback sessions will be held. To support providers, several competency-based trainings are available on the [Iowa HHS website](#) and [learning management system \(LMS\)](#).

Responding to a committee member question, Moskowitz recommended that if parents have questions to start with the case manager. If there isn't a case manager, there is an email address for redesign questions, concerns, or needed clarification:

iowahcbs@mathematica-mpr.com

Content for brain injury training is currently being reviewed to be included on the new LMS.

Maggie Ferguson shared that Iowa HHS Injury Prevention Program received funding from the National Council on Aging for enhancing the work of the Iowa Falls Prevention Coalition.

Public Comment. No public comment was made.

Adjourn. Meeting concluded at 11:43 a.m.