

## Council on Health and Human Services

Meeting Minutes  
February 28, 2025

COUNCIL MEMBERS	EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS
Chair Rebecca Peterson ✓	
Andrew Allen	
Kay Fisk ✓	
Dr. Monika Jindal ✓	
Dr. Donald Macfarlane ✓	
Sandra McGrath ✓	
Samantha Rozeboom, DNP ✓	
Sam Wallace	
Jack Willey ✓	

**1. Call to Order**

Council Chair Rebecca Peterson called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

**2. Roll Call**

Secretary conducted a roll call as indicated above; a quorum was present.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

Jack Willey moved to approve the November 21, 2024, minutes, seconded by Dr. Macfarlane. Motion carried by voice vote.

**4. Public Comment**

Public comment was received encouraging the HHS Council to establish an ad hoc committee focused on strategies and policies related to tobacco use and prevention.

**5. Legislative Session Update**

The Government Relations Team (Carrie Malone, Nick, Crawford, and Sonya Streit) provided an update of the 2025 legislative session. HHS focused on several priorities aimed at enhancing healthcare access, supporting youth in crisis, expediting the process for kinship caregivers, and the Medicaid rate review. The team also highlighted Governor Reynolds’ priorities such as rural and maternal healthcare initiatives, cancer research, expanding residency slots, and childcare.

Chief Financial Officer Jess Benson summarized the Governor's FY26 general fund Health and Human Services budget recommendations.

## **6. Director's Update**

Director Kelly Garcia provided a number of updates, including the following:

- HHS supports the Governor's initiatives on cancer research, on which the Department and the University of Iowa will collaborate.
- A settlement agreement has been reached in a lawsuit against HHS regarding mental health services for children on Medicaid. The Iowa REACH initiative will address a range of issues to keep families together as much as possible.
- Iowa Primary Care Association will serve as the statewide Behavioral Health Administrative Service Organization.
- HHS announced its intent to award contracts to entities that will serve as Disability Access Points across the state.
- Director Garcia attended the sale auction of Glenwood Resource Center. HHS worked with the new owners on maintaining the records and history of cemetery on the property.
- THRIVE Iowa is a new initiative where the individuals can work with a navigator to get connected with resources. It is being piloted in several counties before it goes statewide.
- Rebeca Curtiss is serving as the interim Medicaid Director.

## **7. State Operated Specialty Care Update**

Cory Turner, Division Director of State Operated Specialty Care, oversees the Cherokee and Independence Mental Health Institutions, the Woodward Resource Center, the State Training School, and the Civil Commitment Unit for Sexual Offenders (CCUSO).

Key projects include:

- Shifting the brick-and-mortar facilities into a more specialty care model.
- Glenwood facility was closed on June 18, 2024. They moved 147 individuals and are monitoring them for up to a year after being released.
- Developing a Strike team for closure that includes, Psychosis Treatment Optimization Program (PTOP), Nurses, and helping transition the clients.
- Preventative measures.

## **8. Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program (FaDSS)**

Legal Counsel Jancy Nielson outlined the duties of the HHS Council related to the

Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program. FaDSS Program Manager Page Humphrey described the program structure and key components. FaDSS is in the award process for non-competitive grant renewal applications that will begin July 1, 2025. HHS recommended that the list of applicants be awarded FaDSS grants in accordance with the service areas, assigned program capacity, and funding allocations.

Jack Willey moved to approve the recommended grant recipients; seconded by Dr. Jindal. Motion carried by voice vote.

## **9. Behavioral Health System Update**

Marissa Eyanson, Division Administrator of Behavioral Health, reported that the new behavioral health system will go into effect July 1, 2025. More information can be found on the website: [Iowa's Behavioral Health Service System | Health & Human Services](https://hhs.iowa.gov/initiatives/system-alignment/behavioral-health-service-system) <https://hhs.iowa.gov/initiatives/system-alignment/behavioral-health-service-system>

## **10. Administrative Rules**

Victoria Daniels, Compliance Officer, summarized the administrative rules related to Behavioral Health (timeline for Behavioral Health rules) and Public Health. Bulletins come out every two weeks (approximately). They include Regulatory Notices, Notices of Intended Action, and adopted filings.

## **11. Brain Injury Report and Newborn Screening Report**

Written reports were submitted to the Council.

- Maggie Ferguson, Disability & Injury Prevention Project Director, answered questions about what a brain injury includes.
- Kimberly Noble Piper, Director of Center for Congenital and Inherited Disorders, answered questions about Metachromatic Leukodystrophy (MLD).

## **12. Safe Kids Presentation**

Janee Harvey, Division Director of Family Well-being and Protection, gave a presentation on Safe Kids. HHS collected feedback to inform how to improve outcomes for children and families, which will include:

- Elevating quality specialty care to meet unique needs.

- Building strong relationships so kids can spend more time in family settings.
- Communicating effectively to ensure collaboration.
- Supporting a well-trained workforce equipped to spend more time with families.
- Reducing traumatic experiences so kids can heal.

### **13. Medical Director's Update**

State Medical Director Robert Kruse highlighted some activities in the Public Health Division such as the internal alignment of programs, expansion of the State Medical Examiner's Office, Public Health Accreditation process, community medicine residency rotations, and a professional development program to address training gaps in the public health workforce.

Dr. Kruse delivered an overview of whooping cough (Pertussis) – treatment, trend, and public health implications. Whooping cough is spread through contact with respiratory droplets. Treatment includes antibiotics. Vaccines are available for protection. Local Public Health agencies investigate cases and identify close contacts.

### **14. Council Discussion, Establishing Ad Hoc Committees**

Council shared a proposal and discussed establishing two ad hoc committees.

- The first was a Cannabis ad hoc committee. The committee would do some research and bring in an expert. The committee would meet quarterly, create an annual report, and sunset at the end of one year. Members would include Chair Peterson, Dr. McFarlane, and Andrew Allen.

Jack Willey moved to create the Cannabis ad hoc committee; seconded by Dr. McFarlane. Motion carried by voice vote.

- The second is a Children's Behavioral Health ad hoc committee. The committee would meet quarterly, provide an annual report, and sunset after one year. Members would include Chair Peterson, Andrew Allen, and Samantha McGrath.

Dr. McFarlane moved to create an ad hoc committee on Children's Behavioral Health; seconded by Dr. Jindal. Motion carried by voice vote.

Council discussed members' terms.

- The previous legislators' terms expired in January 2025. New legislative appointments will be made during the legislative session.
- Tom Brown will replace Sam Wallace on the Council in May 2025.
- Other members have been reappointed.

**15. Adjournment**

Jack Willey moved to adjourn; seconded by Samantha Rozeboom. Motion carried by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 2:01 p.m.