

Meeting Notes

Division: Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa Medicaid

Meeting Topic: REACH Implementation Team: Communications Subcommittee

Facilitator: Dex Walker

Date: 07/15/2025

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: Virtual

Meeting Objectives

Implementation Team meetings create the opportunity for key stakeholders to facilitate and support the adherence to the Iowa REACH Initiative Implementation Plan objectives and activities and to provide coordinated oversight and recommendations to ensure the success of the Iowa REACH Initiative.

Meeting Participants

- Amy Berg-Theisen
- Christina Smith
- Anne Crotty
- Laura Leise
- William Linder
- Dex Walker
- Klaire Wisniewski
- Gretchen Hammer
- Marisa Cullnan

Agenda Topic and Items

- Iowa REACH Communications Overview
 - Iowa HHS provided an overview of the REACH program and a refresher of the Communications subcommittee's work to date.
 - The Communications subcommittee will inform efforts to:
 - Engage and communicate with the public to inform, educate, and involve youth and their families, providers, and child-serving agencies in REACH.
 - Develop accessible communication materials that provide clear, actionable information about relevant services within the REACH
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- continuum of care for youth, providers, and child-serving agencies.
- Currently, other REACH subcommittees are discussing implementation questions. Once these are determined, the Communications subcommittee can provide specific feedback on communication around services. In the meantime, the Communications subcommittee can:
 - Brainstorm targeted outreach strategies.
 - Refine core messaging for consistency and clarity.
 - Support user-friendly easy to REACH content on the HHS website.
 - Iowa HHS would like outreach materials to convey an opportunity for relationship-building and ongoing collaboration to shape the REACH Initiative.
 - Outreach Strategies
 - Participants discussed various methods of outreach, including:
 - Presenting to statewide advocacy groups that focus on juvenile justice, youth councils, and childcare initiatives.
 - Hosting member and provider town hall meetings to encourage engagement and gather feedback.
 - Conducting presentations and Q&A sessions with internal Iowa HHS groups to ensure alignment and understanding across departments, specifically HHS Home Visitation Programs.
 - Participants brainstormed additional audiences who could effectively distribute REACH information to youth and families, including:
 - Places of worship.
 - Healthcare providers including pediatricians, hospitals and emergency rooms, and provider associations.
 - Participants discussed an example scenario where providers could use a QR code to access resources on the REACH website, then print it out and provide a physical copy to families as needed.
 - Judicial system, namely the State Attorney General's office and judges involved in juvenile justice.
 - State and advocacy groups, including the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council, Olmstead Consumer Task Force, NAMI Iowa, ASK Resource Center, Ethnic Minorities of Burma Advocacy and Resource Center, Monsoon Asians & Pacific Islanders in Solidarity.
 - Education system including teachers, counselors, and area education agencies.
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- Participants agreed that a program that specifically supports youth and families with the transition between high school and college would be beneficial.
 - One participant mentioned this is a service provided by Community Support Advocates (CSA).
 - Participants discussed REACH Initiative navigation and best practices to support disability access.
 - Other committees are still discussing system navigation, and the state will determine how the system comes together over the next year.
 - Participants emphasized the importance of not overloading the audience with information.
 - Communication materials should have clear information on any program costs and how to access REACH.
 - Messaging should focus on how services and programs fit together and how a user would navigate the REACH Initiative.
 - It is helpful to have both provider and referral perspectives to understand what people request and what services providers should build. Attendance at town hall meetings can vary and affect audience reach as a result.
 - Messaging Across Platforms
 - Participants revisited state communication strategy examples to discuss potential outreach materials and HHS website enhancements.
 - REACH already planned: presentations, newsletters, email communication.
 - REACH would like to develop: short videos, quick guides and brochures, FAQs for the HHS website.
 - Participants discussed goals and best practices for the REACH website content and design.
 - One-stop shop for access to information and materials that are updated regularly.
 - Content is accessible.
 - Navigation is simple and intuitive.
 - Important information is easily identifiable.
 - Discussion
 - Participants discussed Iowa Medicaid communication issues and ideas for improving accessibility and engagement.
 - Participants emphasized that relying solely on digital and in-person communication risks excluding those who lack consistent internet access, individuals in rural areas, or other marginalized communities.
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- Participants supported the use of multiple communication channels, including printed brochures and materials that are easy to understand in plain language without jargon.
 - One participant recommended creating easy-read documents to support accessibility for people with learning disabilities, low literacy skills, or those who speak English as a second language.
 - Participants support a hybrid approach that combines traditional (print, in-person) and modern (digital, QR codes) methods of engagement.
- Public Comment
 - None.
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