

# Steering Committee Meeting Summary

**AUGUST 26, 2025, 3:00 – 4:30 PM CENTRAL TIME**

## Summary of Meeting Themes:

- Mathematica shared that Iowa hired a new Medicaid Director, Lee Grossman. He is originally from Iowa and most recently directed Medicaid in Wyoming. Director Grossman brings expertise in Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS), and in working with people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.
- Mathematica gave an update on public comment for the seven existing waivers. Iowa HHS posted the waiver amendments on August 20. Iowans can submit comments until September 19, by 4:30 p.m.
  - <https://hhs.iowa.gov/public-notice/2025-08-20/public-notice-1915c-home-and-community-based-services-hcbs-aidshiv-brain-injury-bi-childrens-mental>
  - HHS will post materials for Steering Committee members to share with their peers.
  - Members raised concerns about reduced maximum units for Supported Community Living (SCL) under the Brain Injury and Intellectual Disability waivers.
    - HHS explained that this change is to “right size” SCL. Members can access up to 8 hours of 15-minute services. More than 8 hours counts as a daily service under the HCBS waiver. The waivers follow Iowa HHS’s Federal Authority, not the Iowa Administrative Code. HHS also removed the rule that daily services must happen outside the home, so daily SCL can now happen at home.
  - Members asked if people at different tiers will be able to access Consumer Choice Option (CCO).
    - HHS clarified that the tiered fee schedule reflects provider costs like travel time and does not apply to CCO.
  - Members noted that the proposed change to SCL will impact some peoples’ services, so it does not feel like a small change. They also would have liked for HHS to hold a public hearing to collect feedback.
    - HHS said they are following past practice by collecting written comments. They are committed to holding public hearings when the HOME waivers go out for public notice.
- Mathematica provided an update on REACH and the REACH Roadshows. REACH is a new Iowa Medicaid program to help kids and teens with serious emotional or mental health challenges. Under REACH, Iowa HHS is recommending a uniform assessment tool and care plan to make sure everyone gets the services they need, creating a strong in-home and community-based care system, with better service coordination, and making sure services stay high-quality by building a plan to regularly review and improve them
  - <https://hhs.iowa.gov/medicaid/about-medicicaid/medicaid-projects/iowa-reach>
  - Iowa HHS plans to make presentations to statewide advocacy groups, host a member and provider townhall, and conduct presentations and Q&A sessions with internal Iowa HHS groups to ensure alignment and understanding across departments.
  - HHS said the first year of REACH is focusing on working with stakeholders. These groups have been sharing ideas and feedback to help shape how the program will roll out, including reviewing other states’ approaches for improving service coordination. REACH services won’t

begin until late 2026 or 2027. The public can attend these sessions, and HHS posts the subcommittee meeting minutes online.

- Mathematica provided an update on future Steering Committee engagement.
  - HHS will establish a new meeting schedule in the fall and will share the plan and discussion topics soon.
  - The group shared feedback on Steering Committee meetings to inform future planning.
    - Members like the current meeting time, receiving slides in advance, and getting a summary afterward. They would prefer to receive the slides more days in advance, so they have time to review them and bring questions to the meeting.
    - Members asked if they could continue serving on the committee.
      - Mathematica said that the steering committee has not operated with term limits, so do not anticipate any reason members couldn't continue to serve.
    - Members suggested preparing a synopsis of past discussions to help new members catch up.
      - Mathematica created an orientation for new members and agreed to add more detail to the orientation slide deck.
    - Members appreciate the diversity of participants, including providers, HHS staff, and people using HCBS. They recommended individuals with a wider range of disabilities.
- Members asked if research is being done to understand why people with physical disabilities remain in nursing homes. For example, home care agencies have reduced shower services since 2015.
  - Mathematica said the HOME project has collected details about this through surveys, including the Needs on Waitlist (NOW) survey.
- Members raised concerns and challenges with CCO and asked for an update on any CCO workgroups.
  - Mathematica shared that there is a Managed Care Organization (MCO) workgroup through the HOME project and Mathematica will provide a summary of that work in September. This work group has previously brought their work to the Steering Committee, for example, when seeking feedback on changes to the CCO Budget Worksheet.
    - HHS responded that Iowa HHS has consistently discussed CCO across aspects of HOME. For example, the agency identified which services would be self-directed under the HOME waivers. There are no major changes to CCO planned for 2025. However, in 2026, HHS aims to bring on additional financial management systems (FMS) so that Veridian does not serve all members and to make Independent Support Brokers (ISBs) optional.
  - Members recalled that Iowa HHS paused specific CCO changes in 2022 due to political factors. They believe additional improvements to CCO remain unaddressed through the HOME initiative. For example, Independent Support Brokers (ISBs) experience delays in receiving payment from Veridian, which cannot process payments until budgets and authorizations are in place. MCOs no longer allow ISB and FMS to be covered outside of the budget.
- **Members said they face challenges when trying to raise concerns. They're often redirected to other agencies or individuals and told that certain issues either fall within or outside the scope of HOME. They asked for more responsive engagement, including clearer communication and better support to understand where and how to address their concerns.**
  - HHS reminded the committee that they hold a CCO townhall where members and providers can bring questions and concerns. HHS also shared that strengthening case manager oversight of member budgets is one example of ongoing CCO efforts this year.

- Members worry that the federal climate may prevent HOME changes from happening. They recognize systems change and improvements take a long time to achieve but underscored that some problems can be addressed now and there is urgency for older caregivers and medically fragile members.