

Meeting Notes

Division: Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa Medicaid

Meeting Topic: Communications Subcommittee

Facilitator: Will Linder, HHS

Date: 08/19/2025

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
- Joella Gerber
- Megan Mahanes
- Anne Crotty
- Will Linder
- Klaire Wisniewski
- Gretchen Hammer
- Jackie Brenner

Agenda Topic and Items

- Iowa HHS described upcoming REACH Engagement activities. Starting in September 2025, Iowa HHS will reach out to groups across Iowa to educate about changes from REACH, collect stakeholder feedback, and foster continued community engagement with REACH.
 - Iowa HHS proposes engaging the following groups:
 - Juvenile justice
 - Youth councils
 - Family support centers
 - Childcare initiatives
 - Child protection and foster care groups
 - Members noted that there is confusion around when REACH will be implemented. Iowa HHS noted that REACH services will not be in place until 2027 at the earliest.
 - Participants shared concerns that people coming out of Integrated Health Homes (IHHs) don't feel like there are many options for them and may feel distrust with Iowa HHS.
 - Participants recommended that Iowa HHS get feedback from these families on what services would be helpful. Iowa HHS should share information about when services will start and tell families what they can do in the interim between now and the start of REACH.
 - IHH coordinators are not familiar with REACH, which is a missed opportunity to share information with families.
 - Participants felt that Iowa HHS posting on their website is not engagement because Iowans are not exploring the website and not everyone has internet access. Instead, they recommended Iowa HHS engage with social media, parents' groups, schools, and churches, and provide information that providers can share with families.
 - Participants asked Iowa HHS' plans for working with state-operated facilities. Participants felt that state-operated facilities need to understand what REACH is and where they exist in the REACH landscape.
 - HHS shared that the REACH settlement is focused on services for young people with SED in the community. However, the settlement plan requires improvement in supporting transitions out of residential facilities. HHS could start this outreach in the fall and set up a partnership during a later phase of REACH.
 - Participants recommended that Iowa HHS meet with people, send them the slides, walk through the agenda, and send a glossary of acronyms
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ahead of the REACH Roadshow. Participants said that individual or small-group touch points can help build trust.

- Iowa HHS asked how they can create user-friendly names for services
 - Other states have used terms such as:
 - Intensive Home-Based Services (Illinois)
 - Intensive mental health services (Washington)
 - Covered services (Ohio)
 - Iowa HHS wants the new service name to convey where services can be accessed, that these services can be tailored to families' needs, and that they are meaningfully different from what is available now.
 - Participants liked names with “whole person supports” and “personalized therapeutic services and supports”
 - Some people may be offput by the idea of services being provided in their homes. If Iowa HHS includes “home and community-based” in service names, they should make it clear that these services can be provided in other settings like rec centers.
 - Participants noted that it should be clear how these services differ from other state services (for example, including “therapeutic” in the name to differentiate from BHIS services)
 - Participants suggested avoiding terms like “correct” and “ameliorate” which convey that there is something that needs to be fixed. Prior meetings have identified that “intensive” can be harmful or confusing.
 - Participants recommended that Iowa HHS ask lowans how define and perceive certain terms like “home and community-based”, “therapeutic”, and “intensive” during the REACH Roadshow.
 - Public Comment:
 - None.
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