

# Meeting Notes

**Division:** Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa Medicaid

**Meeting Topic:** Services and Providers Subcommittee

**Facilitator:** Carol Mau, HHS

**Date:** 08/12/2025

**Time:** 4:00 PM

**Location:** Virtual

## Meeting Objectives

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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

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- Carol Mau
- Gretchen Hammer
- Addie Kimber
- David Beeman
- Jen Royer
- Jess Kelly Tanager
- Emily Blomme
- Tresa Stearns
- Steve Sherman
- Kim Hagen
- Laura Leise
- Sabrina Johnson
- Amy Berg-Theisen
- Nikki Thomson

## Agenda Topic and Discussion

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- Effectiveness of peer supports
  - Peers currently serve many roles in Iowa, including as crisis counselors, system navigators, and a mental health lifeline for families.
  - Peer support specialists are an essential part of the care system.
    - Peer support specialists are a place families can go for emotional support and help navigating a complex system
    - A pilot for children in PMICs with family peer specialists reduced children's length of stay.
  - Peer services are offered in many places within Iowa, but the peer support system is not very robust. Currently, people have to find support through multiple different channels.
- Requirements and Training for peer supports
  - Requirements for peer support specialists should not be too strict. Peer support specialists may have a complex history, and when employment and position requirements are too strict it can be hard to find providers with relevant experience.
  - Iowa does not need to require more training for peer support specialists, but there is a gap in support for peer support specialists. Supports could include:
    - Optional trainings on how to maintain work boundaries
    - Optional trainings on leadership skills
    - Mental health supports
  - Washington WISE training requirements are not necessary or feasible for REACH
- Future of peer supports for REACH
  - Peer supports should be included in REACH.
  - Rates need to be raised to support an increased peer support workforce
  - In order to be as effective as possible, peer supports should be:
    - Available 24/7 in case families need urgent support

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- Offered in a home setting to be easily accessible
  - Easy to find and access, especially considering changes to Iowa's overall behavioral health system
  - Coordinated among programs to ensure that peer support specialists do not offer duplicative services
  - A system like Washington WISe where peer support specialists are assigned and fully integrated into the care process would be helpful.