

## HOME Newsletter - March 2025 (ARCHIVED)



*A family of four outside enjoying a spring day.*

Iowa Medicaid is redesigning its Community-Based Services (CBS) to improve how Medicaid members find **Hope and Opportunity in Many Environments (HOME)**.

Through HOME, Iowa Medicaid recognizes the hope that comes with being able to choose where you live and the services you receive that make maintaining health, social connection, and quality of life possible. The goal is to ensure that everyone has access to high-quality behavioral health, disability, and aging services in their communities.

This newsletter shares updates on the HOME project progress and highlights ways you can engage with Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). For more information on the HOME project, [visit the 'Iowa HOME' webpage'](#)

**HOMEwork**

Over the last few months, the HOME Project team has made progress on key items.

- Refined the draft of the expanded Waiver Priority Needs Assessment (WPNA) with questions to assess risk of institutionalization.
- Outlined implementation steps for the proposed new waivers, including the WPNA, future assessments, provider reimbursement tiers, and individual budgets.
- Created a testing plan for Iowa HHS's use of InterRAI, including assessing validity and reliability of the core assessment items for all waiver members.
- Planned for 2025 waiver activities to prepare for the future HOME waiver launch, including reviewing administrative code for needed updates before implementation.
- Developed case manager training on proposed new waivers.
- Created managed care organization (MCO) case management ratio reports and reviewed with all MCOs.
- Gathered input from the Services and Provider workgroup on revisions to provider qualifications for future waivers. Providers and MCOs participate in this workgroup to advise on key topics.

**A Closer Look at HOME**



*A father and son outside smiling.*

In each newsletter, we take a closer look at one element of current work on the HOME project.

For this issue, we are looking at recent and upcoming changes to assessments.

### **What has changed so far?**

As of **January 1, 2025**, the assessment tools used to determine level of care for the ID waiver have changed:

- For adults, the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) changed to the interRAI Intellectual Disability (interRAI-ID).
- For children, the SIS Child changed to the interRAI Child and Youth Mental Health- Developmental Disability (ChYMH-DD).

Iowa HHS, MCOs, and Telligen are working together to make this transition as smooth as possible for members.

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### **Moving to Independent Assessors**

We've heard Iowans' concerns about possible conflicts when MCOs handle both assessments and person-centered planning. In response, Iowa HHS is shifting to an independent assessor model.

By **July 1, 2025**, Telligen, the Core Standardized Assessment (CSA) contractor, will take over conducting all waiver assessments. These changes aim to promote fairness, consistency, and a better experience for members.

Stay tuned for more updates!

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### **What can you expect?**

#### **Assessment Transition to Telligen Timeline**

- ✓ January 1, 2025 – Telligen starts doing assessments for ID waiver members
- ✓ April 1, 2025 – Telligen starts doing assessments for members on the Brain Injury (BI), Health and Disability (HD), Physical Disability (PD), and Children's Mental Health (CMH) waivers
- ✓ May 1, 2025 – Telligen takes over LOCUS assessments for habilitation services
- ✓ July 1, 2025 – Telligen starts doing assessments for Elderly Waiver members

#### **Partnership Spotlight**



We couldn't do this work without essential partnerships and contributions from people with lived experience.

Eric Donat joined the HOME steering committee in 2024 and has provided important and thoughtful insights to shape this work. Eric has called Waterloo home since 1984, when he was adopted from the Philippines as a child. Living downtown gives him the freedom to walk, ride, or take the city bus wherever he needs to go. He enjoys the city's vibrant community events, from Waterloo's summer concert series 'Friday-loo' and Iowa Irish Fest to the spectacular July 4th fireworks and the excitement of hosting RAGBRAI, a cross-Iowa bicycle ride.

Through the Physical Disability (PD) waiver, Eric receives support from a home health aide who helps him maintain his apartment. His passion for advocacy keeps him engaged in the HOME project, where he enjoys being a voice for others. Since 2000, he has been an active advocate for people with disabilities, receiving legislative training from the Iowa Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council and working closely with state legislators.

Beyond advocacy, Eric is deeply involved in his Waterloo community. Known as "Mr. Everywhere," he serves on multiple city commissions and committees, sits on the school board at his local Catholic church, and uses his ability to speak Spanish and French to support immigrant communities.

In his free time, Eric enjoys Mexican food (especially tacos!), watching movies and TV shows, and diving into history and the Harry Potter series. His commitment to community and passion for making a difference continue to shape his work and impact in Waterloo and beyond.

**Engage with us!**

There are many ways to engage with the HOME project!

- Visit the [HOME webpage](#) for more information and updates about the HOME project.
- Check [the Medicaid Town Hall webpage](#) for a list of monthly Town Halls Medicaid members and providers can join and engage directly with the Iowa Medicaid state team.
- Suggest topics in a quick [survey](#) for future Medicaid provider and member townhalls to focus on in 2025.
- Share your comments, including requests for content you'd like to see, in a [Feedback page](#) about the Iowa HHS website.
- [Contact HHS here](#) for general assistance from Iowa HHS.

Every day at HHS, we work to improve the lives of our fellow Iowans. As an agency it is important to keep focused on our mission; to help Iowans achieve healthy, safe, stable, and self-sufficient lives through the programs and services we provide.



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