

# Recent Updates & Progress

July 2024 (ARCHIVED)



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.

The purpose of this newsletter is to share updates on progress with the HOME project. We will also highlight ways you can provide feedback to inform our work.

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

- Continued planning efforts for systems changes, including:
  - Started documenting systems needs for the new waitlist processes.
  - Prepared for interviews with system navigators.
- Gathered a lot of important input:
  - Wrapped up the Needs on Waitlist (NOW) survey with 3,328 responses! The NOW survey collected information about what people who are on the waitlist might need to help Iowa to make important changes to improve how waivers work in the future.
  - Held three listening sessions on the waiver redesign concept paper and began reviewing feedback from listening sessions and the online feedback form.
  - Began coordinating with MCOs and members on the intellectual disability (ID) waiver about transitioning from using the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) assessment tool to the interRAI tool.
  - Started testing the new assessment tools through an optional assessment with members on the ID waiver whose recent off-year assessments (OYAs) showed no change in condition from the previous year. More information about the optional assessment is available on the HHS [HOME project website](#).
- Continued working on key components of the new waivers:

- Discussed options for making transitions to the new waivers.
- Developed MCO case management ratios and included them in MCO contracts.
- Drafted a case manager training plan.

You can see an update on our progress [here](#).

## HOMEwork Updates

In each newsletter, we take a closer look at one element of current work on the HOME project. For this issue, we are summarizing key takeaways lowans shared on the proposed waiver redesign.

In April, the HOME team released a concept paper describing the proposed changes to the Iowa Medicaid HCBS waiver system and outlining opportunities for lowans to provide input for improving HCBS waivers. Iowa HHS hosted three listening sessions and posted an online form to gather feedback.

### Summary of waiver redesign feedback

Most feedback fell into one of these three buckets: (1) change from seven diagnosis-based waivers to two age-based waivers; (2) offer comprehensive service packages; and (3) develop “tiered budgets”.

1. Change from 7 waivers to 2, age-based waivers.
  - Many lowans appreciated **streamlining the waivers** and hope this process will be clearer, easier, and require less paperwork.
  - lowans liked the concept of needs-based waivers **suited to a person** and their family’s need instead of their diagnosis.
  - lowans are concerned about having to move from the child to the adult waiver. They worry about having to reapply and join another waitlist, dealing with disrupted services, and needing to change providers or case managers.
  - Some lowans are worried that the child waiver differs from the adult waiver and lacks services like nursing, nutritional counseling, medical equipment coverage, Consumer-Directed Attendant Care (CDAC) services, and home health aides.
2. Offer comprehensive service packages.
  - lowans would like access to more services, and they worry about losing current services.
  - Some lowans said that the **quality of case management** has decreased since MCOs have been directing it. They note high caseloads, turnover, lack of training, and a perceived conflict of interest.

- lowans expressed concern that the waiver redesign will not address **lack of funding** and **provider shortages**.
- lowans hope that the **waitlists** will decrease, but they also worry that waitlists (already too long) will get even longer.

### 3. Develop “tiered budgets.”

- lowans want **more information on the single assessment tool**, how it will be used to determine funding levels, and how to appeal decisions.
- Some lowans worry that continuing to have MCO’s conduct assessments could create a perceived conflict of interest.
- Some lowans are concerned that the assessment will not be personalized enough and want some diagnoses to be exempt from frequent reassessments.
- Some lowans worry that people with lower assessed needs who have already been on long waitlists will not receive the care they need. They also worry that the elderly will end up on a waitlist when they do not face one now.

Finally, lowans want consistent and detailed communication about the changes. They worry about disruptions during the transition and want to see a transition plan and timeline. They also want to know how people on current waivers will switch to the new waivers. Providers requested more information on training and application requirements.



## What's Next

Participate in the HOME project and stay informed by filling out this [interest form](#).

We will use responses from this form to recruit people for upcoming feedback opportunities to share your experience. Your input is important. We appreciate your dedication and look forward to hearing from you!

## HOMEteam Partner Spotlight

*Becky Coffin*

We couldn't do this work without essential partnerships and contributions from people with lived experience. Becky Coffin is a single mom who has resided in Des Moines for 37 years, and an active member of the HOME steering committee. She is deeply dedicated to advocating for her family and others in similar situations. Her son Joey, aged 30, has recently transitioned from a skilled setting to the home and community-based services - intellectual disability waiver. The family was supported through the Money Follows the Person program while Joey was on the waiver waitlist. Due to his high medical needs, Joey is currently matched with a host home provider in Ankeny, where his daily living needs are fully supported within a skilled setting overseen by an agency. Jason, aged 26, is on the health and disability waiver and receives habilitation services. He receives consumer directed attendant care (CDAC) and supported community living (SCL) which enables him to be successful and live independently in West Des Moines. He meets with both providers weekly to assist with housekeeping, grocery shopping and social outings in the community. Jason has worked at Hy-Vee as a courtesy clerk for five years.

Becky's extensive experience with waiver services has driven her to advocate for families like hers to shape policies. She finds value in the HOME project steering committees' collaborative process, ensuring that all voices are heard to enhance the alignment of HOME and address the diverse needs of individuals. Beyond her advocacy work, Becky and her family share a passion for Disney animated movies and video games. She cherishes watching her children thrive in their community and enjoys listening to live local music in her free time.



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## Resources

- [Iowa HHS Home Website](#)
- [HOME Project Timeline](#)
- Fill out the [Feedback Interest Form](#)
- Email the HOME Project at [iowahcbs@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:iowahcbs@mathematica-mpr.com)