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Brain Injury Advisory Committee

Date: 04/30/2026

Time: 9:00 AM – 11:30 PM

Location: Zoom

Meeting Participants

Community Voices Members	Organizational Representative Members	Iowa HHS Brain Injury Program Staff
Tia Clark ✓	Marsha Burrignt (IVRS)	Maggie Ferguson ✓
Brenda Easter ✓	Catherine Johnson (Disability Rights Iowa)	Jim Pender ✓
Andrea Gomez ✓	June Klein-Bacon (BIAIA) ✓	Toby Yak
Laura Jess	Brooke Lovelace (DD Council)	
Eric Lietsch	Krys Purscell (Iowa SILC) ✓	
Brandie Richmann ✓	Margot McComas (Iowa HHS - PH)	
Jim Torner ✓	Bekah Gomez (Iowa HHS - Medicaid) ✓	
Jordan True	Laura Leise (Iowa HHS - ADS) ✓	
Kelly Wise ✓	Angela VanPelt (LTSS Ombudsman)	
Shamika Carmen	Melissa Walker (Dept of Ed) ✓	

Others in attendance:

Haleigh Cushen, National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome & Introductions.

Committee members took a moment to introduce themselves to start the meeting.

Role was taken.

2. Update on State Plan.

Maggie Ferguson provided a preview of the state plan document that has been created by the Iowa HHS communications team following internal review process.

Action Item: Ms. Ferguson will request a greater emphasis on how to stay connected to the process in the introduction section, given the importance of ongoing monitoring and feedback to maintain the document as a “living document”.

Members discussed next steps for implementing the plan and cadence for future meetings. A recommendation moving forward is to utilize workgroups for each of the two focus areas of the plan. These workgroups will meet monthly to develop an implementation and evaluation plan and will continue meeting afterward to carry out the action items identified in the implementation plan. Committee members discussed the need to invite additional partners to the discussion based on subject matter expertise and ability to carry out the work.

Action item: Ms. Ferguson will set up a calendar of meetings through December 2026. The full committee will convene at least quarterly to discuss work that has occurred in the subcommittees.

Once the plan is approved by the Iowa HHS Council and published, the Brain Injury Program staff will develop a strategy for creating awareness of the state plan, including opportunities for members of the public to stay updated on progress.

3. Brain Injury Screening using the Online Brain Injury Screening & Support System (OBISSS). Guest Speaker: Haleigh Cushen, National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

Haleigh Cushen presented an overview of the screening and assessment tools that are included in the OBISSS system and the support available to programs utilizing this system. Examples of support include tip sheets for accommodating brain injury symptoms and subscriber data reports. Ms. Cushen shared an overview of the 2025 annual report to highlight national data across all OBISSS subscribers. A copy of the slides is available, along with promotional material. A brief recorded overview of OBISSS can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/GGZq4vpALD8?si=tVQIJLP9viHkq2w4>.

Committee members had an opportunity for questions and discussion following the presentation.

Commented [GA1]: @Ferguson, Maggie [HHS] Can you clarify what is meant by this sentence? Subcommittees were determined to then be created and will plan to meet monthly? The sentence needs restructured for clarity. Thanks!

Inquiries about accessing the OBISSS through the Iowa subscription can be emailed to brain.injury@hhs.iowa.gov.

4. Member Updates.

Brain Injury Association of Iowa (BIAIA) Executive Director, June Klein-Bacon stated BIAIA is working with individuals who are having challenges regarding Medicaid and managed care organizations with accessing services, such as Community-based Neurobehavioral Services. BIAIA will post a call for proposals for the 2027 annual conference soon; please share with others who may be interested.

Ms. Klein-Bacon also shared the Iowa Disability Policy Alliance will host a cross-disability pride event at blank park zoo in August for Disability Pride Month. Watch www.biaia.org for information to come.

Iowa HHS 2026 Olmstead Plan has been published. Laura Leise, Iowa HHS Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Specialist, shared the plan, an update summary and a link to the website for a presentation outlining this information (links included below). The Olmstead Plan outlines Iowa's plan for integrating individuals with disabilities into the community of their choice.

- [State of Iowa Olmstead Plan](#)
- [State of Iowa Olmstead Plan Summary 2026-2031](#)
- [Olmstead Plan and Stakeholder Engagement | Health & Human Services](#)

Krys Purscell, Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Executive Director, shared that the Independent Living Network will begin a needs assessment process soon. The process will take a particular look at gaps in services, especially with the recent and upcoming changes in various systems administered by Iowa HHS that impact individuals with various disabilities. Ms. Purscell also shared that emergency preparedness is an area of activity that the Administration for Community Living has emphasized for inclusion in all state assessments.

Jim Torner, PhD, researcher at University of Iowa, shared that in cooperation with Iowa HHS, 2018-2024 stroke data has been shared with the University of Iowa (UI). The UI team plans to update the Coverdell Stroke Registry Report and shared that a component of the report of particular interest to this committee is the number of individuals with long-term disability related to having a stroke. Dr. Torner also shared the following: National Academy of Science Workshop: Approaches to Address Unmet Research Needs in Traumatic Brain Injury Among Older Adults: Proceedings

of a Workshop <https://www.nationalacademies.org/projects/HMD-HSP-24-07/publication/29099>

Maggie Ferguson, Iowa HHS Brain Injury Program, provided an update regarding continued rollout of the Teacher Acute Concussion Tool (TACT) training and utilization. Dr. Karen McAvoy, developer of the TACT, has provided training for schools interested in utilizing this system. Ms. Ferguson also shared that there will be two students assisting with developing reports and other outreach materials for schools this summer.

Action item: Ms. Ferguson will follow up with committee members who requested more information that can be shared with their local communities.

Melissa Walker, Iowa Department of Education Administrative Consultant, has had opportunity to meet with various groups, such as school nurses and school administrators, where information was shared regarding on demand school nurse training, which includes a component on concussion and how to access TACT.

Jim Pender, Iowa HHS Brain Injury Program, provided an update on activities related to the federal brain injury grant. A summit is planned focused on the intersection of brain injury and homelessness. Registration is free and the summit will be held in Des Moines on July 9.

5. Public Comment.

No Public Comment was received.

For inquiries about this meeting, please email brain.injury@hhs.iowa.gov