

Medical Advisory Council (MAC)

MEETING MINUTES

March 30, 2026

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Angie Doyle-Scar, Co-chairperson of the Medical Advisory Council (MAC), called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A quorum was established with seven members present

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the previous meeting minutes was made by Brandon Hagen and seconded by Co- chairperson Seth Brown. The minutes were approved unanimously.

DASHBOARD UPDATE

Kurt Behrens, Managed Care Reporting and Oversight (MCRO), presented updates on the [Iowa Medicaid Dashboard](#)¹ which can be accessed on the [Agency Dashboards webpage](#)². Kurt provided an extensive review of the **State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026 Quarter 1** Medicaid dashboard.

Enrollment Trends

- SFY25 ended with 700,000 Medicaid members.
- SFY26 Q1 enrollment began at approximately 697,000, a 1% decrease.
- No significant subgroup changes were reported.
- Dashboard filters allow analysis by age, race, sex, plan, county, etc.

Prior Authorization (PA) Processing

Major regulatory changes:

¹<https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiaMmlyMTQxNzltZmlwNS00ZDI2LThhMDAtZGI1MzZhNmNiMmM3liwidCI6IjhhMmM3YjRkLTA4NWEtNDYxNy04NTM2LTM4YTc2ZDE5YjBkYSJ9>

² https://hhs.iowa.gov/dashboard_welcome

- Federal requirements reduced standard PA processing time from 14 days to 7 days effective January 1, 2026.
- Iowa began early implementation roughly six months in advance.
- Current MCO performance shows near-100% compliance with the 7-day window (e.g., Wellpoint at 99%).

Kurt noted these are significant operational changes and further reporting will continue to evolve.

CMS Interoperability Rules (Upcoming Changes)

New PA-related Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requirements effective January 1, 2026 (calendar-year based). Dashboard modifications are ongoing to support new measures. Some new fields will remain blank until sufficient data accrues.

Quality Measures (HEDIS & CMS Core Set)

- National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) released 2025 Health Plan Ratings:
 - Iowa Total Care: 4 stars
 - Wellpoint: 4 stars
 - Molina: 3.5 stars (expected to rise as the plan matures)
- Member experience (CAHPS) surveys are included in star ratings.
- CMS Core Set results are posted but less preferred because they rely solely on administrative claims rather than hybrid data like Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS). 2024 HEDIS data set will be published with next quarter's dashboard.
- Kurt demonstrated the NCQA plan ratings site and how to look into Prevention & Population Health, Patient Experience, etc.

CAHPS Member Experience Surveys

- Surveys now include Adult, Child, and CHIP (Hawki).
- Results compare MCO performance to national averages using data from the national [AHRQ database](https://www.ahrq.gov/data/index.html)³.
- Fee-for-service is not yet surveyed but likely will be in future cycles.

Dental Dashboard Updates

Oral Health Evaluations (Newly Added):

³ <https://www.ahrq.gov/data/index.html>

- SFY26 Q1: 91,000 members received an exam out of 670,000 dental program members (13.68% Q1 rate; expected to increase over additional quarters).
- SFY25 full-year: **37%** of members had at least one dental screening.
- Strong utilization among children; substantially lower among adults.
- New tracking of fluoride varnish and CPT code-level drill-downs. This mirrors well-child visit tracking on the medical dashboard.

SDOH Dental-Related Insights:

- Members reporting lack of dental care cite:
 - Cost (29%)
 - Not having or knowing a dentist
 - Fear/anxiety
- Transportation also emerges as a major barrier in related SDOH questions.
- SDOH data is typically updated quarterly; Kurt will check why October 2025 is still showing as the “last updated” date.

Medicaid reports can be accessed on the [Medicaid Performance and Reports webpage](#)⁴.

MCO & DENTAL UPDATES

WELLPOINT IOWA

John McCalley delivered a comprehensive update on Wellpoint’s community engagement, member supports, and recent initiatives.

Food Security Month (March)

Wellpoint conducted statewide volunteer events, including:

- Food pantry shifts
 - Mobile food pantries
 - Grocery delivery
 - Food bag preparation
- Partnerships include all six Iowa food banks, Double Up Food Bucks, and upcoming Food-as-Medicine programming (future MAC presentation anticipated).

“Adopt a County” Rural Health Initiative

⁴ <https://hhs.iowa.gov/performance-and-reports/medicaid-reports>

A multi-layered partnership in Montgomery County addressing food insecurity and health inequities with local nonprofits and the county hospital. A full update is planned for a future meeting.

New Value-Added Benefits (Launched February 2026)

- Guardianship Assistance: Up to \$750 for guardianship filing and attorney fees.
- Smartphone Program: No-cost smartphone, unlimited talk/text/data, preloaded digital health tools. Intended to improve appointment access, digital check-ins, and care management.
 - John will follow up regarding eligibility for residents of long-term care facilities.

Community Partnerships

Examples included:

- One City United (Waterloo) – supporting unhoused individuals
- ISU Extension nutrition programs (multi-use cooker incentive)
- Autism-friendly prom in Webster County
- All-Abilities Day (Sioux City)
- Transition housing tours in Johnson County
- Regular volunteering at Dubuque Rescue Mission

IOWA TOTAL CARE

Jay McLaren presented on ITC’s Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Resource Team and community initiatives.

SDOH Resource Team Function

- Receives referrals from case managers, Smart Start for Baby staff, care coordinators, providers, and members.
- Develops individualized action plans for needs such as:
 - Housing (relocation, homelessness)
 - Food
 - Utilities
 - Financial instability
- Action plans are sent to members and followed with 50% documented “closed loops” despite challenges with transient populations.

Literacy Initiatives

- Newsletter distribution
- Library and school partnerships
- New collaboration with 4-H to support youth SEL and literacy across rural areas.

Empowerment Command Centers

Iowa Total Care co-funded centers in:

- Des Moines
- Grinnell
- Ottumwa

These provide crisis support (hygiene, short-term needs, resource navigation) for newly homeless or displaced individuals. Additional sites planned.

MOLINA HEALTHCARE

Nafissa Egbuonye presented on Molina's community initiatives, workforce development, and [value-added benefits](#)⁵.

Head Start Partnerships

- Shoe drives planned in Fort Dodge, Davenport, and Marshalltown.
- Parents receive information on children's care gaps, preventive care needs, and value-added benefits.

Northeast Iowa Food Bank Pilot

- Molina contributed \$100,000 for a two-year senior-nutrition pilot in collaboration with healthcare providers and nonprofits.
- More outcome data expected by next MAC meeting.

Workforce Development – Home Health Aid Scholarships

- Partnership with Mission Care Collective.
- 15,000 scholarships nationwide; 59 hours of virtual training, printed certification, full tuition coverage.
- To date:
 - 1,300 scholarships awarded

⁵ https://www.molinahealthcare.com/members/ia/en-us/-/media/Molina/PublicWebsite/PDF/members/ia/en-us/BRO0126VABEN-Iowa-2026-VAB-Booklet_ENGLISH_508C.ashx

- 968 enrolled
- 166 completed training

Diabetes Education Series

- Virtual classes for members with diabetes or pre-diabetes and caregivers.
- Includes interpreter services and caregiver supports.
- First session was held March 24, 2026.

DELTA DENTAL OF IOWA

Taryn Jonet of Delta Dental presented several operational and community updates.

Emergency Room (ER) Dental Project

- Quarter 2 outreach reached 311 unique members with dental-related ER visits.
- Now receiving ER data files from all three MCOs.
- Data refinements are underway to ensure appropriate coding and case capture.
- Outreach strategies include:
 - Care coordination for members without an active dental home
 - Education for members with existing dental providers about accessing after-hours dental care instead of ER use

Oral Health Risk Surveys (PreViser)

- Increased completion rates using:
 - Phone completion with customer service
 - Automated text links
- Internal system now flags new members or members overdue (>12 months) for survey completion.

Mobile Dental Clinics

Recent clinics included:

- **Denison** (with Crawford County Public Health): 97 members served
- **Storm Lake** (with Buena Vista Public Health and Regional Medical Center): 75 members served
Treatment planning provided onsite; ongoing care coordination arranged for complex needs (extractions, dentures, etc.).

Workforce Initiatives

1. Revolving Loan Fund

- \$2 million investment for low-interest loans enabling dental practice start-up, purchase, or transition.
- Prioritizes rural/high-need areas.
- Providers do not have to be in Delta's network to qualify.

2. I-ADAPT Program (Provider Wellness)

- Professional coaching and virtual therapy via FlowState.
- Year 2 adds 3 more therapy sessions annually.
- Over half of participating dentists continue therapy voluntarily after free sessions.
- Family members also engaging in services.

Community Outreach

Activities included partnerships with:

- Molina at Harding Middle School
- Community health centers
- Drake Head Start
- Maternal health programs such as EveryStep and Count the Kicks

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Carrie Malone, HHS Government Relations, provided a wide-ranging update on the 2026 legislative session.

HHS Legislative Webpage

Members were directed to the HHS Government Relations Resources page containing:

- Department presentations
 - Legislative reports
 - Budget materials
 - Program summaries
- Carrie encouraged MAC members to use it for deeper context.

Session Overview

- Session has been relatively quiet for major Medicaid-specific bills.

- Work is now focused on appropriations and floor debate following funnel deadlines.

HHS Agency Bills

1. Behavioral Health Alignment Bill
 - Continues statewide alignment with the new behavioral health map.
2. Early Childhood Iowa Reform (Revised Approach)
 - Focus shifted toward family preservation and early intervention.
 - Establishes a new Early Intervention & Supports Unit under Jan Harvey.
 - Strong emphasis on evidence-based home visiting and preventing child welfare involvement.

Medicaid-Related Budget Issues

Topics addressed included:

- Pharmacy Carve-Out: A proposal to remove pharmacy benefits from MCO contracts is active in budget discussions.
- MEPD Expansion: Ongoing interest in expanding Medicaid for Employed Persons with Disabilities.
- Subacute Services Reform: Bills to remove long-standing regulatory limitations have passed both chambers in some form.
- HCBS Litigation & Home- and Community-Based Services Redesign: Legislators receiving education on legal and operational complexities.
- Rate Review:
 - Annual comparison to Medicare benchmarks published by HHS.
 - Not necessarily a department recommendation.
 - Legislature may or may not fund adjustments.

HMO Tax (Recent Governor Action)

A member asked about impacts of the governor's approval of an HMO tax bill.

Carrie clarified:

- The higher tax rate is temporary (9 months).
- CMS restricts longer-term use of such taxes.
- The current Medicaid "shortfall" reflects several years of unfunded medical inflation masked by COVID-era federal funding.
- Projections posted online illustrate these trends clearly.

BENEFICIARY ADVISORY COUNCIL (BAC) UPDATE

Janae Carter provided an update on BAC's meeting on March 19 to set three top priorities for the year:

1. Dental Access Expansion
 - Workforce shortages and limited Medicaid-participating dentists are major concerns.
 - Particularly timely due to upcoming onboarding of a new dental PHP.
2. Waiver Redesign Transparency (HOME Project)
 - BAC seeks clearer updates on HCBS redesign progress and implications.
3. Transition Supports
 - Focus on youth aging into adult services and individuals whose level-of-care needs change
 - Better communication and smoother transitions requested

OPEN DISCUSSION

A BAC member highlighted challenges for families trying to secure Host Homes (adult foster care):

- Iowa prohibits parents from serving as host home providers for their own adult children, even though they may serve as providers for other families.
- Other states (example mentioned: Colorado) allow this.
- Parents feel this option is urgently needed due to:
 - Provider shortages
 - Difficulty finding appropriate behavioral environments
 - Safety and trust concernsThe MAC agreed that a formal educational session on host home policy structures would be valuable.

Another BAC member raised two system-level concerns:

1. **MCO Oversight**

- Parents report reductions in SCL (Supported Community Living) hours, confusion between tiered rates and hourly billing, and inconsistent interpretation of code and administrative rules.
- They asked: *Who is evaluating MCO performance and ensuring consistency?*

2. Woodward State Resource Center Concerns

- Referenced recent reports of severe issues involving vulnerable residents.
- Requested transparency similar to prior Glenwood reporting, including dashboard metrics and system accountability.

MAC leadership acknowledged both concerns and agreed to bring forward more information on oversight processes.

Oral Health Workforce Context

Members requested a future presentation explaining:

- National and state trends in declining dentist participation in insurance networks
- How reimbursement, administrative burden, and private-market shifts (e.g., membership-model dentistry) contribute
- How these patterns impact Medicaid dental access and operations

Request for Recurring “Medicaid Program Update”

Members asked that each MAC meeting begin with a general update from Medicaid (operations, policy, data).

MCO Value-Added Benefits

Members requested:

- Detailed utilization data
- Rationale for selecting each value-added benefit
- Outcomes/impact data will be requested from PAHP/MCO partners for the June MAC meeting.

The meeting concluded with a reminder to submit concerns or topic suggestions to the MAC and BAC shared email inbox MedicaidMAC-BAC@hhs.iowa.gov.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 2:44 p.m.

Submitted by

Nell Bennett

Recording Secretary

nb