

# District 6 Community Based Organization and Community Member Feedback

## Introduction

In 2024, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds proposed landmark legislation to reimagine Iowa's Behavioral Health Service System. As part of this new system, the Iowa Department of Health & Human Services (Iowa HHS) and the Iowa Primary Care Association (Iowa PCA) completed district-level assessment and planning to identify needs and opportunities. This report is one component of the assessment process and shares what was learned from local behavioral health providers and partners that are contracted with Iowa PCA, also known as Community Based Organizations (CBOs), and other community members in District 6. This work is part of our collaborative efforts to build a stronger behavioral health system for all Iowans.

## Brief Methods

From December 2025 to February 2026, the Iowa PCA and Iowa HHS developed and distributed surveys to contracted CBOs and community members to inform this year's assessment. Across Iowa, members. In District 6, there were with 141 total survey responses, including 113 from community members and 28 from contracted CBOs.

In addition, the Iowa PCA facilitated 111 guided conversations with contracted CBOs statewide. Five of the CBOs that participated in the guided conversations are based in District 6 and included organizations that exclusively provide prevention, early intervention and peer services as well as larger organizations that provide services across the continuum of behavioral healthcare- prevention, treatment, recovery and crisis services.

## What We Heard Across the Continuum

Transportation and workforce shortages were identified by respondents as challenges that affect access to services across the behavioral health continuum.

- 89% of contracted CBO respondents said transportation is the most significant challenge to access services across District 6.
- Regardless of organization size, 64% of contracted CBO respondents said staffing is a barrier to individuals and families receiving behavioral health services, and 58% said it is not easy to fill open positions.

## Prevention

**District 6**  
*Top Prevention Needs*

- | Mental Health Promotion
- | School-Based Programs
- | Substance Use Prevention

- In District 6, the top Prevention needs identified by CBO respondents are improved mental health promotion, strengthened substance use prevention in rural school-based settings and substance use prevention services.
- CBO respondents in District 6 identified that building prevention programs is difficult and limitations imposed by funding requirements were a barrier.

## Early Intervention

**District 6**  
*Top Early Intervention Needs*

- | Awareness & Utilization of System Navigation
- | Referral & Utilization Pathways

- The top Early Intervention needs identified in District 6 include increased awareness and utilization of Behavioral Health System Navigation and strengthened referral and utilization pathways.
- Behavioral Health (BH) System Navigation helps connect people to services early, but many community members and CBO respondents were not fully aware of the program or how it should be used. In District 6, 35% of community members surveyed said they had heard of BH System Navigation, and 12% have used the service or knew someone who had.
- When surveyed community members were asked whether they thought individuals and families know how to access BH services, only 19% agreed or strongly agreed.

## Treatment

**District 6**  
*Top Treatment Needs*

- | Access to Specialty Treatment Services
- | Access to Residential & High Acuity Treatment Services
- | Coordination & Transition Between Levels of Care

- The top Treatment needs identified in District 6 are increased access to specialty treatment services (including youth services), expanded access to residential and high-acuity treatment services, and improved coordination and transitions between levels of care.
- The biggest gaps according to CBO respondents in District 6 are children's services, withdrawal management, and residential substance use treatment.

## Recovery



- The top identified Recovery needs in District 6 are increased availability of peer-led recovery supports, expanded recovery housing and infrastructure, and improved awareness and access to recovery services.
- 49% of community members surveyed in District 6 believe that people in their district do not know where to go for recovery services.
- Recovery services are often not available when needed according to 63% of surveyed community members.
- 57% of surveyed community members believe that people in District 6 do not have enough peer-led recovery support, local recovery places to go to for help, or recovery housing.

## Crisis



- The top Crisis needs in District 6 were identified as improved coordination between crisis and treatment providers, expanded rural crisis infrastructure, and increased awareness of available crisis services.
- In District 6, 55% of community members surveyed do not believe that individuals know how to access crisis services.
- 56% of District 6 community members surveyed also believe that crisis services are not available when needed.

## Next Steps

The feedback provided by community members and CBO's is a component of Iowa HHS' Behavioral Health Service System assessment toolkit. The toolkit has been developed to be utilized by Iowa HHS, the Iowa PCA, District Advisory Councils, CBO's and community members in support of ongoing system improvement efforts. Iowa HHS' system assessments are thematically built around answering questions that are important to Iowans: **How much did we do? How well did we do it? Are Iowans better off?** By gathering and using meaningful data, we are better able to identify the right targets and plan next steps.

The Iowa PCA and Iowa HHS team members wish to extend sincere appreciation to the many individuals and organizations that contributed gave their time and perspectives as part of this year's assessment process. Thank you also for the perspective offered by the members of the seven District Advisory Councils who contributed to the early development of focus and themes for district assessment and planning.