

Medical Advisory Council (MAC)

MEETING MINUTES

June 11, 2026

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Angie Doyle-Scar and Jason Haglund, Co-chairpersons of the Medical Advisory Council (MAC), called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A quorum was not established with five members present, and attendance is reflected in the [roll call sheet](#)¹. March Meeting Minutes will be voted on at the next MAC meeting on Thursday, September 10, 2026.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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

Session Overview

- Described 2026 as a light Medicaid legislative session with fewer Medicaid-specific bills.
- Focus areas included subacute care regulation, modernization of prior authorization, and addressing the Medicaid supplemental budget need.

Key Updates

- **Subacute Care Facilities:**
 - Need to align regulations with DIA to expand availability.
 - Current average length of stay under 10 days; goal to expand capacity and address inpatient volume.
- **Prior Authorization (PA) Modernization:**
 - New requirement: **automated, electronic** PA processes (no more faxes).
 - Result of collaboration with MCOs, hospitals, and Sen. Weiner.
- **Medicaid Supplemental Need:**

¹ <https://hhs.iowa.gov/media/18889/download?inline>

- First supplemental request in years due to decreased federal pandemic funds.
- **Rate Review:**
 - Annual review continues; rate increases adopted for some under-benchmark services, including **ambulatory surgical centers**.
- **MEPD Program (Medicaid for Employed Persons with Disabilities):**
 - Legislature directing HHS to develop an **online payment portal**, and work is already underway.
- **Retroactive Eligibility Question:**
 - No change this session to pregnant women or infants' retroactive eligibility rules.
 - Senate File 2422 governs related eligibility changes.

BENEFICIARY ADVISORY COUNCIL (BAC) UPDATE

Janae Carter provided an update on BAC's May 13th meeting to set top priorities for MAC:

Top Priority Issues

- **Dental Access:**
 - Network adequacy concerns: Providers may be within distance requirements but not accepting Medicaid or new patients.
- **Home & Host Home Programs:**
 - Questions about rules restricting parents from serving as host home providers for their own children.
- **BAC Federal Report (due 2027):**
 - Draft planned for September 2026 meeting.
 - December meeting will include vote; aim to avoid additional holiday-season meetings.

D-SNP (Dual Special Needs Plans) OVERVIEW

Susan Van Horn, Medicaid Policy Program Manager, delivered a presentation on Dual Special Needs Plans.

Population Overview

- Dually Eligible Individuals are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid.
- High-need population with complex medical/behavioral/long-term care needs.
- Disproportionate spending group (Medicare 34% of spend; Medicaid 30%).

Plan Types

- Coordination Only
- Highly Integrated (HIDE SNPs)
- Fully Integrated (FIDE SNPs)

Current Iowa Landscape (2026)

- 6 Medicare Advantage organizations
- 9 D-SNP products
- All 3 Iowa MCOs now offer D-SNP options.

Upcoming Changes

- Move toward **Exclusively Aligned Enrollment (EAE)** so members receive both Medicare & Medicaid services through the same MCO.
- 2027 SMAC contracts will include new integration requirements.
- No member disruptions expected in 2027 other than typical plan-year renewals.

HOME (Hope and Opportunity in Many Environments) PROJECT UPDATE

Program Purpose: Major redesign of Iowa's HCBS waiver system to simplify access, modernize services, and align supports to actual need.

Stakeholder Engagement Highlights (2022–2024)

- Statewide evaluation using ARPA funds.
- 600+ surveys, 14 "HOMEtown conversations," 3,000+ waitlist surveys.
- Workgroups with MCOs and providers.

Key Findings

- Services often don't align with needs.
- Navigation remains complex.
- Recommends moving to an age-based, need-based system.

Implementation Timeline

- **2025:** Waiver amendments submitted; standardized service definitions created; independent assessor model implemented for all core assessments.
- **2026 (Phase 1):**
 - Transition members from the following waivers into two new age-based waivers:
 - Health & Disability (HD)
 - AIDS/HIV
 - Physical Disability (PD)
 - Children's Mental Health (CMH)
 - New waivers:
 - **Adults with Disabilities (21+)**
 - **Children & Youth (under 21)**
 - Clinical eligibility expands to include developmental disabilities & autism.
 - Monthly service cap continues (same as current).
- **2027+ (Phase 2):**
 - Transition remaining waivers (ID, BI).
 - Elderly waiver remains unchanged.
 - Introduce My Service Plan Limit (acuity-based monthly budget).
 - Add new services: **pre-vocational, supported employment, community transition services, peer mentoring.**

Assessment Tools

Tools aligned by age/diagnosis (InterRAI suite), including Early Years (0–3), ChYMH (4–17), IID, Home Care (18+), etc.

Major Service Package Changes

- Some services removed from waivers due to state plan availability (e.g., children's nursing, attendant care, therapy).
- Adult Daycare no longer for members <21.
- Homemaker & Chore combined into Home Maintenance Support Service (effective Jan 1, 2026).

DASHBOARD UPDATE

Kurt Behrens, Managed Care Reporting and Oversight (MCRO), presented updates on the [Iowa Medicaid Dashboard](#)² which can be accessed on the [Agency Dashboards webpage](#)³. Kurt provided an extensive review of the **State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026 Quarter 2** Medicaid dashboard.

Enrollment Trends

- Q2 2026 Medicaid enrollment: **~963,000** (slight dip from Q1, recovered in Q3 to ~702k counted differently by program).

Key Dashboard Changes

- **Prior Authorization:**
 - 7-day processing deadline (down from 14 days).
 - Increase in initial denials due to missing information; many later overturned upon appeal.
- **Grievances:**
 - NEMT is now top complaint category statewide.
 - "Other" category reduced through improved classification.
- **Dental Network Access:**
 - Only ~30% of credentialed dental providers accepting new Medicaid patients.
- **Waiver Waitlist:**
 - Continues to rise; expected to decline significantly after HOME implementation.
- **Assessments:**
 - Timeliness currently ~70%; new vendor CareStar begins July 2026.
- **Improvements Planned:**
 - Display grievances/appeals filtered by waiver.
 - More detailed service utilization and provider availability metrics.
 - Enhanced network access monitoring (unique provider counts).

²<https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrljoiMmlyMTQxNzltZmlwNS00ZDI2LThhMDAtZGI1MzZhNmNiMmM3liwidCI6IjhhkMmM3YjRkLTA4NWetNDYxNy04NTM2LTM4YTc2ZDE5YjBkYSJ9>

³ https://hhs.iowa.gov/dashboard_welcome

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 Value-Added Benefits.

- Major focus areas: maternal health, behavioral health, LTSS, transportation, nutrition.
- High utilization in food & transportation benefits.
- Employment support: Job Connections platform (700+ members enrolled, nearly 400 active users).
- Doula coverage added; guardianship support benefit (\$750).

IOWA TOTAL CARE

Jay McLaren presented on ITC's Value-Added Benefits.

Strong use of My Health Pays rewards:

- 77,000+ transactions in FY25.
- Most common uses: groceries, gas, utilities.

Programs include:

- Smart Start for Your Baby
- Tobacco cessation
- Ready for My Recovery Program
- Diabetes kits & Hi V dietitian referrals
- Foster care kits & transition support
- Scholarships for healthcare certification programs
- Phone service/lifeline program
- Doc's Kids Club (books for children)

MOLINA HEALTHCARE

Nafissa Egbuonye presented on Molina's [Value-Added Benefits](#)⁵.

- 77,000+ benefits used; ~18,000 unique members.
- High utilization in healthy rewards, maternal supports, and meal services.

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

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

- YMCA membership program tied to completing preventive care.
- Community engagement: “Laundry Love” events (37 events since March 2024).
- New initiatives in nutrition education and, potentially, swimming lessons.

DELTA DENTAL OF IOWA

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

Adult dental wellness pilot (launched Jan 2025):

- Members complete oral health survey + preventive visit = Amazon gift card
- Goal: long-term habit formation, not one-time rewards.

Results:

- FY26 target: 300 new members; achieved 596.
- 50% scheduled additional preventive care afterward.
- Survey completion up 40.5% from prior year.
- Children’s survey launching July 2025 for DWP Kids & Hawki.
- Less than 10% of members have active Member Connection accounts—goal to increase engagement.
- Teledentistry services available 24/7 at deltadentalia.com/dwp/virtual; 65 members used in FY26.

NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION (NEMT) UPDATE

Ashley Bolsem, Demonstration Authority Oversight Officer, joined the MAC meeting in person to provide a brief update on changes to the NEMT program:

- Expansion: As of Jan 1, 2027, **NEMT will be covered for entire IHAWP population.**
- Rural access challenges persist (driver shortages).
- Uber/Lyft are approved options but are not consistently available statewide.
- MTM is actively soliciting provider feedback on gaps.

REMINDERS AND OPEN DISCUSSION

MAC members were invited to attend upcoming Medicaid Town Hall meetings, and were given advance notice of 2027 MAC meeting dates:

- Q1 MAC – March 11, 2027
- Q2 MAC – June 10, 2027
- Q3 MAC – September 9, 2027
- Q4 MAC – December 9, 2027

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.

The meeting concluded with open comment period and 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 3:30 p.m.

Submitted by

Nell Bennett
Recording Secretary
nb