IOWA | Health and Human Services

Council on Health and Human Services

Meeting Minutes
August 27, 2026

COUNCIL MEMBERS	EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS
✔ Chair, Rebecca Peterson	Senator Sarah Trone Garriott
✔ Andrew Allen	Senator Mike Klimesh
✔ Kay Fisk	✔ Representative Heather Matson
✔ Dr. Monika Jindal	Representative Carter F. Nordman
✔ Dr. Donald Macfarlane	
✔ Sandra McGrath	
✔ Samantha Rozeboom, DNP	
✔ Jack Willey	
✔ Tom Brown	

1. **Call to Order**
   Chairperson Rebecca Peterson called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. **Roll Call**
   The secretary conducted roll call as indicated above; a quorum was present.

3. **HHS Budget Public Hearing**
   Chief Financial Officer Jess Benson covered the HHS State Fiscal Year 2027 Budget by funding source.
   - Total Budget: $15,022,946,290.00
   - State General Funding: $2,697.9 B, 18.0%
   - Federal & Other Non-General Funding: $12,325.1 B, 82.0%

4. **Public Comment:**
   Flora Schmidt of the Iowa Behavioral Health Association (IBHA) highlighted that IBHA's behavioral health providers serve hundreds of thousands of Iowans each year and form a major part of the state's safety-net system. She requested Iowa HHS to maintain or increase Medicaid provider rates, restore full community mental health block-grant funding to CMHCs, fully fund CCBHCs at intended PPS rates, honor federally negotiated indirect cost rates for SUPTRS funds, and keep SNMIS reimbursement at 100% of Medicaid rates while expanding covered services.

   Tiffiny Staggs, Iowa Family Crisis Centers (FCC) a family childcare educator in Waverly, Iowa, emphasized the need for childcare funding based on the true cost of quality care, including CCA reimbursement rates, predictable payments, and fair educator compensation to ensure families can access care and providers can remain in the profession.

5. **Approval of Minutes**
Jack Willey moved to approve the minutes from April 28, 2026, HHS Council meeting; seconded by Samantha Rozeboom. Motion carried by voice vote.

6. **Performance Measures - Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) Program**
Page Humphrey, Bureau Chief of Community Services in the Division of Family Well-Being & Protection, reviewed the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) Program Contract Measures including home visits, engaging family members, while focusing on childcare and mental health needs.
The program has transformed outcomes for families. Connecting them to stabilizing supports and opportunities in their communities

Sandra McGrath moved to approve the Performance Measures, Jack Willey seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote.

7. **Healthy Hometowns: Highlights, Year One Review, Year Two Plan, Dashboard Demonstration**
Kelsey Feller, HHS Chief Data Officer and Dr. Lachlan Watkins, the State of Iowa's Health Economist, presented on the first year of Iowa's Healthy Hometowns initiative.

They covered the Hometown Connections partners, Combat Cancer prevention and treatment initiatives, Communities of Care, the Health Information Exchange, and their associated goals and timelines, with a focus on Iowa's rural landscape, access to care, and average rural census drive times.

They also reviewed the projected Year 2 Projects and Procurements Details and the anticipated services to be covered including Cardiovascular Health Hub and Spokes & Maternal Health Hub and Spokes, School Based Services, Mobile Integrated Health (EMS), High-Risk OB and Neonatal Transport (EMS), and Communities of Care Co-Locations.

8. **Behavioral Health Report: Year One Redesign**
Marissa Eyanson, HHS Behavioral Health Division Director, presented on the first year of Behavioral Health Redesign. She covered prevention strategies, early intervention, treatment, recovery, and crisis services. She also covered the desired outcomes. This includes building an integrated, comprehensive, statewide system of high-quality behavioral health services, improving access, strengthening the workforce and reducing stigma associated with mental health care and improving outcomes for Iowans.

Also covered were the Iowa Health and Wellbeing Survey, as well as the Community Based Organizations and Community Member Feedback.

This survey also set a baseline for general wellbeing. Questions about quality of life, general wellbeing, and day to day life were asked to survey respondents to get a clear picture on quality of life for Iowans.

Director Eyanson offered the following resources for further information.
Iowa's Behavioral Health Service System | Health & Human Services

Behavioral Health Dashboard

9. **Rules Update**
Compliance Officer Victoria Daniels covered rulemakings that had been published since the last Council meeting.

10. **Director's Update**
HHS Principal Deputy Director Larry Johnson presented updates on HHS activities including a recent visit from the US Department of Health and Human Services Secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who visited to attend a roundtable (on a state prevention plan for the chronic disease of substance abuse) hosted by House of Mercy.

He voiced the priorities for the agency through to the end of Governor Reynolds term. These include modernization and treatment that meets Iowans where they are. He highlighted the Healthy Hometowns initiative, which is aimed at building sustainable, high-quality rural health system.

Principal Deupty Johnson highlighted that HHS is using the success of the Behavioral Health districts framework to further standardize other areas of the HHS system.

He introduced two new HHS Division Directors, Steve Garrison, State-Operated Specialty Care Division Director and Jill Stuecker, Division Director of Community Access and Eligibility and gave a brief overview of their history and qualifications.

11. **Steve Garrison Introduction**
Iowa HHS's new State-Operated Specialty Care Division Director, Steve Garrison, introduced himself to the Council. He gave a short review of his past 12 years in Iowa State Government and gave an overview of his goals for the HHS Facilities.

Items to be improved upon:
- Automation of processes
- Hiring Cherokee superintendent
- Strengthen SOSC Infrastructure

He plans to work with other Divisions within HHS to find opportunities to share resources and to provide those who live in our facilities the best care and possible outcomes.

He is also focusing on:

- Monitoring the population
- Providing more mental health support to patients
- Establishing a welcome plan to integrate new arrivals in a positive way and create better outcomes
- Prepare patients to reenter society (mentally and socially)
- Establish a geriatric facility

12. **Jill Stuecker Introduction**

Iowa HHS's new Community Access & Eligibility Division Director, Jill Stuecker, introduced herself and gave a short review of her previous work and qualifications.

Her focus for Community Access and Eligibility:

- Maintaining the SNAP error rate at under 6%
- Metrics, guiding work to streamline processes and keep efficiency and correctness
- Getting to know her 1200 team members
- Getting out into the field

13. **Adjournment**

Jack Willey moved to adjourn; seconded by Dr. Monika Jindal. Motion carried by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.