

June 5, 2020

The Honorable Governor Kim Reynolds
The Honorable Lieutenant Governor Adam Gregg
The Honorable Senator Charles Grassley
The Honorable Senator Joni Ernst
The Honorable House Representative Cindy Axne
The Honorable House Representative Abby Finkenauer
The Honorable House Representative Steve King
The Honorable House Representative Dave Loebsack
Iowa General Assembly

The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) is committed to ensuring individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have access to the least restrictive setting to support high quality of life. It's critical that these individuals have meaningful options to live in the community of their choice. The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the vulnerability of large congregate facility settings. To support this commitment, DHS has re-evaluated existing strategies and identified new ones to create a multi-year Community Integration Plan.

Our work plan is intended to augment the state's Olmstead Plan and will initially focus on persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are currently served by a state resource center (SRC) or who could seek admission to an SRC. Many of these individuals also have co-occurring behavioral health or medical needs. The plan calls for building out community supports and includes robust dialog with guardians and loved ones. This will be a collaborative process with a person-centered approach. The Department will work in partnership with the Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs), residents, guardians, community providers and other stakeholders. The goal of this effort is a thoughtful approach to the community integration process. We will continually engage all key stakeholders—including families and guardians—in the discussion.

Our SRCs serve individuals who were admitted more recently and those who have lived at the resource centers for decades, including some for most of their lives. While the service array for supporting individuals with disabilities in the community has improved and increased over time, the need for large institutions to serve individuals with disabilities has decreased. However, there are many individuals who have lived their entire lives at a resource center and want to continue to do so. Our plan acknowledges this and provides their loved ones with reassurance that they may continue to be served at an SRC should they choose.

DHS also envisions the SRCs preparing and supporting individuals to live healthy, safe, successful lives in the home and community of their choice. The home- and community-based services waiver homes will be an integral part of this plan as will the Money Follows the Person program. Our SRCs will continue to provide important safety net services for individuals in crisis, for individuals with unique or unusually complex needs, and as a training center for teaching skills to individuals and preparing the next generation of support professionals. To operationalize the vision for the SRCs, DHS has taken and will take steps to align admission criteria thereby determining a customized care path for each individual.

We've put together a thoughtful plan and look forward to collaborating with community providers, stakeholders and our MCO partners. We are grateful for their commitment to this initiative. We believe with the right supports that anyone can be served in the community. We also understand that there will always be a need for resource centers and all decisions will be made by the families and loved ones of those we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Garcia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly Garcia
Director