



UPFRONT

APRIL 25, 2011

Title: REDESIGNING OUR MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Most of my work outside of my budget responsibilities and constituent work has involved an effort to redesign the delivery of mental health and intellectual disabilities services in Iowa. A bi-partisan group has worked diligently for the past ten weeks, bringing to the table all the players that would be affected by the redesign. The House, this week, is ready to move forward with a bill that contains our vision of where we feel the direction of the redesign must go.

On Tuesday, the House Appropriations Committee unanimously approved the House's proposal for redesigning the delivery of mental health and intellectual disability services in Iowa. The bill starts a multi-year process that provides Iowans in all parts of the state with access to the same level of services.

The proposal begins the process of redesigning Iowa's mental health system by placing the initial focus on mental illness. Beginning in FY 2013, the state assumes responsibility for services to adults with mental illness, children with serious emotional disturbances, and children and adults who have co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders.

DHS is the agency charged with administering publicly-funded mental health services for children and adults. The Legislative Council is asked to have an interim committee that develops an implementation plan for the state assuming administration of these services. The plan includes who is served in the new

system, core services that will be provided across the state, outcome measures, and provider accreditation.

The implementation plan also addresses the potential for treating Iowans with co-occurring disorders, ways to develop treatment services that are not currently available in Iowa for children, barriers for the recruitment and retention of mental health providers, ways to increase access to providers, and the future role of the Central Point of Coordination system.

The legislative interim committee is set to complete their work and submit their plan for review and approval to the Council on Human Services by December 1, 2011 and to the Governor and Legislature by January 1, 2012.

The proposal also calls for the state to assume administrative responsibility for the intellectual disability and brain injury service system. DHS is the agency charged with this role, and is charged with convening a stakeholder group to address the same issues covered by the mental health group. They would submit their plan to the Council on Human Services by December 1, 2012 and to the Legislature and Governor by January 1, 2013.

The Department of Human Services and Judicial Branch would continue their efforts to address issues in Iowa's mental health commitment process, with a goal of completing this work during the 2012 legislative session. The proposal also calls for the Departments of Human Services and Public Health to work with the Iowa State Association of Counties to agree upon a unified information system for disability and substance abuse services, which would be considered by the Legislature in 2012.

The proposal directs that the funding appropriated in Senate File 209 (\$20 million) be deposited in the Mental Health Risk Pool for use to address waiting lists for services. It is expected that additional funds will be appropriated for mental health allowed growth to address the issues created due to the use of one-time federal Medicaid funds to replace state growth dollars.

The proposal establishes a Disability Services System Redesign Savings Fund to capture savings generated by steps taken during this process. These funds are reinvested back into the system to provide funding for service improvements. The proposal recognizes that the state of Iowa currently does not have a coordinated system of mental health services for children. To address this, the proposal begins the process of developing a system of mental health services for

Iowa's children. The proposal calls for the creation of multiple levels of care that Iowa's Psychiatric Medical Institutes for Children (PMIC's) would be allowed to provide. This step would allow the state to bring home children and young adults who have been sent to other states for treatment and services not currently available in Iowa. Additionally, the proposal transitions PMIC's into managed care setting beginning in FY 2013.

While the bill has been voted out of committee, extensive work will still has to be done before the bill reaches the floor.

Visitors to the capitol this week were Steve Brimhall, Mayor of Mount Pleasant, and Ed and Joy Conwell of Mount Pleasant.

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If you have any issues or concerns, please contact me. Be sure to include your name and address with any communication to my office.

State Rep. Dave Heaton, R-Mount Pleasant, represents the 91st House District, which includes all of Henry County and the northern half of Lee County.
