
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2021

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2020



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

Independence Mental Health Institute

Background

The Independence Mental Health Institute (MHI), operated by the Department of Human Services (DHS), provides acute psychiatric care for children and adults who need mental health treatment. The Independence MHI is licensed as a hospital and is also accredited by the Joint Commission (formerly known as the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations). After the MHI opened on May 1, 1873, for the first seven decades the Independence MHI was a custodial facility with individuals being hospitalized for the greater part of their lives. In the late 1950s, with the advent of psychiatric medication and the recruitment of qualified professionals, the emphasis at the MHI shifted to treatment rather than housing individuals. With the change in philosophy, the population decreased from 1,800 individuals in 1946 to approximately 300 individuals in 1970. For FY 2019, the General Assembly provided funding for 60 beds at Independence.

Populations Served

The Independence MHI provides services for both children and adults and includes 40 adult psychiatric beds and 20 child and adolescent beds.

The most common diagnoses for the adults served at Independence are schizoaffective disorder, depression and other mood disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, and intermittent explosive disorder. In many cases, individuals have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder.

The most common diagnoses for the children and adolescents served are oppositional defiant and conduct disorders, depression and other mood disorders, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, and eating disorders.

The majority of individuals admitted at Independence are committed involuntarily by the court because they are a danger to themselves or others. Other admissions include individuals who have committed a crime and are at the MHI for an evaluation to determine if they are competent to stand trial, and individuals found not guilty of a crime by reason of insanity.

Treatment Services Provided

There are a variety of both subacute and acute-care treatment services provided at the Independence MHI, including:

- Counseling
- Psychotropic medication

More Information

DHS Independence MHI: dhs.iowa.gov/mhds/mental-health/in-patient/mental-health-institutes/independence

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- Psychiatric rehabilitation classes
- Leisure skills development
- Recreational activities
- Discharge planning

Each individual has a personalized treatment plan based on individual assets and needs, including physical, psychological, educational/vocational, and social/cultural needs. There is a wide variety of therapies available in addition to psychotherapy including recreational therapy, music therapy, and creative arts. Patients at the MHI have a number of rights and privileges designed to safeguard personal dignity and respect cultural, psychosocial, and spiritual values.

Funding

The Independence MHI is funded 96.5% by General Fund appropriations and 3.5% by third-party payments such as Medicaid, Medicare, or private insurance.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapter [226](#)

Iowa Administrative Code [441—28](#) and [441—29](#)

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