



Department of
HUMAN SERVICES

*Iowa Department of Human Services
Annual Report, SFY21*

December 2021

Iowa Department of Human Services, Annual Report

Pursuant to [§217.21](#), Annual Report

The department shall, annually, at the time provided by law make a report to the governor and general assembly, and cover therein the annual period ending with June 30 preceding, which report shall embrace:

1. An itemized statement of its expenditures concerning each program under its administration.
2. Adequate and complete statistical reports for the state as a whole concerning all payments made under its administration.
3. Such recommendations as to changes in laws under its administration as the director may deem necessary.
4. The observations and recommendations of the director and the council on human services relative to the programs of the department.
5. Such other information as the director or council on human services may deem advisable, or which may be requested by the governor or by the general assembly.

Expenditures & Payments

An itemized statement of the department's expenditures and statistical information regarding all payments made under the department's administration are available to Department of Management (DOM) and Legislative Service Agency (LSA) through the state's Integrated Information for Iowa (I/3) system. The public may access this information through the DHS Dashboard (discussed below).

Recommendations as to Changes in Laws

The department's legislative liaison works with the governor's office and LSA to pre-file departmental requests for legislative changes deemed necessary by the director.

Observations & Recommendations of Director, Kelly Garcia

The Department is submitting a budget for State Fiscal Year 2023 (SFY23) that is generally status quo for the Council's consideration. We will submit an additional general fund request for the Children's Health Insurance Programs and the MHDS Regional Services program.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact spending and service utilization across most of our programs in a variety of ways. Iowa has made good progress with its vaccination campaign, but the prevalence of the Delta variant continues to require an ongoing response and program flexibility. As the public health emergency continues, federal and state waivers and provisions around our programs and services also continue. These include, e.g., temporary suspension of disenrollment from health programs and increased federal matching funds (FMAP). These variables create many

challenges when trying to navigate longer-term projections of needed state general funds.

Many of the challenges we have addressed over the past several months continue to affect the work of the Department. We continue to make solid progress in addressing the class action suit at the Boys State Training School (BSTS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) findings at the Glenwood Resource Center. We are strengthening our focus on community integration for individuals with intellectual and development disabilities (ID/DD). We are working to assess and build out a true continuum for the mental health needs of Iowans. We also continue to respond to ongoing events, such as the crisis in Afghanistan, in which our Department will be a key support.

Over the next couple of years, we anticipate a need to expand capacity at the Civil Commitment Unit for Sex Offenders (CCUSO). We continue our efforts to build a Family First approach to child welfare including essential work with our child welfare providers. We are also working closely with the administration to address ongoing and emerging childcare challenges in the State of Iowa.

The workforce shortage across sectors presents serious challenges for our agency. While we have faced long-term challenges in filling critical health care and clinical roles, we are now experiencing challenges across all roles. This is compounded by larger shifts in the workforce landscape, including remote work opportunities and highly competitive starting wages. This presents challenges beyond DHS' internal staffing but also extends to our many providers across health care, child welfare and childcare. This is likely to affect provider reimbursement.

In addition, the Department of Human Services, along with the Iowa Department of Public Health, continue our efforts to more effectively align programs, services and operations. The alignment is a purposeful collaboration between our departments to promote improved outcomes for Iowans.

As always, we at DHS remain deeply committed to the more than one million Iowans we serve each year. We are grateful for continued investments Governor Reynolds has made in the Department as well as the legislature's support of these efforts. We will continue to monitor programs, services and operations as we approach the 2022 legislative session and will work closely with the administration to ensure our budget needs are clearly communicated.

I am deeply committed to the incredible work we're doing within our collective health and human services system. I continue to be both awed and humbled by the work our team does every day. With you, and with your support, we will continue to rise to the challenges we face, striving to make a positive difference in the lives of the Iowans we serve.

Other Information about the Department during SFY21:

COVID-19 DHS Resources

The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) has taken significant steps to ensure the safety and well-being of our team and those we serve during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Details about DHS' COVID response, including resources for clients and providers, are available on the DHS Website, following [this link](#). For a current, on-going summary of DHS' COVID activities and response, please use [this link](#).

IDPH-DHS Alignment

The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) and Iowa's Department of Public Health (IDPH) are exploring options for aligning their programs, services and operations more closely in order to better serve the health and human services needs of Iowans.

By "aligning," we mean using, sharing, coordinating, or structuring two or more things (programs, services, processes, technology, data, access points like buildings or websites, etc.) in new, more closely connected ways.

Details about this initiative, updates and resources, including project plans and news releases, are available through [this link](#).

2021 DHS Legislative Session Presentations

Details about DHS' 2021 Legislative Presentations on such topics as Community Mental Health and Disability Services, Child Care, State Facilities, Medicaid, and Family First Prevention Services are available on the DHS Website, following [this link](#).

Managed Care Organization Reports

Performance monitoring and data analysis are critical components in assessing how well the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) are maintaining and improving the quality of care delivered to members. The quarterly reports, with a number of elements required through oversight legislation, are comprehensive and focus on compliance areas, as well as health outcomes over time. The Department examines the data from a compliance perspective and conducts further analysis if any issues are identified. While there are specific performance standards in the contract for a limited set of items, not all data reported is directly linked to a contractual requirement.

Historical MCO Quarterly Reports are available on the DHS Website, following [this link](#).

Department of Human Services Agency Dashboard Initiative

DHS is committed to continuous improvement transparency, and accountability for results. To that end, the DHS launched informational dashboards (interactive reports) to share up-to-date, accurate data with the public to increase awareness of our

programs and performance. Our vision for this initiative is to increase comfort and confidence in the quality of services provided by DHS. Stakeholders are encouraged to use this data to help drive conversation and inform decisions that affect the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of Iowans.

DHS plans to continue delivering enhancements to these reports to share additional information and details including targeted performance measures used to evaluate programs.

Details about how to use the Digital Dashboards and to view current data on fiscal summaries, child care, child support, child welfare, facilities, SNAP/FIP, and health programs are available on the DHS Website, following [this link](#).

Mental Health & Disability Services Regional Services Update

SF619, passed by the 2021 Iowa Legislature, modifies the methodology and sources of funding for the regional mental health system in Iowa. A Mental Health and Disability Services Regional Service Fund is created by the Act, and for each fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2021, the Act appropriates from the General Fund of the State to the Mental Health and Disability Services Regional Service Fund an amount necessary to make all regional service payments for that fiscal year. The moneys available in a fiscal year are distributed to each mental health and disability services region on a per capita basis and in accordance with performance-based contracts with each region. The per capita amount increases over a period of fiscal years and eventually increases based on the regional service growth factor, as calculated under the Act.

The Act also establishes the incentive fund in the Mental Health and Disability Services Regional Service Fund to provide funding to mental health and disability services regions meeting certain eligibility criteria.

The Act also provides emergency rulemaking authority to DHS and requires DHS to convene a study committee to evaluate the current mental health and disability services region structure and operations and submit a report to the General Assembly and the Governor by December 15, 2022.

Department of Justice (DOJ) Resource Center Investigation

The Department of Human Services (DHS) took immediate action upon notice of the investigation and our efforts are ongoing. We have been in a collaborative role with our federal partners throughout the investigation. We continue to work with them on the best path forward to ensure we provide the best care to those we serve. Just as we have this entire past year, we will continue to keep all of our stakeholders updated, including the families of our residents, legislators and the public. Our highest priority is the care and well-being of those we serve.

Resources regarding of the Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation at the Glenwood and Woodward State Resource Centers are available on the DHS Website, following [this link](#).

Class Action Suit at the Boys' State Training School (BSTS) in Eldora

We are actively making changes to address the concerns raised in the suit. We're committed to sharing information and updates as we make progress. The Iowa Department of Human Services continues its commitment to an open dialog with all stakeholders and building trust through transparency.

Resources regarding a class action suit at the Boys State Training School (BSTS) are available on the DHS Website, following [this link](#).