



The General Assembly

STATE OF IOWA
Eighty-eighth General Assembly
STATEHOUSE
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

July 10, 2019

Honorable Jack Whitver, Chair
Studies Committee – Legislative Council

Honorable Linda Upmeyer, Vice Chair
Studies Committee – Legislative Council

Re: Request for Interim Study to Review programs and facilities under the purview of the Department of Human Services

Dear Majority Leader Whitver and Speaker Upmeyer:

Today we write you to request an interim study to review programs and facilities under the purview of the Department of Human Services. Shortly after the legislative session adjourned, we learned of another patient death at Glenwood Resource Center bringing the total to 15 deaths since June of 2018. And in June we learned that four state employees had been injured in violent outbursts from patients at the Independence Mental Health Institute in just two weeks. In the wake of the surprising departure of the DHS Director, we believe it is imperative that the Legislature establishes an interim committee to do the following:

review the environments, conditions, and policies of, and the staffing for, facilities and programs under the purview of the department of human services, including but not limited to the institutions controlled by the department and privately managed facilities and programs both on and not attached to the campus of the main institution as program developments require, pursuant to section 218.1.

In order to accomplish this, we ask that the interim study members be authorized to perform site visits, in addition to holding meetings to receive testimony from the department, consumers, and other stakeholders. The study committee shall report findings and recommendations regarding ongoing oversight, staffing, and policy changes to protect the rights and meet the needs of consumers and their families receiving services, and to provide trained, accountable, sufficient staff for the programs and facilities.

Thanks for your consideration,

Amanda Ragan
State Senator, District 27

Pam Jochum
State Senator, District 50

Joe Bolkom
State Senator, District 43