

Behavioral Health Services

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Behavioral Health Administrative Service Organization (BH-ASO): Year One Reflections

BHSS Statewide Plan: Priorities

Prioritize
Prevention
and Early
Intervention

Improve
System
Coordination

Improve
Access to
Behavioral
Health

Streamlined Administrative Effort



Reduced multiple contracts into single, streamlined contracts



Improved reimbursement timeliness



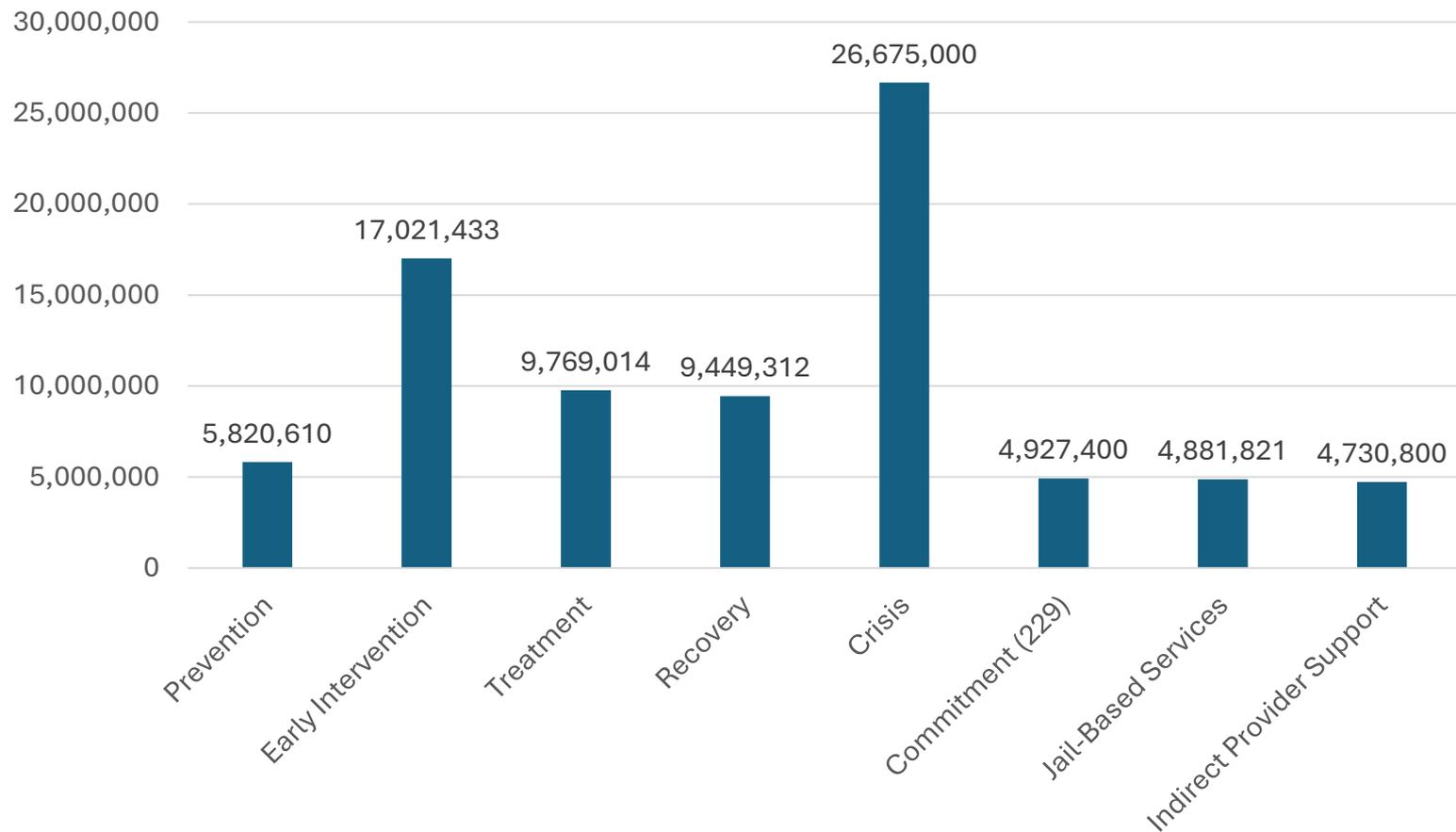
Developed a new system for direct service reimbursement that aligns with typical insurance billing practices to improve efficiency



Identified program and payment efficiencies

BH-ASO Budget Allocation

Service Continuum = Allocation



Behavioral Health System Navigation

The Challenge

- People seeking behavioral health support and the professionals aiding them often encounter a complicated, fragmented system causing delays and frustration.
- This complexity can discourage individuals from getting help.
- Stress and symptoms make navigating the system harder.
- Those facing stigma need additional encouragement and support.

The Solution

- The Iowa PCA is leading statewide Behavioral Health System Navigation by:
 - partnering with "Your Life Iowa"
 - creating resources and training
 - ensuring consistent access
 - working with various stakeholders to provide standardized, effective, and person-centered support for all Iowans.

Behavioral Health System Navigation

- **Non-crisis, time-sensitive** behavioral health service
- Helps individuals, families, providers and other “helpers” understand and access behavioral health services in Iowa.
- Brief, accessible support and guidance through information, education, referral, and coordination to connect people to the right services or support.

General Public; Individuals and Family Members



Call: (855) 581-8111

Text: (855) 895-8398

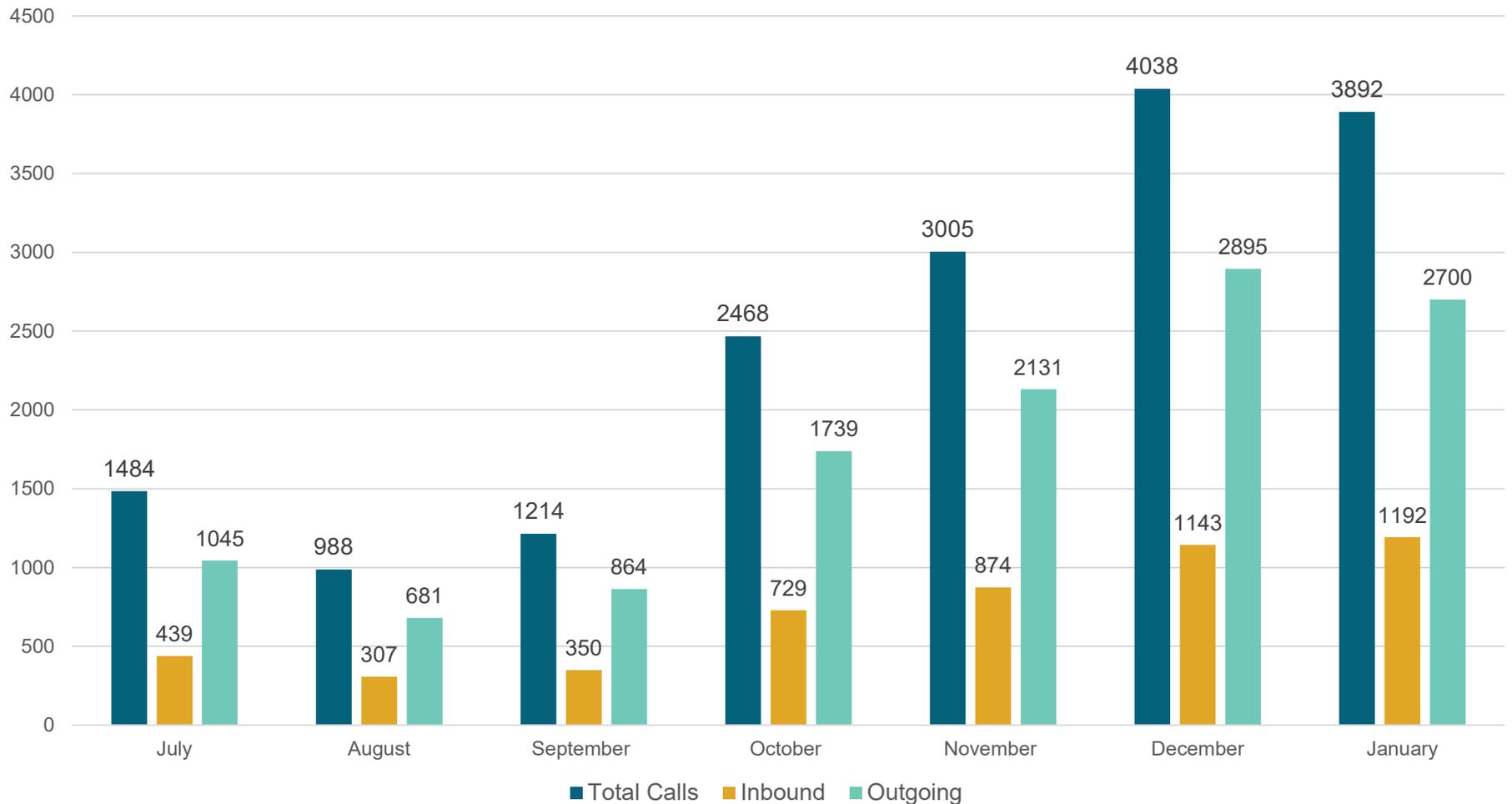
Chat: yourlifeiowa.org

Providers and Community Partners

Providers and Community Partners can coordinate directly with Iowa PCA System Navigators by calling **(515) 505-8988**.

System Navigation: Inbound and Outbound Calls

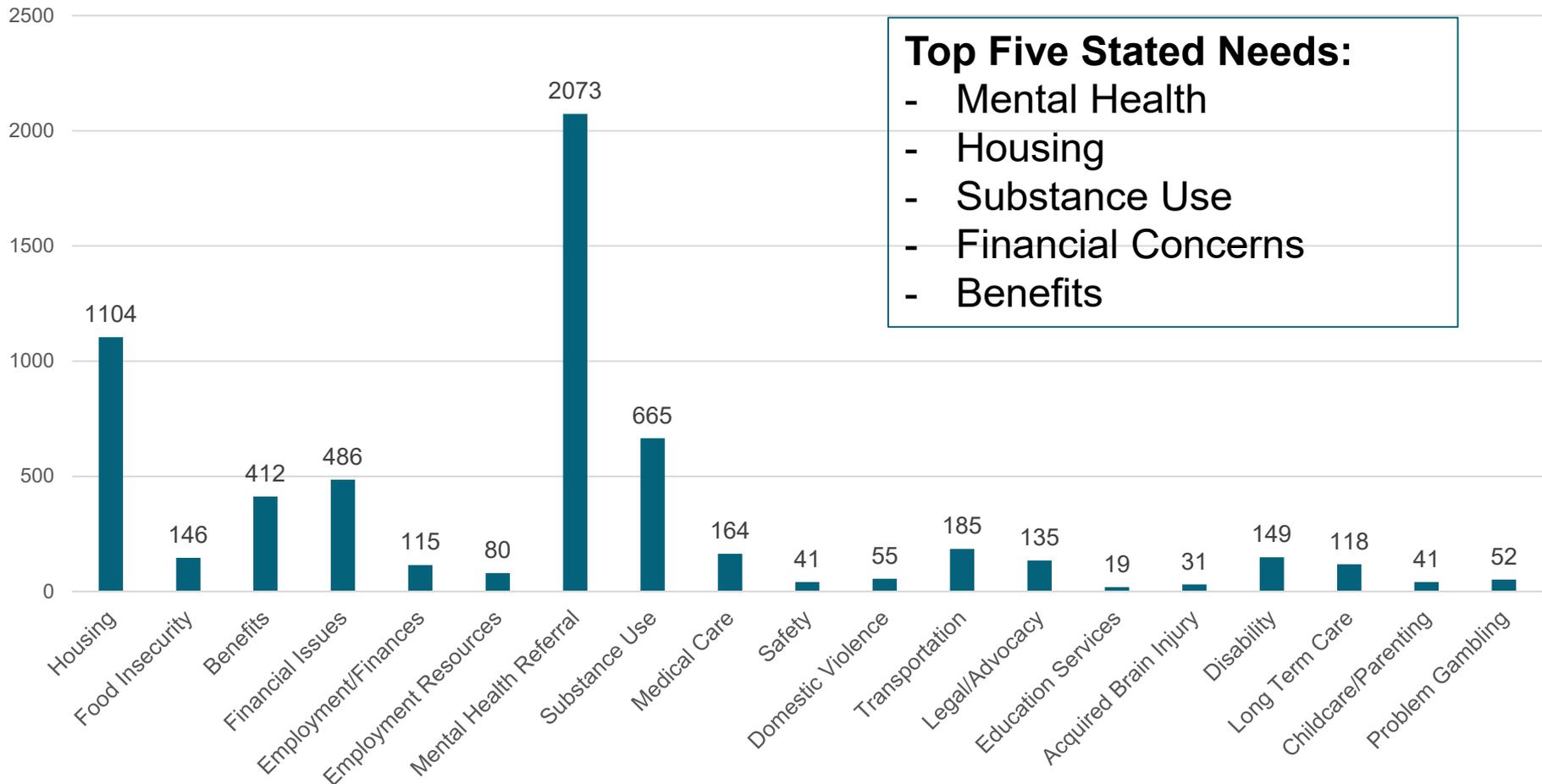
July 2025-January 2026



System Navigation: Top Presenting Needs*

July 2025-January 2026

*Individuals may have more than one stated need per phone call



System Navigation — Partnerships in Action

An Iowan experiencing chronic homelessness contacted System Navigation near the District 1–2 border and was hesitant to access shelter services due to past experiences. System Navigators across districts partnered with the Sioux City Warming Shelter to build trust and identify safe options.

Through a coordinated effort, System Navigators:

- Secured transportation to the Warming Shelter
- Scheduled needed medical appointments
- Assisted with housing documentation
- Identified care options that did not require insurance
- Assisted with Medicaid reapplication and approval
- Arranged transportation for safe transition to family housing



The Warming Shelter, Inc., located in Sioux City, is dedicated to offering low-barrier shelter and compassionate support to individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Siouxland.

System Navigation —Partnerships in Action

“Having a Behavioral Health System Navigator at our Recovery Community Center has significantly strengthened our ability to support individuals and families. Their expertise and statewide connections have made a difference in many situations, and people have consistently told us they feel supported and hopeful after meeting with the navigator.

We’ve seen firsthand how their knowledge and statewide connections help people navigate complex behavioral health and social service needs. **Our navigator is approachable, flexible, and genuinely invested in helping people. It's easy to see how helpful this service is for individuals and families.”**

— Rod Courtney, Founder and Executive Director

CRUSH of Iowa’s Recovery Community Center in Cedar Rapids connects people in recovery to resources, reduces stigma, hosts community events, and advocates for those in recovery.



System Navigation – Partnerships in Action

“Classroom Clinic provides gap-filling, children’s mental health services in partnership with local school districts. System navigation has been a great resource for our providers to access when additional community-based services are needed to support our families. **That collaboration has made a real difference for children who need multiple layered supports within the local community.**”

- Sue Gehling, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, Classroom Clinic

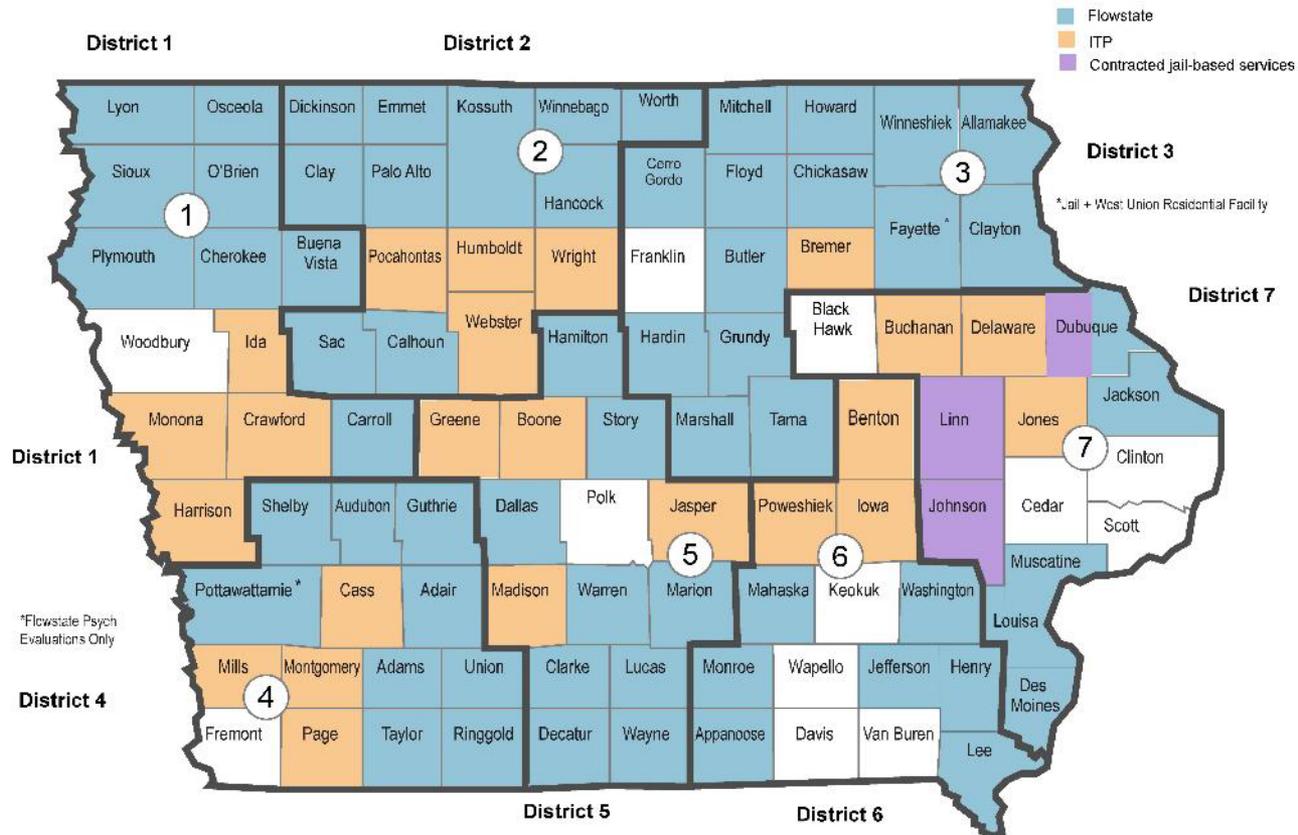
Classroom Clinic, based in Carroll, Iowa, partners with school districts statewide to address unmet student mental health needs by providing timely, convenient access to children’s mental health services through telehealth.



School Based Health Care

- In Iowa, the [number of youth](#) experiencing behavioral health conditions has **doubled over the past three years – from 20% to approximately 40%**.
- The tele-behavioral health investments made by the Iowa PCA are designed to fill workforce and access gaps and strategically complement local providers.
 - BH system navigation is being leveraged to help make connections between tele-BH and local providers
- Made two investments in tele-behavioral health services in school-based settings:
 - Classroom Clinic: services in 34 school districts in 26 counties (148 buildings)
 - Hazel Health – services in 30 school districts in 23 counties (141 buildings)
- \$5 million investment by the Wellmark Foundation for eligible rural schools to foster lasting, sustainable mental and behavioral health programs
 - Coordinated with Iowa HHS and Iowa PCA to increase impact

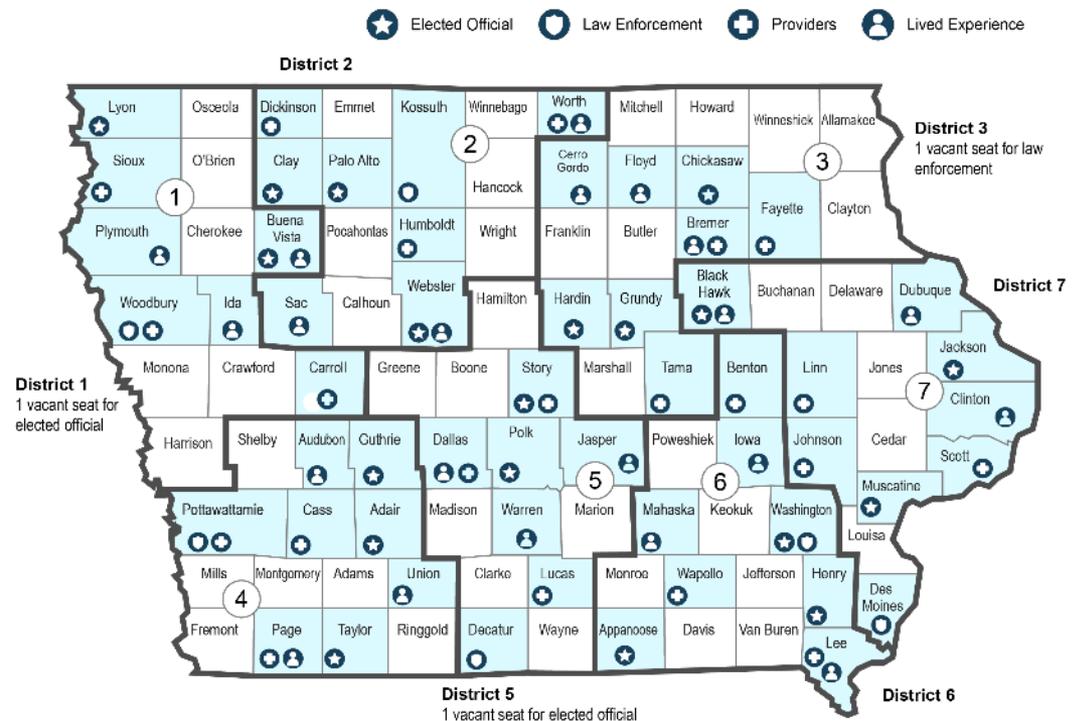
Statewide Jail-Based Investments



All Iowa counties can provide and be reimbursed for mental assessment/evaluations, therapy, medication management, and medications.

District Advisory Councils

- Have met three times since their creation
- Chair and Vice-Chair approved, charter ratified for all districts
- Topics included key behavioral health updates, discussion and feedback for Opioid Settlement Funds, prevention services, and district assessment and planning
- Meeting details, recordings, and slides can be found at iowapca.org/district-advisory-councils
- Currently have open seats in:
 - District 1: elected official (1 open seat)
 - District 5: elected official (1 open seat)



District Assessment Process

District Assessment Survey Process

- Distributed survey to 2,000+ contracted providers and community stakeholders
- 171 provider responses and 956 community stakeholder responses

District Assessment Guided Provider Conversations

- Iowa PCA district leaders and Iowa HHS held in-depth sessions with 107 contracted providers
- Focused on reviewing survey feedback and assessing the behavioral health service continuum

Next Steps

- Identify key findings and themes from provider and stakeholder feedback.
- Use insights to inform development of district assessments and plans.
- Seek feedback from District Advisory Councils (DAC) and community members at the March DAC meetings.
- Iowa PCA will submit district assessments and plans to Iowa HHS in March 2026, with final district plans in place by June 2026.
- FY26 District Plans will guide Iowa PCA activities for SFY27.

Training and Technical Assistance

- **Our Approach**

- **Provide knowledge and skills to drive quality and performance:** Offer evidence-based content and practical tools that equip providers and teams to deliver high-quality, person-centered care.
- **Offer centralized resources and subject matter expertise:** Deliver support through a team of consultants, guides, and tools tailored to clinical, operational, and strategic needs.
- **Leverage the expertise of the network through collaborative learning:** Create structured opportunities for peer exchange, shared problem-solving, and dissemination of lessons learned across organizations.
- **Elevate best practices to share and scale:** Identify, document, and promote replicable models and innovations that demonstrate measurable outcomes.
- **Drive continuous improvement and advance innovation:** Support data-informed decision-making and adaptive implementation strategies that lead to sustainable change.
- **Promote varied opportunities and formats for TTA:** Flexible delivery to meet various needs - live sessions, on-demand resources, individual consultation, and learning collaboratives.

Training and Technical Assistance

- Our team includes subject matter expertise to lead and co-design Training & Technical Assistance (TTA), supporting the design, delivery, and continuous improvement of the BHSS.
- Direct collaboration with Iowa HHS, contracted providers, and community partners to ensure prevention, early intervention, treatment, recovery, crisis, justice-involved services, and children's behavioral health needs are met consistently across all districts.



The first of several Advanced De-Escalation Training for crisis, led by SolutionPoint+. This course equips non-law enforcement professionals to confidently identify and respond to crises involving behavioral health and substance use disorders.

Year 1 Accomplishments

- **Establishing strong provider relationships**, laying the foundation for effective training and support to improve quality and outcomes.
- **Built collaborative structures** and district-level workstreams across all continuum areas to guide implementation.
- Participation in all **District Assessment Guided Provider conversations** to identify district-specific and statewide training and technical assistance priorities.
- Launched **coordinated provider and partner engagement activities**, including onboarding, introductory meetings, and early technical assistance touchpoints.
- **Expanded statewide training capacity** through partnerships with SolutionPoint+ and NAMI Iowa, offering crisis response, prevention, recovery, and family education programs.

Questions and Discussion



- Thanks for the opportunity to provide an update today!
- We appreciate our elected officials sharing information with their constituents about BH system navigation – please encourage Iowans to reach out if they need assistance.
- What questions do you have for us?

Resources

Legislator Contacts

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Iowa PCA Website and Resources

www.iowapca.org



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