

Patty Funaro

I wanted to take the opportunity to make a few comments on the Medicaid privatization plan that is currently being implemented under the direction of Governor Branstad. I will not be able to attend today's legislative oversight committee meeting, having just learned about it yesterday.

I am a psychologist in private practice in Des Moines, and I was recently appointed to the Medicaid Assistance Advisory Council by the Iowa Psychological Association, having just attended my first MAAC meeting on 11/25/15. That meeting gave me a clear realization that this privatization is not ready to proceed. Given that the meeting was approximately a month away from implementation, there were far too many questions that could not be answered and were taken under advisement. Serious questions with no answers, including those related directly to patient care. I have no doubts that very vulnerable citizens, including those with mental health conditions and disabilities, will be seriously adversely affected. Even if those consequences are deemed temporary (which I do not assume), they are unacceptable. Even at the end of the meeting, the Department was unable to answer a citizen question as to whether the MAAC board would be providing a recommendation as to whether to proceed or not. Having since read the Iowa and Federal Codes related to the MAAC board, I believe that the advisory role of the MAAC board should include such a recommendation. As a member of that board, I forwarded that concern to the Department with a request for a legal review with no response in the last week. Again, there are too many unanswered questions.

Minimally, the privatization needs to be significantly delayed. Without significant changes, as currently being implemented, I personally believe that the privatization should be terminated indefinitely. I personally have halted taking new Medicaid patients given the ambiguity of the coming year and the uncertainty that I could reasonably continue to provide care.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.

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Thank you.

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