

Background:

There is a small population in Iowa who have complex medical conditions. These Iowans need intensive medical treatment and 24 hour skilled nursing care. ChildServe has been caring for children with complex medical conditions since 1928.

Iowa and ChildServe have always operated in a partnership to provide care for these children. In the early 1990's, Iowa adopted a special system for these children and authorized ChildServe to operate Iowa's only skilled nursing facility for children. This allowed ChildServe to specialize in the unique needs of these young Iowans and build programs appropriate for them. Over time, the children's medical complexity has increased and Iowa's system allowed ChildServe respond to their changing needs. When created, Iowa's system was limited to children up to the age of 21.

As medical care has advanced, more of these children have survived into adulthood. Unfortunately, there was no system for these children when they turned into young adults. Their options were often limited to geriatric nursing homes that may not have been adequately prepared to provide for their high level of medical care and didn't have young adult programs. For years, ChildServe unsuccessfully searched for a provider who would fill this gap and develop a young adult program. Because of ChildServe's expertise and the unique needs of these children, on numerous occasions ChildServe was asked why ChildServe didn't develop such a program.

For the last couple years, the Governor, the Department of Human Services ("DHS") and ChildServe have been exploring options for these children who "age out" of ChildServe. After much reflection ChildServe decided to continue their service to these children and their families and offered to help build a solution.

The Solution:

The Governor, DHS and ChildServe are proposing a system which consists of extending these young adults' care in ChildServe's nursing facility and in group homes specially designed and equipped for their nursing and medical needs. Both would provide 24 hour skilled nursing care. This system provides a new and unique group home alternative to these young adults and adds an important option for their most appropriate placement. The group home alternatives also offer an opportunity to save costs for some of these young adults who have less complex medical conditions, thereby saving Iowa's Medicaid resources

The Project:

ChildServe's nursing facility was built in the 1980s and was designed for the medical needs of the children at that time. To accommodate young adults, extensive renovation and remodeling will need to be done to that facility. Today's medical needs include more respiratory care and ChildServe's present rooms need to be equipped with oxygen/medical gas. Further, an extension of the nursing facility will be necessary and new rooms for adults will need to be added. To make room for this expansion, several ChildServe programs and services will have to be relocated and remodeling will need to be completed to accommodate that relocation.

ChildServe also intends to remodel and renovate two group homes to accommodate young adults.

The initial cost estimate for this major renovation was over \$5 million. **The Governor recommended the next RIF budget include \$1.25 million for this project.** ChildServe requests the Appropriations Committee appropriate the \$1.25 million for this vital project.