

Hello Patty and the committee,

Delay this hasty rush to Medicaid privatization.

Background:

We are parents of Sarah, age 43, who has Down syndrome. When she was born there was no required free public education, no respite care, no supported employment, no ADA, and the first group home opened in Iowa City the month after she was born. Due to two heart defects, she was a failure to thrive infant and toddler. Surgeries at ages 4 (U of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics) and 12 (Mayo Clinic) corrected the defects

For four decades, I, and other parents have advocated for services to meet our children's needs. Most of us have worked out a system that is suitable for our situation. There have been many hurdles along the way.

She now has two jobs, belongs to a fitness center, sings in a special choir and loves her group home.

The situation:

The state is not ready for this rush to privatization of Medicaid. Information has been incorrect, insufficient or unavailable.

1. "Members" have just received letters about their randomly assigned MCOs. Our letter came Dec. 2. These letters were promised in October. How can parents/guardians/advocates research the options and made an informed decision by Dec. 17th ?
2. Providers are not ready. I have called Sarah's medical providers. Answers: a) we may join a network but we don't know which ones; b) we will probably not join a network, call back in a few months; you will be responsible for what Medicare does not cover (20%); c) you sound like you are informed, what do you suggest we do? Please keep us informed.
3. Savings: how can for profit agencies make profits without cutting services?

Please pay attention to the comments and questions from those who are requesting a delay in Governor Branstad's ill conceived plan.

Thank you.

Betsy Riesz, Ph.D.