

## What's New with Iowa Medicaid?



By **Emily Eppens**, Iowa Medicaid Communications Manager, and **Heather Miller**, Dental Contract Manager, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services

### What is Going on with Iowa Medicaid?

It's been a busy year for the Medicaid program largely because of the following projects:

- The "unwind" or return to normal operations after the public health emergency.
- Onboarding of a new managed care organization.
- A redesign of the home- and community-based services waiver programs, now known as "Hope and Opportunity in Many Environments," or the HOME project.

There is a lot of detail that goes into each of these initiatives. Currently, the unwind has a lot of impact on

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Many members who are eligible for Medicaid services did not submit the required renewal paperwork to Iowa HHS. To prevent gaps in coverage, Iowa Medicaid has a 90-day reconsideration period that allows members to submit the necessary information for an eligibility determination.

members as well as providers. The following is what you, as a provider, need to know.

### The COVID-19 Unwind in a Nutshell

The unwind is in full force in Iowa. Beginning in April, members who were no longer eligible for the program were disenrolled and directed to partners within the healthcare marketplace. Because of Iowa Medicaid's partnership with the marketplace, some disenrolled persons have an automatic referral to the marketplace to help the transition from Medicaid to a new healthcare plan. Because of subsidies put in place during the public health emergency, some plans are as low as \$10 per month.

Right now, a significant number of Iowans are being disenrolled from Medicaid. At first glance, these numbers can be overwhelming. However, this was expected and there are many contributing factors to the disenrollment numbers. In early 2021, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services began issuing guidance that included mandates on how states were to conduct the unwind. One of the unwinding requirements included completing

renewals during a 12-month period for all members before they could be disenrolled. Based on this information, Iowa Medicaid strategically 'front-loaded' renewals for members who were likely ineligible for Medicaid. About 65% of this group now has insurance through their employers or the marketplace. Some members who turned 65 during the pandemic are now eligible for Medicare as well.

Iowa Medicaid continues to stress the importance of submitting required documentation. Many members who are eligible for Medicaid services did not submit the required renewal paperwork to Iowa HHS. To prevent gaps in coverage, Iowa Medicaid has a 90-day reconsideration period that allows members to submit the necessary information for an eligibility determination. If a member is disenrolled because they did not submit paperwork at their renewal, they have 90 days from the time of their cancellation to submit the required documentation. If they are found eligible, their coverage will be reinstated retroactively to the date of their cancellation.

## What Does this Mean for Children on Medicaid?

Children receiving Medicaid or who fall under the Hawki program face the same issues mentioned above, specifically parents or guardians not returning the required paperwork to continue the child's health coverage. The 90-day reconsideration period applies to children on Medicaid and Hawki.

During the public health emergency, children active on Medicaid could not be moved to the Hawki program. This was because the state was required to maintain coverage for children active on Medicaid when the public health emergency began, or children determined eligible for Medicaid at any time before April 1, 2023. Now, during the unwind, the state can again transition children from Medicaid to Hawki. Note: Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) does not apply to Hawki.

## What Flexibilities will still be Available Moving Forward?

Medicaid flexibilities made available during the public health emergency have varying end dates, and others will be continued. For a full list of flexibilities and their end dates or a list of continuation codes, visit <https://hhs.iowa.gov/ime/unwind/PHE>.

## Dental Care

Regular preventive dental care covered under EPSDT allows members to address dental concerns earlier in life, when they are easier and less costly to treat. Current access to oral healthcare is a challenge nationally, and Iowa is no exception. Low-income populations experience the lowest access to oral healthcare.

Having dental insurance, or even having access to dental services, does not ensure service use. Iowa Medicaid currently contracts with two dental benefit managers, Delta Dental of Iowa and Managed Care of North America, to administer the Dental Wellness Plan for Adults, Dental Wellness Plan for Kids, and the Hawki program.

A dental request for proposal (RFP) was recently released. The vision for the Medicaid dental programs is to partner with dental plans to implement innovative



strategies that improve efficiencies, ensure cost effectiveness, and establish wider networks. We hope to do this by building stability for members and providers by coordinating and integrating care, improving the quality of service outcomes and efficiencies across the healthcare delivery system, and decreasing costs through the reduction of unnecessary, inappropriate, and duplicative services. The contract start date under this RFP will begin July 1, 2024.

## Where do I go if I have Questions About the Unwind?

There are several resources available.

- You can find resources and frequently asked questions on the HHS website, at <https://hhs.iowa.gov/ime/unwind-resources>.
- Follow @iamedicaid social media on Facebook and X, formerly known as Twitter, for unwind updates.
- Email questions to [IAPHEUnwind@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:IAPHEUnwind@dhs.state.ia.us).
- Attend Iowa Medicaid's virtual town halls. Providers meet monthly, while members meet bimonthly. Town halls are a great way to communicate directly with the Iowa Medicaid team.

## Transitioning from Medicaid

The Iowa Medicaid team is doing all they can to ensure eligible Iowans keep their healthcare coverage through Medicaid. However, if you or your child are disenrolled, Iowa Medicaid offers resources to help you enroll in a new and affordable health plan right away. Visit <https://hhs.iowa.gov/ime/unwind/transition>.



# Iowa Compass: Guiding Iowans to Services and Supports

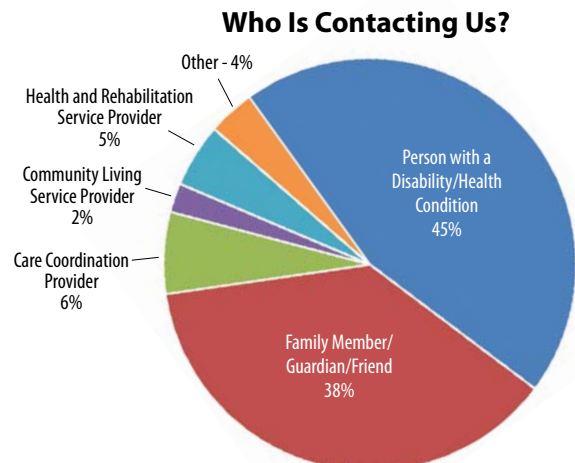
**Mike Lightbody, MPH, CRS-A/D**, Iowa Compass Program Manager, University of Iowa Health Care, Center for Disabilities and Development, Iowa's University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities

Iowa Compass is a community resource navigation program in Iowa that serves individuals of all ages with disabilities and complex health conditions. The program is funded by Iowa Medicaid and based at the Center for Disabilities and Development (CDD). The program began in the mid-'80s with support from the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council. It was created to meet the growing needs of Iowans, inspired by the efforts of Iowan Katie Beckett and her mother to access community services that were traditionally only available in hospitals. Since then, Iowa Compass has significantly expanded its programs, grants, and services, particularly in the realm of long-term services and supports.

## Who is Served by Iowa Compass?

Iowa Compass is a vital program that serves as a community resource navigation tool for individuals with disabilities and complex health conditions in Iowa.

Iowa Compass plays a crucial role in enhancing the well-being and quality of life for Iowans with disabilities and complex health conditions by connecting them with needed resources and support.



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# IOWA LEND FALL 2023

## Open Seminar Schedule

**Iowa Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities Program (ILEND) is offering a fall seminar series on a variety of topics.**

- The seminars take place at **noon** and are open to the public through Zoom. Join the discussion using the following instructions.
- When logging in to the Zoom session, please set your screen name to: your name, affiliation, and capacity (i.e., student, practicing professional, family member/caregiver, individual with a disability, etc.). To do so, click participants, find your screen name, select more, select rename, select okay.
- Feel free to keep your cameras off.
- Please keep your audio muted.
- Time for questions is limited and prioritized for LEND trainees. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to message Kelly Von Lehmden privately using the chat room.

Please reach out to [lori-vandervelden@uiowa.edu](mailto:lori-vandervelden@uiowa.edu) for the link associated with the lecture(s) you wish to attend and any other questions you may have.

Date	Title/ Topic	Speaker
Tuesday, Sept. 12	<b>Introduction to the Queer Community: Using Pronouns and Being an Ally</b>	<b>Kaleb Cook</b> , Director of Cook Inclusive & 2 <sup>nd</sup> year LEND Fellow
Thursday, Sept. 14	<b>Jackie's story-Why Person- and Family-Centered Care Matters</b>	<b>Jackie Nau</b> , Parent & Advocate
Tuesday, Sept. 19	<b>Introduction to Accessible Documents</b>	<b>Ann Busta</b> , CRS D/C Resource Data Manager, Iowa Compass <b>Mike Lightbody</b> , MPH, CRS-A/D, Program Manager, Iowa Compass
Thursday, Sept. 21	<b>Overview of Developmental Disabilities</b>	<b>Dianne McBrien</b> , MD, LEND Program Director
Tuesday, Sept. 26	<b>Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs)</b>	<b>Dianne McBrien</b> , MD, LEND Program Director
Tuesday, Oct. 17	<b>Introduction to Disability Policy</b>	<b>Kelly Von Lehmden</b> , LEND Training Director
Thursday, Oct. 19	<b>Iowa Waivers &amp; Other Associated Government Systems &amp; Programs</b>	<b>Caitlin Owens</b> , LMSW, CF- Social Work, UCEDD (University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities) Operations Manager
Tuesday, Dec. 5	<b>Community Parent Panel</b>	<b>Dayrin Lovan</b> , Community Outreach Coordinator and Parent Panel
Thursday, Dec. 7	<b>Living and Working- The Choice is (Should Be) Yours</b>	<b>Judy Warth</b> , BBA, CESP, CF Community, Employment and Transition

# IDEA vs Section 504

**What are they?** Laws that provide special education, other services, and appropriate accommodations for eligible children with disabilities in the United States.



## WHAT IS THE LEGAL DIFFERENCE?

**IDEA** A funding statute requiring all states to follow its conditions for funding special education

**Where does it apply?** All state and local public school districts.

**Section 504** A civil rights statute requiring all recipients of federal funds to provide non-discriminatory services, including reasonable accommodations

**Where does it apply?** All federally funded programs, which includes all public schools.



## WHO DOES IT COVER?

**13** categories of disabilities. Children must be eligible under at least one category **IDEA**

**Any** child with an identified physical or mental disability **504**

## WHAT ABOUT ADHD?

Falls under the "other health impairment" category. Kids with ADHD in some cases are eligible under the "emotional disorder" and "learning disability" categories. **IDEA**

If ADHD substantially limits a major life activity, such as learning, then a child qualifies for services. **504**

## WHAT MAKES YOUR CHILD ELIGIBLE?

- Meet criteria for specific category of disabilities **IDEA**
- Disability impairs educational performance
- Your child requires special education intervention

- Has a documented disability **504**
- Disability limits a major life activity

## WILL YOUR CHILD RECEIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?

**Yes.** To qualify your child must need some form of special education intervention. **IDEA**

**Not necessarily.** Your child may receive both special education and related services, or only the related services such as preferential seating and movement breaks. **504**

## HOW DOES YOUR CHILD START RECEIVING SERVICES?

The school conducts a special education evaluation and develops an IEP (individualized education plan) **IDEA**

The school conducts an evaluation for 504 services and creates a 504 Plan listing all the accommodations your child will receive. **504**

**ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?** No cost to parents • The school needs parent permission to evaluate your child.

## Iowa Compass: Guiding Iowans to Services and Supports *(continued from page 4)*

### What Services does Iowa Compass Offer?

Iowa Compass offers comprehensive support and assistance through three core services: the contact service, resource database, and Social Check-in Service. Many Iowa Compass callers have specific needs, such as finding financial assistance for rental deposits, locating in-home caregiver supports, or securing funding for assistive technology devices like ramps or therapy equipment.

**The first core service** is the contact service that uses a cloud-based platform to connect with Iowans via phone, chat, text, and email on weekdays between 8 a.m.–5 p.m. A team of Community Resource Specialists (CRS) work with callers from diverse backgrounds to identify and provide information about community resources that can help address their needs. Approximately half of the contacts received are from individuals with disabilities and complex health conditions.

The CRS employs a framework rooted in the social determinants of health. They also adhere to the high-quality customer service standards set forth by the Alliance of Information and Referral Services (AIRS). The primary source for referrals is the Iowa Compass database. The specialists also utilize established community connections and publicly available databases at 211Iowa and Lifelong Links, to explore the full range of local, state, and national resources available to Iowans. Through its cloud-based platform, the program connects with individuals to identify their needs and provide information about relevant community resources.

**The second core service** is a public resource database available at [search.iowacompass.org](https://search.iowacompass.org). This database allows users to look for resources designed specifically for Iowans with disabilities using a picture-based category system, health conditions, a guided search with keywords, or program names. For those seeking resources without a specific individual in mind, two interfaces have been developed to facilitate exploration. The directory of all services offers a comprehensive list of different types of services and supports for Iowans with disabilities, and visitors can narrow down the results by zip code, age, or health condition by using the “change search filter.”

The services by county page identifies disability-related organizations located in each Iowa county. This interface is specifically tailored for public health professionals and community organizations seeking to connect and network with providers who support residents with disabilities in a given county. The resource database team ensures that the programs listed are: up to date and

accurately described with plain language service descriptions, contact information, eligibility criteria, and application processes. This comprehensive resource database enables the CRS team to accurately identify and refer callers to programs and allows the public to search for and share these valuable resources. The website also offers tip sheets on accessing services for Iowans with disabilities, a scholarship directory, a data dashboard, and a connection to the program’s Facebook page. Through its cloud-based platform, the program connects with individuals to identify their needs and provide information about relevant community resources.

**The third core service**, the Social Check-in Service, was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic in response to the increasing concerns of Iowa Compass callers regarding isolation, depression, and anxiety. The Social Check-in Service addresses the growing mental health concerns among callers, providing ongoing support and engagement opportunities. These preexisting issues were amplified by the pandemic due to factors such as the loss of direct care professionals, increased financial strain, and general fears of the unknown. In collaboration with the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council and funded by the COVID Recovery Iowa service of the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa Compass established a team to proactively reach out to individuals with disabilities and offer support. These supportive conversations evolved into the Social Check-in Service. This service provides ongoing telephone and text follow-ups, group activities via Zoom, and the option to schedule one-on-one sessions with the friendly visiting counselors at Iowa Compass.

### How to Contact Iowa Compass

Iowa Compass can be contacted by phone or text at 800-779-2001, or by chat and email at [www.iowacompass.org/Contact](https://www.iowacompass.org/Contact) between the hours of 8 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The Social Check-in Service can be accessed by phone or text at 844-902-3770, or by scheduling a one-on-one counseling session at [www.uihc.org/services/social-check-service](https://www.uihc.org/services/social-check-service) between the hours of 9 a.m.–7 p.m., Monday through Friday. Learn about our weekly Zoom social groups by following the Social Check-in Service for Iowans with Disabilities Facebook group. Participants without access to Facebook can see upcoming events on the UIHC website.



University of Iowa Stead Family Children’s Hospital  
 Center for Disabilities and Development  
 University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities  
 100 Hawkins Drive  
 Iowa City, IA 52242-1011

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If you have questions about **billing** related to EPSDT Care for Kids services, please call Provider Services: **1- 800-338-7909**. If you have questions about **clinical issues** and EPSDT Care for Kids services, please call **1- 800-383-3826**. Please note: Due to budget restraints, the *EPSDT Care for Kids Newsletter* is sent to offices and organizations, rather than to individuals. **The newsletter is also available online at [www.iowaepsdt.org](http://www.iowaepsdt.org)**. Readers are welcome to photocopy or download material from the newsletter to share with others. If you wish to reproduce material from the newsletter in another publication, whether print or electronic, please obtain permission prior to publication by contacting Michelle Johnston at [michelle-johnston@uiowa.edu](mailto:michelle-johnston@uiowa.edu). Please include the following acknowledgment with reprinted material: Reprinted by permission of the Iowa *EPSDT Care for Kids Newsletter*.

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### NEWSLETTER STAFF

<b>Executive Editor</b> Temitope Awelewa, MD	<b>Editorial Board</b> Amy Chebuhar, MSN, RN Elizabeth Cramer, MD Tashina Hornaday
<b>Production Editor</b> Lesly Huffman	
<b>Graphics Editor</b> Leigh Bradford	

Please send correspondence concerning **content** to:

**Temitope Awelewa, MD**  
 UI Stead Family Children’s Hospital  
 Department of Pediatrics  
 200 Hawkins Drive – BT 1300-2  
 Iowa City, IA 52242  
[temitope-awelewa@uiowa.edu](mailto:temitope-awelewa@uiowa.edu)

Please send **change of address** information to:

**Michelle Johnston**  
 University of Iowa Stead Family Children’s Hospital  
 Center for Disabilities and Development  
 100 Hawkins Drive, Iowa City, IA 52242-1011  
[michelle-johnston@uiowa.edu](mailto:michelle-johnston@uiowa.edu)