



Olmstead Consumer Task Force
Medicaid and Legislative Watch Committee
January 31, 2025

OCTF Medicaid and Legislative Watch Subcommittee Members

Harriet Gulbranson

Paula Connolly

Megz Stroback

Kelly Stull

Jen Simmering

Amy Desenberg-Wines

David Thielen

Michael Martin

Falicia Beck (staff support)

Bill Loyd

We welcome any additional persons (voting members and volunteers) who wish to serve on this committee.

Agenda

- Review of priorities adopted by OCTF
- Review updates for each of the priority areas
- Review tools for staying updated on local and federal issues
- Next Steps

Priority Areas Adopted by the Full OCTF as of January 10, 2025

EMPLOYMENT

- Support the [Work Without Worry Act](#)

MEDICAID

- Overhaul at state level; reauthorization at federal level
- A new [CBPP brief](#) reports that per capita caps are in discussion again. Iowa expenditures have exceeded the proposed cap in at least 4 years: by 7% in 2019, 8 % in 2020, 3 % in 2021, and 11% in 2022 which could mean drastic cuts.
- Track reforms (past and future) and have a presence at public comment meetings

AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES/CAPACITY

- Waiting lists and inadequate number of providers to meet the need
- Inadequate reimbursement rates for providers
- Direct Support Professional Workforce Crisis (see ANCOR REPORT)



Employment

Work Without Worry Act

A bill to create a “Work without Worry” program in Iowa Medicaid was discussed by lawmakers last year and advocates are asking for its passage this year. It would remove the penalties for a working spouse’s income and raise the income and asset limits for Medicaid coverage for Iowans with disabilities.

Bill History: Committee approval 2/19/24. Introduced and referred to appropriations.

Currently in draft form and will again be proposed by Rep. Josh Turek.

Modeled after the bill that passed in Tennessee.



Medicaid

IOWA

- A budget increase is proposed for this year ([HF 13](#))
- Most of that will go towards rate increases for providers
- ICAP Continues to lead that charge
- Long –term could sustain current service and potentially increase services
- Threatened by what happens at the federal level

FEDERAL

- Per Capita Caps discussions are ongoing
- Many efforts are aimed at impact of caps at both the local and federal level
- IDDC sponsoring a webinar next Friday at noon as a general education session (sign up to receive alerts)



**AVAILABILITY OF
SERVICES/CAPACITY**

IOWA

- See comments under Medicaid and proposed budget increase.

FEDERAL (DSP Workforce Shortage)

[ANCOR: The Details](#)

The SOC review is a crucial step towards creating a distinct SOC code for DSPs. Accurate data collection on DSP roles will help state and federal agencies develop better policies to address workforce challenges, solve worker shortages in home and community-based services (HCBS), and ensure DSPs receive the recognition and support they need to provide high-quality care. Clear data is essential for understanding workforce trends and improving access to services for individuals with I/DD.

OMB is currently accepting public comments on the SOC revisions, specifically seeking input on new job categories like DSPs. This is a unique opportunity for us to advocate for the recognition DSPs deserve.

Why It Matters:

- Better Policies: Accurate data helps create better policies that address the challenges DSPs face.
- Solve Workforce Shortages: Understanding more about DSP trends can help solve the shortage of workers in services for people with I/DD.
- Enhanced Professional Recognition: Clear data can help ensure DSPs receive the recognition and support they need to continue providing high-quality care.

[ANCOR's 2024 Report on the DSP Workforce Crisis](#)

Iowa Legislative Calendar for Important Date

- **February 14:** Final day for legislators to request bills (committee chairs may still request study bills after this date).
- **March 7:** First deadline (called a “funnel”). Bills must be voted out of committee by this date (except for tax and budget bills).
- **April 4:** Second “funnel” deadline. Bills must be voted out of committee in the second chamber (so House bills out of Senate committees and Senate bills out of House committees).
- **May 2:** 110th day of session (the "last day" - legislators lose staff and “per diem” expenses).

A blurred background image showing several people in a meeting or office setting. The focus is on the text overlay on the right side.

Advocacy Partners and Tools

- APSE's Public Policy Committee meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month from 3-4pm EST. julie@apse.org for assistance.
- IACP publishes a weekly Bill Watch for members. Their day at the capitol is 3/27/25. [Register here](#).
- The Arc has a SAVE [MEDICAID Campaign](#)
- IDDC Medicaid Webinar: What is at Stake 2/7/25 at noon. Register [here](#).
- IDDC [Bill Tracker](#)
- IDDC [Capitol Chat](#) – Every other Friday at noon.
- ANCOR's Protect Medicaid [Take Action Tool](#)



Next Steps for the Sub Committee



BEGIN IDENTIFYING AND
DEVELOPING STORIES ALIGNED
WITH TARGET LEGISLATION



DETERMINE AVAILABILITY FOR
VISITS TO DES MOINES AND
PRESENCE IN FORUMS THAT
GIVE LEGISLATIVE UPDATES



CONTINUE TO IDENTIFY
ADVOCACY TOOLS AND BEST
PRACTICES



BUILDING LEGISLATIVE CHAMPIONS and ADVOCACY PARTNERS OVER TIME

- Zoom calls, visits, and invitations to OCTF meetings outside of session with legislators to build relationships, explain who we are and share our areas of interest/stories.
- Consider supporting established Political Action Committee (PAC) Funds

▣ Potential Champions and Partners

- Rep. Elizabeth Wilson
- Rep. Josh Turek
- AUCD
- Please feel free to share additional names and contact information