

Public Policy Committee Iowa DD Council

Meeting Notes from **April 20, 2026**; 11 a.m. on Zoom

Attendees: Wendy Andersen, Caitlin Owens, Kevin Harris, Casey Wilkinson, George Thompson, Amy Campbell, Brooke Lovelace, Melissa Thomas, Carlyn Crowe

The meeting began with committee members sharing personal wins with the highlight being Wendy's recent trip to a cycling event for her daughter in Northern California.

Legislative Wins and Budget Updates

Carlyn announced a legislative win with the passage of the accessible prescription bill (HF 2582) in both House and Senate, which is expected to be signed by the governor. The bill will require accessible prescription labels for those requesting them at Iowa pharmacies. The cost will be incurred by insurance with no cost to patients.

Also reported was that the House Health and Human Services budget included MEPD (Work Without Worry proposed change) with expanded eligibility to 300% of FPL. It is estimated an additional 1,400 people would be eligible for MEPD in the first year, (according to the fiscal note on the bill) though specific numbers for subsequent years need verification. Other budget notes are that two appropriations to independent living centers are being transferred from Vocational Rehab budget to HHS budget, and some cuts to speech therapy and rehab services were partially restored following advocate feedback on those cuts.

Policy and Program Updates

The group discussed several policy matters including budget allocations and educational programs. One bill of note was the bill on classroom disruptive behavior amended in the pilot program for new attendance centers for students with in special education and/or with behavior problems It was originally proposed to be funded by AEA, was amended to require either district or department funding, though the specific funding mechanism remains unclear. The bill on video cameras in special education classrooms had been on the debate calendar this week, but never came up.

Carlyn reported on a successful advocacy day with the Disability Policy Alliance organizations where many legislators were engaged.

Wendy encouraged continued sharing of challenges with MCOs to Rep. Ann Meyer and HHS committee, which Rep Meyer told advocates at advocacy day.

Federal Budget Impact on Disability Programs

The group discussed federal budget impacts on disability programs, with Brooke reporting that while the President's budget cut UCEDDs and other programs, Congress rejected it last year and funding for DD councils was maintained. However this year's budget includes eliminating the UCEDDs. Also of concern in administration budget priorities is potential cuts to caregivers funded through HCBS/Medicaid, and supported employment programs. Carlyn also highlighted concerns about SNAP eligibility changes affecting people with disabilities.

Brooke also discussed upcoming presentations at their next council meeting, including Director Grossman providing updates on Medicaid fraud concerns and Rebecca Curtis attending. Casey raised concerns about frequent Medicaid inactivation issues, which Brooke suggested reporting to Andrea Mahah for investigation.

Institutional Abuse and Advocacy Plans

The group discussed abuse and neglect in institutions which has been noted as a priority concern. Wendy shared updates on a national memorial project being developed with a nonprofit to honor individuals who lived in institutions and experienced abuse. The Common Coalition is making abuse and neglect their priority issues. The Allies group is planning to write letters to the governor regarding the Woodward facility situation, with Casey reporting they have two letters so far and are aiming to collect more by Thursday.

The group also discussed plans for the upcoming Make Your Mark legislative conference, deciding to focus on voter engagement and engaging candidates given the proximity to the election. A suggested session was to have the members of the blind and low vision organizations who helped pass HF 2585 speak on how they worked to get that bill passed and invite Rep Brett Barker and Senator Kara Warme who sponsored/managed this bill and helped get it passed.

Next Meeting

Dates were discussed but decided to send out a Doodle poll for the week of May 4 to get the meeting in before the Council meeting on May 12.