



INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO. 2554-MC-FFS

DATE: February 19, 2024

TO: All Medicaid Medical Providers

APPLIES TO: Managed Care (MC), Fee-for-Service (FFS)

FROM: Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Iowa Medicaid

RE: Needs on Waitlist (NOW) Survey

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

As part of the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) ongoing [Hope and Opportunities in Many Environments \(HOME\)](#)¹ initiative, Mathematica will soon be leading a Needs on Waitlist (NOW) Survey to better understand the characteristics and needs of individuals awaiting a [Home and Community-Based \(HCBS\) waiver slot](#)². This telephonic survey will run through the end of **May 2024** in partnership with teams from Iowa Medicaid's Targeted Case Management, the Division of Aging and Disability Services and Iowa's Area Agencies on Aging.

Currently, when individuals join the waitlist for HCBS, very little information is collected. As a result, it is difficult to know what the approximately 15,000 Iowans waiting for services need now or in the future. Additionally, some Iowans wait two to five years before receiving a waiver slot and their circumstances may have changed. The information we will collect about waitlist member needs through the NOW Survey will help inform both the current state of the waitlist as well as future process improvements and program enhancements. Throughout this work, we will also help make connections to supplemental, non-waiver services available across the state.

KEY THINGS TO KNOW

Survey Design

¹ <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/welcome-iowa-medicaid/current-projects/home>

² <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/welcome-iowa-medicaid/policies-rules-and-regulations/home-and-community-based-services-hcbs-waivers-program>

- The NOW Survey collects information on demographics, need for HCBS and supports for activities of daily living (ADL) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) needs, behavioral health, cognitive functioning and executive functioning status. Some sections, such as behavioral health or cognitive functioning, will only be asked if these are determined throughout the survey to be relevant to the waitlist member.
- The NOW Survey includes questions for children and adults waiting for waiver services, as well as questions for their caregiver, family member or authorized representative. Family members or caregivers may complete the survey for children or adults that would like someone else to respond to the questions for them.
- The average amount of time it takes to complete the survey is 45 minutes. Sometimes it takes less time and sometimes it takes more time. Because of the length, it is possible that some individuals will need to complete the survey over multiple phone calls.

NOW Survey Communications to Waitlist Members

- Contact with waitlist members to complete the NOW Survey will occur in scheduled batches. People on the waitlist will receive calls at different times from **January 2023 through May 2024**. About a week prior to the first call, Mathematica will send a letter with background information, an FAQ and a flyer on where to go for help while waiting for Medicaid waiver services in Iowa.
- Waitlist members and their parents or caregivers might also hear about the NOW Survey from case managers, text messages or outreach from their Medicaid health plans, or at a prior [HOMEtown Conversations event](#)³.

Survey Administration

- The survey is only administered over the telephone. However, accommodations are available for those who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as for those who request Spanish language translation.
- Only those who were on a HCBS waiver waitlist as of October 2023 will be contacted to complete the survey. On a monthly basis Mathematica will remove individuals from the contact list who have been awarded a waiver slot or have been removed from the waitlist for another reason.
- Participation is completely optional, and those completing the survey are welcome to skip questions or stop participation at any time.

³ <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/welcome-iowa-medicaid/current-projects/home/hometown>

- Individuals also have the option of calling the dedicated 1-800 number to schedule a time to complete the survey. Those assigned to Mathematica will be given a specific 1-800 number and those assigned to Iowa's Targeted Case Managers or Area Agencies on Aging will have a different dedicated 1-800 number.
- There is no compensation for individuals completing the survey nor will there be any impact to an individual's position on the waitlist.

Exempted Waitlist Members

- If it is determined that a waitlist member is in any type of residential facility such as a nursing facility or psychiatric residential treatment facility, or correctional facility (jail, prison), completion of the NOW Survey is not necessary.
- If the waitlist member has moved out of the state, they will not complete the NOW Survey.

Use of NOW Responses

- Survey responses will be shared with Iowa HHS, agencies connected with Iowa HHS operations and Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) for informational and outreach purposes.

Responding to Emergency or Urgent Needs

- Iowa Medicaid uses a Waiver Priority Need Assessment (WPNA) form to identify individuals with eligible emergency or urgent needs, which may be submitted on behalf of any waitlist member at any time for consideration. NOW Survey communications will educate waitlist members on the WPNA form.
- If an individual expresses an immediate emergency, the interviewer will follow the appropriate steps documented in the NOW Survey escalation protocols and procedures.

Hope and Opportunity in Many Environments (HOME)

- HHS is working to improve and ensure that everyone has access to high-quality behavioral health, disability and aging services in their communities.
- This initiative, called Hope and Opportunity in Many Environments (HOME), aims to redesign community-based services to ensure equitable access to services, high-quality delivery of care and a coordinated system that is easy for Iowans to navigate.

HHS is committed to bringing hope in the knowledge that seniors, individuals with disabilities and individuals with behavioral health needs are connecting with the people they love in their homes and in their communities.

[Iowa HHS Resources for People of All Ages \(Flyer\)](#)⁴

If you have questions, please contact Iowa Medicaid Provider Services or the appropriate MCO:

Iowa Medicaid Provider Services:

- Phone: 1-800-338-7909
- Email: imeproviderservices@dhs.state.ia.us

Iowa Total Care:

- Phone: 1-833-404-1061
- Email: providerrelations@iowatotalcare.com
- Website: <https://www.iowatotalcare.com>

Molina Healthcare of Iowa:

- Phone: 1-844-236-1464
- Email: iaproviderrelations@molinahealthcare.com
- Website: <https://www.molinahealthcare.com/providers/ia/medicaid/home.aspx>
- Provider portal: <https://www.availity.com/molinahealthcare>

Wellpoint Iowa, Inc. (formerly Amerigroup Iowa, Inc.):

- Phone: 1-833-731-2143
- Email: ProviderSolutionsIA@wellpoint.com
- Website: <https://www.provider.wellpoint.com/iowa-provider/home>

⁴ <https://hhs.iowa.gov/media/12137/download?inline=>