



SUPPORT FOR IOWA'S MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

In recent years, Iowa has made significant legislative strides in enhancing its mental health system for both adults and children. The introduction of more comprehensive care models and increased funding has led to improved access and services. However, critical gaps remain, particularly in rural areas where resources are scarce, and in the realms of crisis intervention and long-term support. Additionally, the recruitment and retention of a trained workforce continue to be significant challenges. Without sufficient mental health professionals, many Iowans are left without the necessary support, exacerbating existing issues and limiting the effectiveness of the systems designed to help them.

Different populations in Iowa face greater barriers to mental health care, including low-income families, individuals living in rural communities, and those from diverse cultural backgrounds. These groups often encounter systemic obstacles, such as lack of transportation, financial constraints, and cultural stigma, which hinder their access to essential services. Nevertheless, there is a growing belief that Iowa possesses both the ability and the will to address these disparities. By fostering a more inclusive mental health system that prioritizes equity and accessibility, Iowa can pave the way for a brighter, healthier future for all its residents. With concerted effort, it is possible to build a robust framework that supports every Iowan, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being of the state.

Workforce and Rate Reimbursement

Iowa is facing unprecedented human services workforce challenges.

Without a sustainable investment and sufficient rate reimbursements, providers are unable to recruit and retain high quality therapists, nurses, educators, and direct care workers necessary to provide the service Iowans deserve.

There is a shortage of mental health therapists who work with Iowans who utilize Medicaid. Medicaid reimbursement rates remain below market rate for community-based therapy and should be increased.

Prevention and Early Intervention Programming

Prevention and early intervention services promote overall long-term health for our state's most vulnerable families.

Research proves that children who experience Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) suffer negative health and financial outcomes throughout adulthood. A total of 56% of Iowa adults report at least one Adverse Childhood Experience, with 14.5% experiencing four or more ACEs.

Funding preventative services — as one piece of a continuum of care — is key to a strong children's mental health system.

Access and Equity

We cannot take a one-size-fits-all approach to mental health.

As Iowa's Mental Health and Disability Services regions build out their services, they must center the needs of underserved populations. The pandemic has exacerbated disparities in access to care. As Iowa's Mental Health and Disability Services regions build out their services, they must center the linguistic and cultural needs of underserved populations.

The state and its regions should invest in providers that offer services designed specifically for rural Iowans, people of color, immigrants and refugees, and older Iowans.

LSI has a more than 160-year legacy of providing a broad spectrum of human services. From prenatal care, early childhood services, and behavioral health services, to crisis stabilization and intense residential treatment like Psychiatric Medical Institute for Children and Qualified Residential Treatment Program (Q RTP), LSI promotes positive outcomes for Iowa children, adults, and families.



99 Iowa counties

have access to LSI Behavioral Health Intervention Services



19,000 Mental Health Therapy Sessions

were provided to children, adults and families through LSI's Therapy program in 2024



Over 1,000 People

were served through LSI Therapy Services in 2024



Lutheran Services in Iowa



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