

# ECR Legislative Newsletter

April 7, 2022 | Issue No. 7

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## It's Time!

We are getting closer and closer to the end of the legislative session (legislators' per diem ends April 19), and it's time to take action! Please strongly consider reaching out to the legislators who represent your area, and discuss the importance of these bills that are still alive. Real people with real struggles and challenges need to share the impact that legislators' decisions will have on the lives of Iowans. **Use this link to find your legislator and his/her contact information:** <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>

## One Big Bill Now

Several bills we have been tracking were recently placed into a special category that protects them from being separately voted out before the end of the session. This is positive news for our constituents, as these issues continue to remain alive for discussion and debate. That special category, a House Appropriations Bill, rolls **four of our top issues** into one big bill. Here is a recap of what is still being discussed/debated under House Appropriations Bill 2578. (This listing is in no particular order.)

### 1. Tiered Rates for Psychiatric Intensive Inpatient Care

This part of the bill requires The Department of Human Services, no later than January 1, 2023, to implement a tiered rate reimbursement methodology for psychiatric intensive inpatient care under the Medicaid program based on the level of patient acuity and other factors as recommended in the inpatient bed tracking study committee report submitted to the governor and the general assembly on December 1, 2021. **What does this mean? It means that a better rate reimbursement system than currently exists could be created to help pay for inpatient intensive psychiatric treatment. Breaking News on 04.07.22: After a lengthy debate, the House passed HF 2578, including \$2 million for tiered rates for intensive psychiatric beds.**

### 2. Medicaid funding for Functional Family Therapy and Multi-systemic Therapy

This part of the bill requires the Department of Human Services to submit a Medicaid state plan amendment to include functional family therapy (FFT) and multi-systemic therapy (MST) for youth as covered services under the Medicaid program. Both FFT and MST are evidence-based treatments for youth that address a youth's home and environment to reduce problematic behavior and divert the youth from the juvenile justice system. **What does this mean? It means that these two programs, not originally covered, could be added to Medicaid so that families and youth could receive more support to ensure children are well-adjusted and healthy.**

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### 3. Shortening the Wait List for the Intellectual Disabilities Waiver

This part of the bigger bill appropriates \$7,400,000 to implement reductions in the waiting lists for home and community-based services for persons with an intellectual disability. **What does this mean? It means that the extensive waiting lists for people with intellectual disabilities to get on a waiver will be reduced and more Iowans will get the care they need.**

### 4. Increasing Wages for Direct Care Workers

This portion of the big bill appropriates \$14,600,000 beginning July 1, 2022, for reimbursement rates for providers of home and community-based service waiver services, with the exception of intermediate care facilities for persons with an intellectual disability. The entire rate increase shall be used to increase the wages of direct care professionals. **What does this mean? It means that the workforce issue we face with low wages for direct care workers could be improved through this infusion of funds.**

### Another Call to Action

Because the end of the session is drawing near and the big bill has passed through the House of Representatives, it is now in the hands of the Senate. **We urge you to contact your senators and share your stories.** Here are some tips we shared in a previous edition:

#### How to Do It

- Visit the legislative website at [legis.iowa.gov](https://legis.iowa.gov) to find the legislators in your area, and their contact info.
- Also, you can contact your county auditor and/or the Secretary of State's office at [sos.iowa.gov](https://sos.iowa.gov).
- Connect on social media with your legislators and follow them.
- Write to legislators via email.
- Visit your legislators in person at the State Capitol.
- Sign up for your legislators' newsletters.
- Attend your legislators' local events when advertised in your area.

#### What to Say

- Identify your issue -- What do you want? Define the problem and focus on the solution.
- Know the issue and gather facts to talk knowledgeably.
- Share a personal story on the issue.
- Be polite. Say please and thank you!



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