



Media Contact:
Rachel Bennett
(515) 244-7181
rbennett@iowacounties.org
www.iowacounties.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Iowa State Association of Counties Calls on Legislators to Join Governor's Commitment to Mental Health Services

ISAC's powerful video campaign highlights the need to prioritize improving services for children and providing stable funding for county-level mental health and disability services



Des Moines, IA (January 15, 2019) – The Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) on Tuesday applauded Governor Reynolds for her call for the development and expansion of mental health services for the children of Iowa, positive changes to the regional carry forward balances, and the need for sustainable funding for the Iowa mental health and disability services system in her Condition of the State address and calls on legislators to also make mental health services a priority during the 2019 legislative session.

ISAC has committed itself to telling the story of mental health and disability services in Iowa and has created a number of powerful videos in its ["#MentalHealthMattersIA"](#) campaign advocating for immediate changes to address the regional mental health and disability services (MH/DS) delivery system in Iowa during the 2019 legislative session. Excerpts of the videos will be made available for news use by request and the full videos may be shared on social media - with proper credits. ISAC will assist media providers in telling the story of why mental health funding needs to be addressed by setting up interviews with its featured members, policy staff, and mental health service providers.

"A long-term, sustainable funding solution is needed now more than ever to solidify the mental health delivery system in Iowa," ISAC Executive Director Bill Peterson said. "Counties, the regions, and service providers are addressing the needs of affected Iowans, but financial stability can no longer be put off. The time to do something is now."

ISAC is calling for the elimination of the regional mental health levy caps so counties can meet the regional budgetary needs and the removal of carry forward balance restrictions so counties have the resources to fund newly required and existing programs without significant changes in property taxes.

"Iowa counties and mental health regions believe in the incredible importance of investing in mental health services for children that may not be getting the help they need right now," said ISAC President and Dubuque County Treasurer Eric Stierman. "We stand ready to continue our partnership with the state as we work to improve our service delivery and stabilize funding for both the adult and children's system."

Financial constraints that have been placed on the counties must be released so that they are able to develop and expand mental health services for children and to provide services for individuals with complex mental health needs as called for in last year's HF 2456. These constraints will continue to cause instability in both funding and service delivery, as well as dramatic swings in the property tax asking of property owners.

The Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) is a private, nonprofit corporation. ISAC members are elected and appointed county officials from all 99 counties. ISAC's mission is to promote effective and responsible county government for the people of Iowa. ISAC's vision is to be the principal, authoritative source of representation, information and services for and about county government in Iowa.