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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Officials Call for Partnership to Deliver Needed Services to Iowans
County Leaders Applaud the Continued Commitment of Governor Reynolds to provide sustainable, long-term funding solutions for Iowa's Mental Health and Emergency Medical Services

West Des Moines, IA (January 13, 2021) – The Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) applauds Governor Reynolds for prioritizing funding for mental health and disability services (MH/DS) and emergency medical services (EMS) this legislative session. County officials request that the legislature join her and work in partnership to bring these vital services to Iowans in need across the state.

ISAC has long advocated for long-term, sustainable funding for Iowa's MH/DS system. Existing services, newly created requirements, the addition of children's services, and the COVID-19 pandemic have all combined to bring the system to its breaking point. County officials urge legislators to join the Governor and prioritize allocating substantial funding for mental health services this legislative session.

"We look forward to working with the Legislature and the Governor to find a long-term funding solution for Iowa's MH/DS system," stated ISAC President and Delaware County Auditor Carla K. Becker. "ISAC members are grateful that mental health has been recognized as a priority on which we can all work together."

EMS in many Iowa counties is insufficient due to the lack of a stable funding mechanism. This leads to the absence of vital services in times of critical need. ISAC recommends the passage of legislation that would allow boards of supervisors to declare EMS an Essential Service and put in place an ad valorem property tax to fund the operation.

"The EMS funding solution that we are recommending has already been successfully implemented in Iowa," expressed ISAC Executive Director Bill Peterson. "This is not a mandate. It's a creative, bipartisan solution that would give each county the option of providing better EMS coverage where needed."

The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to demand the action of all levels of government. County officials and professionals in Iowa's 99 counties are on the front lines of pandemic response by providing vital services to Iowa's citizens. Counties seek partnership from the Governor and the Iowa Legislature as they face these vast challenges and work on solutions together.

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.