

JUDICIAL MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES

Libby Reekers, LBSW, IADC
Tama County Judicial Mental Health Advocate

An Advocate is a person who is not tied to the regional MHDS system or the legal system.

An Advocate is independent of both.

Advocates are not required to defend the:

- Legal system that placed the individual in treatment
- Providers that are treating the individual
- MHDS system that may fund the individuals treatment

Advocates act as a liaison for the individual and the court, providers, MHDS system, family, or friends

The Advocate is an “outsider looking in”

WHAT IS AN ADVOCATE?

ADVOCATE EMPLOYMENT

Iowa Code Section 229.19

County BOS are responsible for hiring Advocates

Advocates cannot be an officer or employee of:

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Region
- County performing duties for a region
- Any agency or facility providing care or treatment to persons with mental illness

ADVOCATE ASSIGNMENT

Every individual placed under an involuntary mental health commitment is required to be assigned an Advocate

The Court in the county where the individual is committed assigns the Advocate

The Advocate is assigned to the individual during the time of an active mental health commitment case

ADVOCATE JOB DUTIES

- **PRIMARY DUTIES**

- Required by Chapter 229 of the Iowa Code
- Not an overall list
- Review the reports, orders, and applications submitted on the individual.
- Advise the Court at any time if it appears that the services of an attorney are needed to safeguard the individuals interest.
- Be readily available to receive communications from the individual and to communicate with the individual directly within five days of the individuals commitment.
- To visit the individual within fifteen days of the commitment and periodically thereafter.
- To communicate with medical personnel treating the individual and to review the individuals medical records.
- To file with the court reports as the Advocate feels necessary or as required by the court.
- May attend the hospitalization hearing of any individual for whom the Advocate has received notice of a hospitalization hearing.
- To utilize the related best practices for the above duties developed and promulgated by the judicial council.

WHAT DO ADVOCATES GET PAID FOR?

Billable Activities:

- Attend hearings
- Participate in individualized interdisciplinary case planning
- Attend staffing's
- Making client phone calls
- Making collateral phone calls and/or travel to case managers, provider/staff, therapists, physicians, etc
- Travel and client visits
- Explain Court orders
- Discuss options for hearings
- Assist with requests for change of doctors
- Make referrals, for those without case management, to agencies at request of client
- Contact the case manager to request assignment of a case manager or referrals on behalf of client
- ¹Complete and submit reports at least quarterly to Court (Chief Judge or Clerk)
- Maintain updated list of clients/orders/demographic information
- Review all periodic reports and associated orders
- Review other documents, e.g., staffing notes, correspondence, etc

WHAT DO ADVOCATES GET PAID FOR?

Billable Activities Continued

- Contact clients who are non-compliant with Court orders as identified through periodic reports
- Explain client responsibilities and consequences regarding their commitment, treatment, and services
- Mediate; assist in resolving conflict between clients and provider agencies
- Write documentation (contact notes, narratives, etc)
- Perform chart/records reviews
- Complete time sheets, mileage and other required forms
- Email and write memos and letters to clients/Court/others
- Maintain client files
- Filing and similar tasks
- ²Attend conference and training as approved by the Court in consultation with the CPC
- ²Serve on Boards and Committees as Mental Health Advocate representative as appointed by the Court in Consultation with the CPC
- Communication with Court about delinquent periodic reports

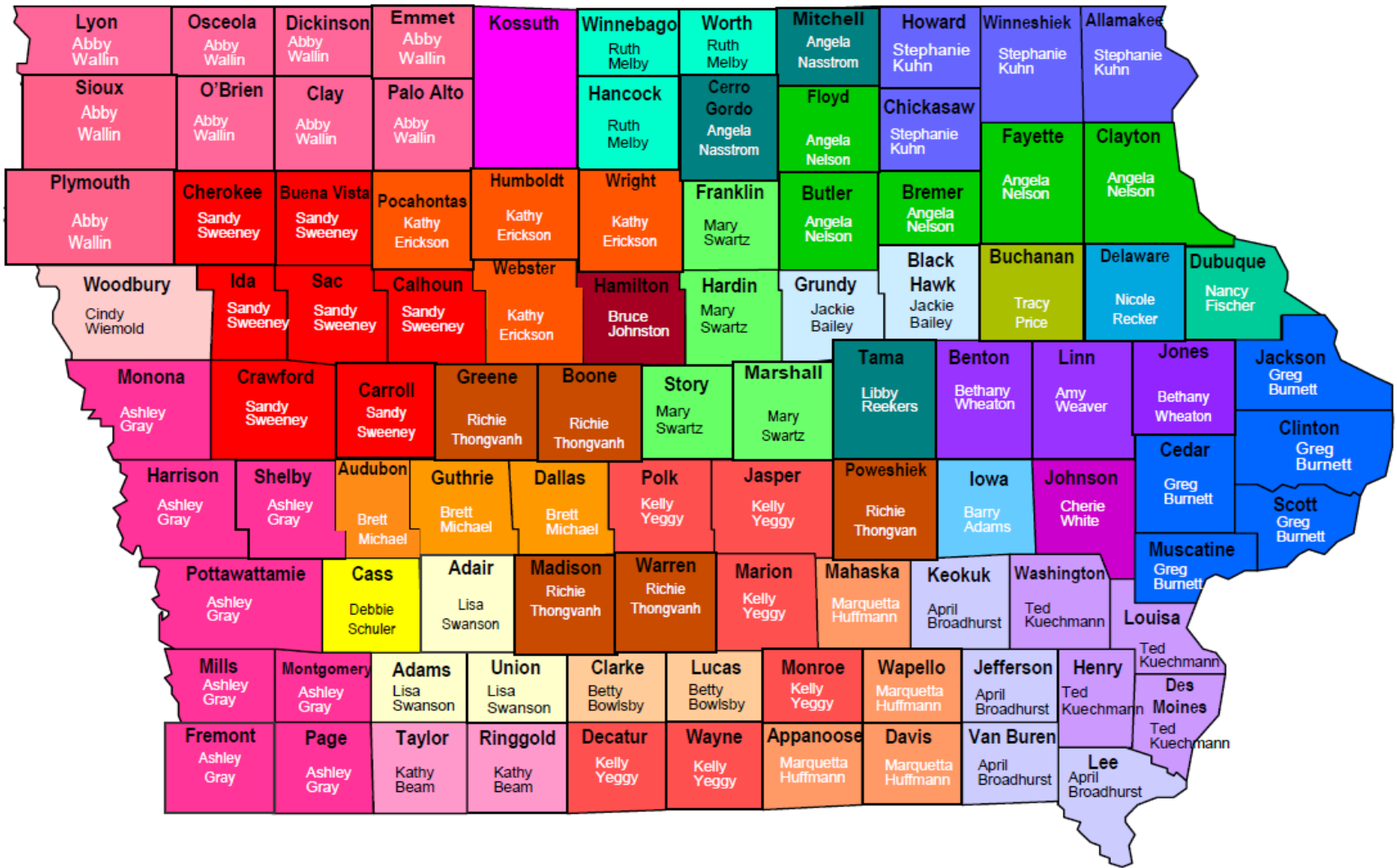
¹ No longer a requirement in the Iowa Code effective 07/01/2016

² Effective 07/01/2015, Advocates became county employees. For that reason, the approval for conferences, training, or serving on boards and committees must come from the County Board of Supervisors or from the direct supervisor the County Board of Supervisors appointed to supervise the Advocate

WHAT DON'T ADVOCATES GET PAID FOR?

Non-Billable Activities

- Direct service/care
 - Taking clients grocery shopping/drives/run errands
 - Assisting clients with household duties: cleaning, laundry, etc
 - Teaching clients skills: how to cook, maintain a home, etc
 - Providing service to patients on a substance abuse commitment
 - Service coordination when case manager involved



Map created by DHS/MHDS
 Updated: 1-9-2023

WHO ARE YOUR ADVOCATES?

ADVOCATES BY MHDS REGION

Region	Counties in Regions	Judicial MH Advocate
Care Connections of Northern Iowa	Clay, Kossuth, Osceola, Palo Alto, Winnebago, Worth	Abby Wallin – Clay, Osceola, Palo Alto Vacant – Kossuth Ruth Melby – Winnebago, Worth
Central Iowa Community Services (CICS)	Boone, Cerro Gordo, Franklin, Greene, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Jasper, Madison, Marshall, Pocahontas, Poweshiek, Story, Warren, Webster, Wright	Richie Thongvanh - Boone, Greene, Poweshiek, Madison, Warren Angela Nasstrom – Cerro Gordo Mary Swartz - Franklin, Hardin, Marshall, Story Bruce Johnston - Hamilton Ruth Melby – Hancock Kelly Yeggy - Jasper Kathy Erickson – Webster, Wright
County Rural Offices of Social Services (CROSS)	Clarke, Decatur, Lucas, Marion, Monroe, Ringgold, Wayne	Betty Bowsby - Clark , Lucas Kelly Yeggy - Decatur, Marion, Monroe, Wayne Kathy Beam - Ringgold
County Social Services (CSS)	Allamakee, Black Hawk, Butler, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Floyd, Grundy, Howard, Mitchell, Tama, Winneshiek	Stephanie Kuhn - Allamakee, Chickasaw, Howard, Winneshiek Jackie Bailey - Black Hawk, Grundy Angela Nelson - Butler, Clayton, Fayette, Floyd Angela Nasstrom - Mitchell Libby Reekers - Tama
Eastern Iowa MHDS	Cedar, Clinton, Jackson, Muscatine, Scott	Greg Burnett
Heart of Iowa	Audubon, Guthrie, Dallas	Brett Michael
MHDS of the East Central Region (MHDS-ECR)	Benton, Bremer, Buchanan Delaware, Dubuque, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn	Bethany Wheaton – Benton, Jones Angela Nelson – Bremer Tracy Price – Buchanan Nicole Recker – Delaware Nancy Fischer - Dubuque Barry Adams - Iowa Cherie White - Johnson Amy Weaver - Linn
Polk County Behavioral Health & Disability Services	Polk	Kelly Yeggy
Rolling Hills Community Services	Buena Vista, Calhoun, Carroll, Cherokee, Crawford, Humboldt, Ida, Pocahontas, Sac, Woodbury	Sandy Sweeney - Buena Vista, Calhoun, Carroll, Cherokee, Crawford, Ida, Sac Kathy Erickson – Humboldt, Pocahontas Cindy Wiemold – Woodbury
Sioux Rivers MHDS	Dickinson, Emmet, Lyon, O'Brien, Plymouth, Sioux	Abby Wallin
South Central Behavioral Health	Appanoose, Davis, Mahaska, Wapello	Marquetta Huffman
Southeast Iowa Link (SEIL)	Des Moines, Henry, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lee, Louisa, Van Buren, Washington	Ted Kuechmann - Des Moines, Henry, Louisa, Washington April Broadhurst – Jefferson, Keokuk, Lee, Van Buren
Southern Hills Regional Mental Health	Adair, Adams, Taylor, Union	Lisa Swanson - Adair, Adams, Union Kathy Beam – Taylor
Southwest Iowa MHDS	Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Monona, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, Shelby	Debbie Schuler – Cass Ashley Gray – Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Monona, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, Shelby

ADVOCATE CONTACT LIST

COUNTY	ADVOCATE	ADDRESS	CITY, IA, ZIP	PHONE	EMAIL	CELL/OTHER/FAX
Adair	Lisa Swanson	118 Jackson	Orient 50858	641.337.5605	Lisa_Swanson@yahoo.com	© 641.247.9934
Adams	Lisa Swanson	118 Jackson	Orient 50858	641.337.5605	Lisa_Swanson@yahoo.com	© 641.247.9934
Allamakee	Stephanie Kuhn	205 Second St. E	Cresco 52136	563.547.9293	SKuhn@countysocialservices.org	© 563.379.5332/f 563.547.9216
Appanoose	Marquetta Huffman	PO Box 1547	Ottumwa 52501	641.684.2155	mhuffman@wapellocounty.org	f 641.682.1315
Audubon	Brett Michael	PO Box 13164	Des Moines 50310	515.402.5843	Brett.Michael@dallascountyiowa.gov	
Benton	Bethany Wheaton			319.929.9229	bwheaton@bentoncountyiowa.gov	
Blackhawk	Jackie Bailey	1407 Independence Ave. Floor 4	Waterloo 50703	319.292.2254	jbailey@blackhawkcounty.iowa.gov	© 641.430.8098
Boone	Richey Thongvanh	900 W. 3rd St.	Boone 50036	515.433.4886	rthongvanh@boonecounty.iowa.gov	f 515.432.2480
Bremer	Angela Nelson	PO Box 269	West Union 50630	563.422.5047	anelson@countysocialservices.org	© 319.505.3102/f 563.422.6330
Buchanan	Tracy Price	210 5th Ave. NE	Independence 50644	319.334.7450	tprice@co.buchanan.ia.us	© 319.327.0357
Buena Vista	Sandy Sweeney	PO Box 71	Rockwell City 50579	712.297.4233	ssweeney@calhouncountyiowa.com	
Butler	Angela Nelson	PO Box 269	West Union 50630	563.422.5047	anelson@countysocialservices.org	© 319.505.3102/f 563.422.6330
Calhoun	Sandy Sweeney	PO Box 71	Rockwell City 50579	712.297.4233	ssweeney@calhouncountyiowa.com	
Carroll	Sandy Sweeney	PO Box 71	Rockwell City 50579	712.297.4233	ssweeney@calhouncountyiowa.com	
Cass	Debbie Schuler	5 W. 7th St.	Atlantic 50022	712.243.4424	dschuler@casscoia.us	f 712.243.6666
Cedar	Greg Burnett	600 W. 4th St. Comm.Svcs.Dept.	Davenport 52801	563.326.8741	greg.burnett@scottcountyiowa.com	f 563.326.8730
Cerro Gordo	Angela Nasstrom	220 N. Washington Ave.	Mason City 50401	641.530.9029	anasstrom@cgcounty.org	
Cherokee	Sandy Sweeney	PO Box 71	Rockwell City 50579	712.297.4233	ssweeney@calhouncountyiowa.com	
Chickasaw	Stephanie Kuhn	205 Second St. E	Cresco 52136	563.547.9293	SKuhn@countysocialservices.org	© 563.379.5332/f 563.547.9216
Clarke	Betty Bowlsby	1005 Manor Dr.	Creston 50801	641.782.4319	bettybl@iowatelecom.net	© 515.577.7826/f 641.782.4139
Clay	Abby Wallin	155 S. Hayes PO Box 380	Primghar 51245	712.344.2000	awallin@obriencounty.iowa.gov	
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Crawford	Sandy Sweeney	PO Box 71	Rockwell City 50579	712.297.4233	ssweeney@calhouncountyiowa.com	
Dallas	Brett Michael	PO Box 13164	Des Moines 50310	515.402.5843	Brett.Michael@dallascountyiowa.gov	

ADVOCATE CONTACT LIST

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Davis	Marquetta Huffman	PO Box 1547	Ottumwa 52501	641.684.2155	mhuffman@wapellocounty.org	f 641.682.1315
Decatur	Kelly Yeggy	PO Box 35593	Des Moines 50315	515.250.6150	courtadvocate@decccs.org	© 641.572.0660
Delaware	Nicole Recker	601 Grant St. Del.Comm.Srvs.	Manchester 52057	563.927.5116	advocate@co.delaware.ia.us	
Des Moines	Ted Kuechmann	910 Cotton Wood PO Box 12	Burlington 52601	319.754.8556x2513	kuechmannt@dmcouny.com	© 319.931.2939/f 319.754.7891
Dickinson	Abby Wallin	155 S. Hayes PO Box 380	Primghar 51245	712.344.2000	awallin@obriencounty.iowa.gov	
Dubuque	Nancy Fischer	720 Central Ave.	Dubuque 52201	563.589.4483	nancy.fischer@dubuquecounty.us	f 563.587.4904
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Fremont	Ashley Gray	PO Box 476	Council Bluffs 51502	712.328.5774	ashley.gray@pottcounty-ia.gov	© 712.242.7996
Greene	Richey Thongvanh	900 W. 3rd St.	Boone 50036	515.433.4886	rthongvanh@boonecounty.iowa.gov	f 515.432.2480
Grundy	Jackie Bailey	1407 Independence Ave. Flr.4	Waterloo 50703	319.292.2254	jbailey@blackhawkcounty.iowa.gov	© 641.430.8098
Guthrie	Brett Michael	PO Box 13164	Des Moines 50310	515.402.5843	Brett.Michael@dallascountyiowa.gov	
Hamilton	Bruce Johnston	500 Fairmeadow Dr.	Webster City 50595	515.832.9550	bjohnston@hamiltoncounty.org	f 515.832.9554
Hancock	Ruth Melby	126 S. Clark St.	Forest City 50436	641.585.2340 x4	Ruth.Melby@winnebagocountyiowa.gov	f 641.585.9027
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Humboldt	Kathy Erickson	202 Main St. PO Box 100	Dakota City 50529	515.332.5205	kerickson@humboldtcountyia.org	f 515.332.2289
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ADVOCATE CONTACT LIST

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Kossuth	Vacant					
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Linn	Amy Weaver	1240 26th Ave Ct. SW	Cedar Rapids 52404	319.892.5601	amy.weaver@linncounty.org	
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Lucas	Betty Bowsby	1005 Manor Dr.	Creston 50801	641.782.4319	bettybl@iowatelecom.net	© 515.577.7826/f 641.782.4139
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Mahaska	Marquetta Huffman	PO Box 1547	Ottumwa 52501	641.684.2155	mhuffman@wapellocounty.org	f 641.682.1315
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Mills	Ashley Gray	PO Box 476	Council Bluffs 51502	712.328.5774	ashley.gray@pottcounty-ia.gov	© 712.242.7996
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Winneshiek	Stephanie Kuhn	205 Second St. E	Cresco 52136	563.547.9293	SKuhn@countysocialservices.org	© 563.379.5332/f 563.547.9216
Woodbury	Cindy Wiemold	1211 Tri View Ave. Ste.B	Sioux City 51103	712.279.6018	cwiemold@woodburycountyiowa.gov	f 712.279.6558
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Wright	Kathy Erickson	202 Main St. PO Box 100	Dakota City 50529	515.332.5205	kerickson@humboldtcountyia.org	f 515.332.2289

RESOURCES

- Information about Mental Health Commitments
 - Involuntary Hospitalization of Adult Persons With Mental Illness
 - <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/LG/801703.pdf>
 - Iowa Code Section 229
 - <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/229.pdf>