

Date: December 13th, 2024

To: Pathfinders R&C

From: Anna Banowsky, Chase Bresney, Ava Dravland, Caylie McConnaha, and Gracie Muck

Re: University of Iowa School Project Rural Health

Appendix: Additional Documentation

SUMMARY

Pathfinders asked us to investigate ways to address the co-occurring mental health and opioid crises facing the six counties in their jurisdiction. Iowa as a whole suffers from a lack of mental healthcare providers with a 503 (residents):1 (mental healthcare worker). This compares to 320:1 for the U.S. In Pathfinders' region, the numbers are all higher than the state average, with the exception of Jefferson County. Keokuk Count is 9,904:1 and Davis County is 9,130:1. (Additional county ratios can be found in Table 1).ⁱ

BACKGROUND

Developed in the late 1800s, Iowa's first mental health institutions were agriculturally focused. It was widely considered therapeutic to have such institutions revolve around farms that patients helped to tend.ⁱⁱ Before 1867, there was one state mental hospital in Iowa that was located in Mount Pleasant;ⁱⁱⁱ by the end of the institution era, there were four mental health institutions in the state located in Mount Pleasant, Independence, Clarinda, and Cherokee. In 1963, the federal Community Mental Health Act was passed. This act sought to dissolve hospitals in favor of community mental health centers in which the main goal was to treat patients quickly.^{iv} Most recently. In 2024, Governor Kim Reynolds signed House File (HF) 2673, which aligns Iowa's 32 disconnected health and substance use regions into seven more unified behavioral health districts.^v

As of January 2024, Iowa ranked last in the U.S. for the number of state psychiatric beds per 100,000 residents. There were 64 state-managed, in-patient beds to treat adults—or two beds per 100,000 residents. In comparison, the *Treatment Advocacy Center* argues that 50 beds per 100,000 people is required to provide “minimally adequate treatment” for individuals with severe mental illness. Between 2010 and 2016, Iowa's bed rate dropped by nearly 80% and has remained level since.^{vi} In early 2024, Iowa had 13 mental health regions and 19 substance use regions.^{vii}

Across the country, half of all adults face at least one mental health illness in their lifetime.^{viii} Ninety percent of all psychologists practice exclusively in metropolitan areas, leaving rural areas struggling for mental health services.^{ix} By not treating mental health in rural areas, Iowa and its mental health crisis is only worsening. Suicide has been named the second leading cause of death among those between the ages of 15-34 in Iowa. The state's suicide ranks 21st highest in the U.S.^x The state average of mentally unhealthy days is 4.5. Wapello County scored the highest in the state with five mentally unhealthy days per month (n =5.0). (Additional county averages can be found in Table 2).^{xi}

The U.S. is also experiencing an opioid epidemic, which has hit rural communities especially hard. Although synthetic opioids were introduced beginning in 1984,^{xii} it has only been since the early 2000s that the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) deemed the abuse of prescription drugs an illegal drug activity.^{xiii} In the first two decades of the 21st century, rural areas experienced an increase in overdose deaths by 15%. More recently, between 2012 and 2019, drug overdose deaths involving drugs considered psychostimulants (i.e., methamphetamine, amphetamine, and methylphenidate) were higher in rural counties compared to urban counties. In the six Pathfinders' counties, the demographic cohort most affected by fatal synthetic opioid overdoses has been Non-Hispanic (NH) American Indian/ Alaska Native (AI/AN), followed by the NH Black population.^{xiv} In 1978, Iowa had only one substance abuse agency;^{xv} by 2019, that there were 187.^{xvi}

CURRENT EFFORTS

In our focused counties, there have been a number of initiatives aimed at addressing mental health and opioid abuse

- In June 2024, Mahaska Health hosted a Men's Health Event and Tractor Ride at the Mahaska County Fairgrounds that included free cholesterol and blood pressure checks, sleep assessments, and other health screenings.^{xvii}
- On October 5, 2024, Jefferson County Health Center hosted an EmpowerU Health and Wellness Fair to provide the community healthy living resources.^{xviii}
- In September 2023, Ottumwa Mayor Rick Johnson established a youth mental health day.^{xix}
- In 2015, the University of Iowa Injury Prevention Research Center (IPRC) hosted a summit on the issues of opioids and heroin that brought many experts together to discuss the epidemic.^{xx}

There have also been initiatives in hospitals and clinics that have worked to improve these issues.

- Van Buren County Hospital established an outpatient opioid workgroup. This group was created in response to a risk assessment for compliance. The multi-disciplinary team consists of a provider champion, pharmacy, clinical informatics, and clinic leadership.^{xxi}
- The Optima Behavioral Health Services and Optima, both in Fairfield, provide recovery and resources, including classes focused on creativity and wellness.^{xxii}
- The Southern Iowa Mental Health Center in Ottumwa began as a community mental health center after an inmate died while in custody. The community developed a jail alternative for those experiencing mental health crises. Initially funded by Wapello County, the center now covers a larger area. It provides crisis and substance abuse services, a pharmacy, and coordination between medical health and mental health services.^{xxiii}
- On July 18, 2024, Governor Reynolds announced \$13 million in grant funding to support opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery through the expansion and improvement of existing facilities or the development of sober-living housing options across the state.^{xxiv}

BEST PRACTICES

1. *The Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) Model*

Rural healthcare providers sometimes lack knowledge of rare, complex, or chronic conditions due to lack of financial support for continued education. Rural patients are often burdened with wait times or long travel. Project Echo was created as an aid for healthcare professionals and teams to learn from each other. North Carolina implemented an ECHO Model with funding from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) has research backing its effectiveness in treating opioid use disorder, or OUD. Using both the ECHO Model and the grant, North Carolina was able to establish a hub-and-spoke model, enabling them to work with rural communities to provide effective MOUD services. The ECHO Model has proved to be effective in combating OUD in rural areas by developing a network of informed of providers.^{xxv}

2. *Mental Health First Aid*

Mental Health First Aid is a class offered to any interested individual. It is especially popular with teachers, healthcare workers, military vets, and others working with the public who want to learn how to effectively assist someone experiencing a behavioral health or substance abuse crisis. More than 4 million people have been trained in this modality, which is offered online and in person. For rural areas, having trained local residents can counterbalance a lack of professional services, while also helping to destigmatizes the topic.^{xxvi}

3. *Schools that Care; I Got You*

Marshall and Nemaha Counties in Kansas created Schools That Care, a program aimed at increased access to mental health and education. Services provided by the project concern mental health treatment, education, and case management. School districts in this rural area partnered with the School-Business Educational Consortium, Nemaha Valley Community Hospital, Pawnee Mental Health Services, and a for-profit telecommunications business. The project was sponsored by a 2015-2018 Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) Rural Health Care Services Outreach grant and a 2018-2021 FORHP Rural Health Outreach grant.^{xxvii}

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Provide Mental Health Resources in Schools*

Pathfinders should work to coordinate efforts to introduce mental health resources into schools. This could be achieved in ways such as a youth mental health day in either May (Mental Health Awareness Month) or September (Suicide Prevention Month). Activities that could be shared include activities for self-regulation, including mindfulness, journaling, and breathing exercises. Open discussion of safe people and places to turn to in a mental health crisis should be shared. Posting infographics around the school that include resources – including basic breathing exercises, suicide prevention hotlines, etc. – can be posted during this time and kept up year-round. A survey given after the day will help discern students’ retention of the material and their own sense of emotional well-being.

2. *Map Resources*

It is important that residents in this Pathfinders' six county area know where mental health and addiction services are located. Pathfinders should have a readily available map of all the providers within the counties that are associated with mental health and addiction services. In addition to being on Pathfinders' website, the map should be distributed in schools, libraries, and healthcare and social service offices. A draft of this map has been included with this package.

3. *Convene and Support Partners*

MOUD services have been proven as an effective, evidence-based solution to opioid addiction. Following the ECHO Model, Pathfinders could serve as a convener on mental health and addiction-related services, helping build the community's resiliency in responding to the mental health and addiction crises.^{xxviii} Pathfinders could also support its communities in finding opportunities and grant funding to establish additional services in the area. In Figure 4, we have included additional information on the logistics of convening partners.

APPENDIX I

Stakeholders:

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Jefferson County Public Health-200 West Briggs, Fairfield, Iowa 52556

Christina Scharck, Executive Director

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Table 1: Mental Health Provider Ratios

Government Level	Mental Health Provider Ratio
United States (National)	320:1
Iowa (State)	503:1
Davis (County)	9130:1
Jefferson (County)	491:1
Keokuk (County)	9904:1
Mahaska (County)	784:1
Van Buren (County)	1814:1
Wapello (County)	565:1


Table 2: Average Number of Mentally Unhealthy Days


Government Level	Average Number of Mentally Unhealthy Days
United States (National)	4.8
Iowa (State)	4.5
Davis (County)	4.8
Jefferson (County)	4.5
Keokuk (County)	4.8
Mahaska (County)	4.8

Van Buren (County)	4.8
Wapello (County)	5.0

Figure 1: Young Adult School Mental Health Survey

Young Adult Mental Health Survey

gmmuck@gmail.com [Switch account](#) 

 Not shared

Recently I have felt down, depressed, or hopeless

Often (more than 5 days)

Sometimes (more than 2 days)

Rarely

I have a strong support system

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

I feel comfortable talking about my mental health

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

If I need help, I know where to find it

Yes

No

Are there any suggestions you have for how to increase mental health awareness/how to better assist young adults who struggle with their mental health?

Your answer

Figure 2: Middle School Mental Health Survey

Middle School Mental Health Survey

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Not shared

Recently I have felt sad, depressed, or hopeless

Yes I feel this way

I sometimes feel this way

No I do not feel this way

I feel like I am always tired no matter how much sleep I get

Yes, I feel this way

No I do not feel this way

I feel comfortable reaching out for help when I am struggling

Yes

Sometimes

No

I have a teacher or other adult from school I can count on to help me, no matter what

Yes

No

I have an adult at home who listens to me when I have something to say

Yes

Sometimes

No

I often have trouble concentrating

Yes

Sometimes

No

Do you feel there is a stigma around mental health?

Yes

No

I don't know

I feel like my school cares about my mental health

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

What could my school do to better support my mental health?

Your answer

Submit Clear form

Figure 3: High School Mental Health Survey

High School Mental Health Survey

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Not shared

Recently I have felt down, depressed, or hopeless

Often (more than 5 days)

Sometimes (more than 2 days)

No

On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate your current stress level

1 2 3 4 5

Not stressed Extremely stressed

What is your top stressor

School

Sport(s)

Work

Friends

Other: _____

I feel comfortable reaching out for help when I am struggling

Yes

Sometimes

No

I feel like I have people I can lean on for support

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

I feel comfortable talking about my mental health

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

I feel like my school cares about my mental health

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

What could my school do to better support those struggling with mental health?

Your answer _____

Table 3: Services on Map

County	Organization	Address	Type	Services Offered	Insurance
Davis	Southern Iowa Economic Development (SIEDA) Davis County Resource Center	203 S Madison St, Bloomfield, IA 52537	Behavioral Health	Services offered are Behavioral Health and Treatment Services, Integrated Alcohol & Drug/ Mental Health Services for Adults, Adolescents, and Children, Intensive Outpatient Treatment, Extended Outpatient Treatment, Co-occurring Group Services, Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), counseling services concerning family and relationship services, children's services, adolescent behavior, depression, anxiety, grief issues, or trauma.	Accepts Medicaid as well as other insurance plans. Fees are based on family income.

Jefferson	Jefferson County Health Center	2000 S Main St, Fairfield, IA 52556	General Hospital	<p>Services offered are Suicide Prevention (Outpatient Treatments & Services) and Outpatient mental health clinics.</p> <p>https://www.jeffersoncountyhealthcenter.org/services</p>	<p>Accepts Medicare and other insurance plans. JCHC also provides financial assistance to those who qualify:</p> <p>https://www.jeffersoncountyhealthcenter.org/files/images/Patients/Financial%20Assistance/2023%20Financial%20Assistance%20Brochure.pdf.</p>
Jefferson	Optimae Life Services	301 W Burlington Ave, Fairfield, IA 52556	Behavioral Health and Behavioral Health Intervention Services	<p>Services offered are community support such as Intensive Residential Service Homes (IRSH), behavioral health such as therapy (in person or via telehealth), home health, rehabilitation, and residential services (as there is a specialized nursing home near Bloomfield,</p>	<p>Optimae Behavioral Health serves everyone regardless of pay. Services are based on a sliding fee scale, which is based on the Federal Poverty Guidelines.</p> <p>Optimae also contracts with Iowa's three managed care organizations (e.g., Iowa Total Care, Molina Healthcare of Iowa, and</p>

				Iowa, which serves older individuals with severe and persistent mental illness). https://www.optimaelifeservices.com/our-services/	Wellpoint Iowa), which helps administer Medicaid benefits for members of the program. https://www.optimaelifeservices.com/our-services/
Jefferson	SIEDA Neighborhood Resource Center, SIEDA Behavioral Health and Treatment Services, and SIEDA Head Start Jefferson Center	2200 W Jefferson Ave, Fairfield, IA 52556	Behavioral Health	Services offered are alcohol and drug rehab that focuses on substance abuse addictions, co-occurring mental health disorders, and opioid addiction. There is outpatient addiction therapy, intensive outpatient care, and relapse prevention care. https://www.rehab.com/sieda-community-action-fairfield	Accepts Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurances.
Jefferson	R&R Counseling Solutions	103 E Adams Ave, Fairfield, IA 52556	Behavioral Health	Services offered are counseling to adults,	Accepts a variety of major insurances,

				<p>adolescents, and children age 5 and over and can meet students in Fairfield Community schools.</p> <p>https://www.rrcsmentalhealth.com/faq</p> <p>https://www.rrcsmentalhealth.com/who-we-serve</p>	<p>Medicaid, and Medicare.</p> <p>https://www.rrcsmentalhealth.com/faq</p>
Keokuk	EmpowerU Therapy Services	113 E Marion St, Sigourney, IA 52591	Behavioral Health	<p>Services offered are Individual, family, group therapy, couples counseling, telehealth, career counseling, and life coaching.</p>	<p>Accepts insurance plans from BlueCross and BlueShield, Medicaid, and Molina.</p> <p>https://empowertherapyserVICES.clientsecure.me/</p>
Keokuk	First Resources Corp.	117 N Main St, Sigourney, IA 52591	Behavioral Health Intervention Services	<p>Services offered are Integrated Health Home (IHH), Intensive Residential Service Home (IRSH), Residential Care Facility (RCF), high-intensity and low-intensity residential treatments, Intensive and Extended Outpatient treatment</p>	<p>Accepts Medicare, Medicaid Military Insurance, and private health insurance.</p>

				services, Behavioral Health Intervention Services (BHIS), and drug testing.	
Keokuk	SIEDA Community Action Keokuk County	114 W Washington St, Sigourney, IA 52591	Behavioral Health	Services offered are outpatient rehab, aftercare and alumni programs, and dual diagnosis and mental health programs.	Accepts Medicaid and private insurances. There are financial assistance options. https://rehab.org/sieda-community-action-7/
Mahaska	Eunoia Counseling	120 N Market St, Oskaloosa, IA 52577	Behavioral Health	Services offered are individual, play, couples, and family therapy, as well as telehealth and Eunoia therapeutic yoga. https://eunoiafamilycounseling.com/#	Not stated.
Mahaska	First Resources Corp. Disability Services, and Substance Abuse, CHOICES Drop-In Center	117 1st Ave W, Oskaloosa, IA 52577	Behavioral Health Intervention Services	Services offered are assessments, drug testing, preventative and continuing care; the Drop-In Center	Accepts Medicare, Medicaid, private health insurance, or state-financed health insurance plans other than

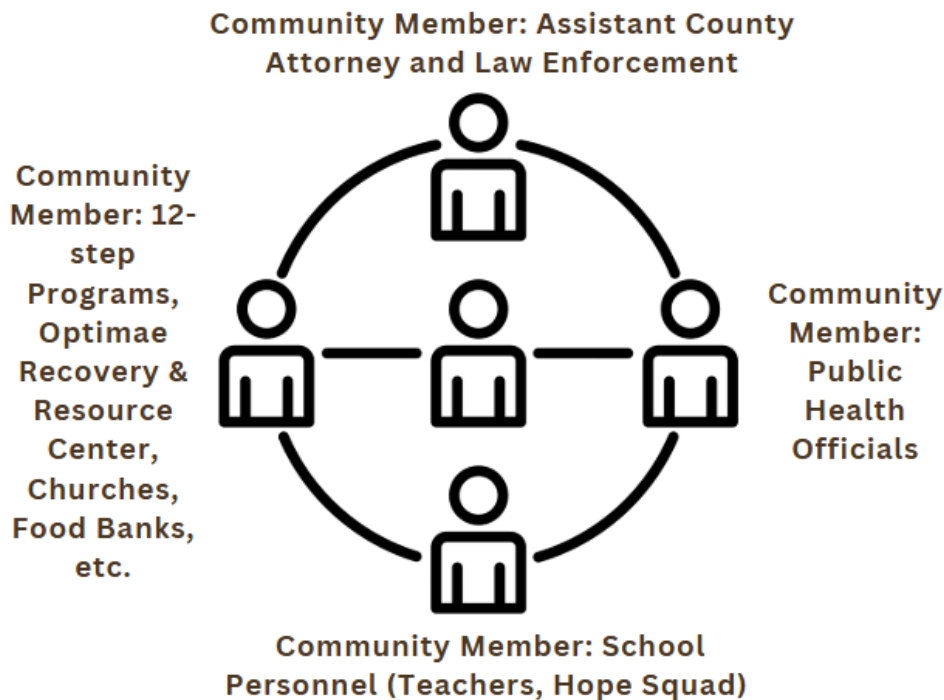
				provides social support for persons with health needs. https://www.firstresources.us/about	Medicaid. https://rehab.com/listings/first-resources-corporation-4266684825/
Mahaska	Mahaska County Hospital	1229 C Ave E, Oskaloosa, IA 52577	General Hospital	Services offered are behavioral health services, telephone appointments, and telehealth. https://www.mahaskahealth.org/index/	Not stated.
Mahaska	SIEDA Mahaska County Resource Center	114 N Market St, Oskaloosa, IA 52577	Behavioral Health	Services offered are alcohol and drug rehab and outpatient addiction therapy.	Accepts Medicaid, Medicare, Military Insurance, and private insurance. There are options for sliding scale payment assistance and financial aid. https://www.rehab.com/sieda-community-action-oskaloosa
Van Buren	R&R Counseling Solutions	709 1st St, Keosauqua, IA 52565	Behavioral Health	Services offered are counseling to adults, adolescents, and children	Accepts a variety of major insurances, Medicaid, and Medicare.

				age 5 and over and can meet students in Van Buren County schools. https://www.rrcsmentalhealth.com/faq https://www.rrcsmentalhealth.com/who-we-serve	https://www.rrcsmentalhealth.com/faq
Wapello	First Resources Corp. Substance Abuse & Mental Health	1010 E. Williams St. Ottumwa, IA 52501	Behavioral Health	Services offered are assessments, drug testing, preventative and continuing care. https://www.firstresources.us/ottumwa	Accepts Medicaid and private pay for all Substance Use Disorder (SUD) programs. https://www.firstresources.us/behavioralhealth
Wapello	Psychology Services of Ottumwa	226 W. Main Street Suite 208 Ottumwa, IA 52501	Behavioral Health	Services offered are therapy, marriage and couples counseling, and psychological testing. https://www.psychologyservicesottumwa.com/products-services	Not stated.
Wapello	Southern Iowa Mental Health Center	1527 Albia Rd, Ottumwa, IA 52501	Behavioral Health/ Community Mental Health/ Crisis Response Services	Services offered are outpatient services, access centers, crisis stabilization,	Accepts all private and public funding sources and has a Patient Assistance

				<p>children’s mental health; there is a drop-in center for adults with mental illness, substance abuse services, and the option for an Integrated Health Home (IHH). https://simhco.ttumwa.org/out-us/ https://simhco.ttumwa.org/patient-assistance-information/ https://simhco.ttumwa.org/services/</p>	<p>Program. https://simhco.ttumwa.org/out-us/ https://simhco.ttumwa.org/patient-assistance-information/</p>
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Figure 4: Meeting Chart

POTENTIAL MEETING FOR JEFFERSON COUNTY



ⁱ “Data and Resources.” County Health Rankings & Roadmaps,

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- www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/iowa/data-and-resources. Accessed 24 Oct. 2024.
- ii “How America’s Mental Health System Evolved.” The Chas Foundation, 25 Mar. 2024, thechasfoundation.org/how-americas-mental-health-system-evolved/#:~:text=Throughout%20the%2018th%20Century,with%20often%20appalling%20living%20conditions.
- iii “A Century of Patient Care”, publications.iowa.gov/26593/1/A-Century-of-Patient-Care.pdf. Accessed 07 Nov. 2024.
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- v “Gov. Reynolds Signs HF 2673, Behavioral Health Alignment.” Governor Kim Reynolds, 15 May 2024, governor.iowa.gov/press-release/2024-05-15/gov-reynolds-signs-hf-2673-behavioral-healthalignment#:~:text=Kim%20Reynolds%20signed%20HF%202673,outcomes%20for%20Iowans%2C%20into%20law. Accessed 07 Oct. 2024.
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- ix Rural Health Information Hub, www.ruralhealthinfo.org/. Accessed 23 Oct. 2024.
- x “Suicide.” Health & Human Services, 7 Nov. 2023, hhs.iowa.gov/public-health/data/people/deaths/suicide. Accessed 23 Oct. 2024
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- xiii *Review of the Drug Enforcement Administration’s Regulatory and Enforcement Efforts to Control the Diversion of Opioids*. Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Justice, Evaluation and Inspections Division, 2019.
- xiv Cano, Manuel, et al. “Overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids: Racial/ethnic and educational disparities in the Eastern and western US.” *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, vol. 251, Oct. 2023, p. 110955, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2023.110955>. Accessed 20 September 2024.
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^{xx} “News.” University of Iowa College of Public Health, www.public-health.uiowa.edu/news-items/iowas-opioid-epidemic/. Accessed 7 Oct. 2024.

^{xxi} “Van Buren County Hospital Establishes an Outpatient Opioid Workgroup.” Van Buren County Hospital, vbch.org/news/van_buren_county_hospital_establishes_an_outpatient_opioid_workgroup/. Accessed 07 Oct. 2024.

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^{xxviii} “Rural Project Summary: Schools That Care - Rural Health Information Hub.” Rural Project Summary: Schools That Care - Rural Health Information Hub, www.ruralhealthinfo.org/project-examples/1057. Accessed 17 Oct. 2024.