



February 21, 2018

The Iowa Chapter of the International Association of People Supporting Employment First (IA-APSE) represents individuals with disabilities, family members, and providers of disability services and supports. IA-APSE is committed to community integrated employment of Iowans with disabilities and the impact it has on the quality of life they experience. Iowa has been recognized as a national leader for its advocacy and progress in promoting and achieving community integrated employment for this group of Iowans.

IA-APSE **stresses its disapproval of House Study Bill 666**, which anyone getting public assistance (such as Medicaid or food stamps) will have to have a job, be looking for a job, volunteer, or go to school at least 20 hours per week. While there are populations exempted within this bill, **it is clear work requirements are not about providing supports to help people get a job or about addressing barriers to employment.** In fact, the CMS guidance letter specifically states that Medicaid funds cannot be used to aid participants in meeting the work requirements through job training, employment services, or childcare.

Instead, Medicaid work requirements are a **thinly-veiled attempt to reduce the number of people on Medicaid.** Work requirements mean that people who are eligible for and rely on Medicaid will lose access to healthcare if they can't meet the requirements. Threatening the loss of healthcare has not been shown to be effective in increasing employment. In fact, **people who have access to healthcare and are healthy are more likely to be able to work.** Further, most people on Medicaid are already working or are caregivers, including of people with disabilities. According to the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#), 60 percent of Medicaid participants are already working; 12 percent are not working due to caregiving; and an additional 14 percent are not working due to illness or disability.

People with disabilities and their families will be harmed by work requirements. While CMS claims that these policies will only apply to “able-bodied” individuals, only people who qualify for Medicaid because they qualify Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are currently counted as “disabled.” **Millions of other people with disabilities who qualify for Medicaid through other pathways will be subject to work requirements without access to the very Medicaid supports that enable other participants to find and sustain jobs.** Further, many caretakers of people with disabilities will be forced to choose between accessing healthcare or taking care of their loved ones.

IA-APSE was founded on working with partners to ensure that Iowans with disabilities had access to quality employment services and supports. To that end, we partner with stakeholders around the state who share that vision. We call on Iowa policymakers to show a commitment to employment by instead expanding access to the job training and employment supports and services that have been shown to help people obtain and retain jobs.

We urge policymakers to stand with Iowans’, those with disabilities as well as their families and friends, and oppose House Study 666. Iowans deserve no less.

Sincerely,

Iowa APSE Board of Directors