

Expanding Access to Health Care

Building on an initiative to expand access to affordable health care, legislators outlined a plan to help Iowans get primary care closer to home.

Senate File 2356 creates a new Regional Provider Network under the IowaCare Program. This will allow low to middle income Iowan adults to obtain primary care through the regional provider network, which already provides health services to rural communities across Iowa. In addition, IowaCare members will be able to access emergency care at all hospitals in Iowa.

The current IowaCare Program is a limited benefit program for individuals who cannot afford health insurance but who do not qualify for Medicaid. Residents of Polk County may only access care at Broadlawns Medical Center. All other Iowans can only obtain care at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City.

The bill intends to fix a longstanding criticism of the IowaCare Program and assist local providers by reducing the amount of uncompensated care.

Iowa Information Exchange

SF 2356 also creates the Iowa Insurance Information Exchange (Exchange) in the Insurance Division of the Department of Commerce, under the authority of the Insurance Commissioner.

The purpose of the Exchange is to provide an information center where all Iowans can obtain information about health care coverage that is available in Iowa including availability of care delivered by safety-net providers and comparisons of benefits, premiums, and out-of-pocket costs.

The bill now goes to the Governor for his signature.