Medicaid

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that individuals who "provide proof of good cause as defined by HHS" would be exempt, but did not include details on what standards would be used by the state department for assessing these claims.

At the hearing, several speakers talked about their own experiences or time helping others applying for public assistance coverage under the current Medicaid program. Nancy Lynch of Des Moines, a former school social worker, said she worked with parents of children with disabilities who were denied services and assistance — and said she believes work requirements would add another hurdle for people in need accessing health coverage

"My job was to help support parents who had children with very special needs that needed help needed help with health care, needed help with services — and I saw how difficult it was for them to receive those services," Lynch said. "No one got it on the first time. Everybody had to apply three and four times. They'd say the same thing, but they had to reapply and reapply and reapply. So they had to kind of beat down the system until they were finally accepted. ... And my big concern is that these work requirements will add more barriers to people who need these services, they will lose the support they need."

Robbin Mensching of West Des Moines said she illnesses and provide exemptions. Speaking about her own experience struggling to receive an official diagnosis of having a mental illness, she said it can be difficult for people with mental health issues to be recognized as having a medical issue. After receiving care, Mensching said she was able to more fully participate in life, but that denying that coverage could impact people's abil ity to join the workforce or care for their families.

"I want to know how they're going to handle covering these people, because there are a lot of people that have been like me," Mensching said "Anxiety, depression, panic attacks it's disabling."

requirements would be enforced through reporting. HHS stated that people on IHAWP would be required to report information showing the work requirements were met every six months. The department plans to create a mobile application for IHAWP members to submit required information showing their compliance with the work requirements if HHS does not already have the information available. If the required information is not provided, the individual's coverage would be suspended.

Mary Nelle Trefz, the advocacy network director of Iowa ACES 360, called for the state to share information about the cost of implementing work requirements, pointing to the need for the Iowa state government to create a new information technology system and train staff to implement and support the

reporting requirements. As Reynolds and HHS pursue a waiver for implementing work requirements, the Iowa Legislature has also moved this session to pass a bill implementing expanded Medicaid work requirements. There are some differences between the HHS and legislative policies — the bill pro-

Phone:

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From left: Terry Anderson, Heather Sanders and Robbin Mensching raised their hands to make comments or ask questions of Iowa Department of Health and Human Services staff about the state's proposal to add work requirements to the state's expanded Medicaid program, Iowa Health and Wellness Plan, during a public comment session hosted at the Urbandale Public Library on Wednesday.

poses an 80-hour monthly

of the HHS waiver request, communications.

been appropriated. So how — to speak out. was concerned about how will the state ensure the in place?"

work requirement, and in- pressed frustration that the then you've got all these cludes "trigger" language HHS staff who hosted the other things that go with that would require the state meeting did not answer that — somebody getting to end IHAWP coverage for several of the questions health care for me, the poall recipients if the federal or direct responses from lice would be involved — I government revokes work HHS or other state leader- mean, it just goes on and requirements in the future ship posed about certain on," Mensching said. "It's after they were approved. details of the policy or how so much more efficient and The legislation also in- it would be implemented, humane to just give people cludes an appropriation of or if there would be chang- coverage so that they can roughly \$8.2 million, ac- es made to address any of live a normal life." cording to the Legislative their concerns. Staff at the Services Agency, to set up meeting said the comments Frelund with the Amerithe needed IT system for and questions would be can Heart Association, said administering reporting re- shared with state leaders, they were creating a "proquirements under the pro- and would be used to an- tect Medicaid" coalition posal. The funding to create swer questions about work to coordinate organizing this IT system is not a part requirements in future efforts to oppose the new

Mensching said she felt

one point in my life (with- the waiver.

Multiple speakers ex- out health coverage), and

Trefz, alongside Stacy work requirements.

There will be another "That pending legisla- work requirements were al- public hearing held on the tion also included support ready a "done deal" in Iowa, waiver request, on April 29 for IT, funding for that but said she believed it was at 2 p.m. at Marshalltown – but that legislation has important for Iowans — es- Public Library. Comments not passed yet," Trefz said. pecially those who would can also be submitted "Those dollars have not be impacted by the change through email and by mail through May 15, with in-"I would have ended formation available on the HHS would assess mental necessary infrastructure is up living on the street at public notice website for

Feenstra

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Interim Division Administrator/Licensed Nursing Home Administrator Kelley Oetker also highlighted the longevity of several of the facility's employees, some of whom have been with IVH for over 55 years. While they were conversing at the future pharmacy site, Jacobus, Operations Executive Administrator Nathan Wilson and Legislative Liaison Mike Olson advocated for HR1970, the Providing Veterans Essential Medications Act, which was introduced by another member of Congress from Iowa, Rep. Marianette Miller-Meeks. It would require the federal VA to either pay for the medications or furnish them directly to the State Veterans Homes when a severely disabled veteran requires high-cost medications.

Once the tour was complete, Feenstra sat down with reporters to answer a few questions, some related to IVH and others on more general political topics.

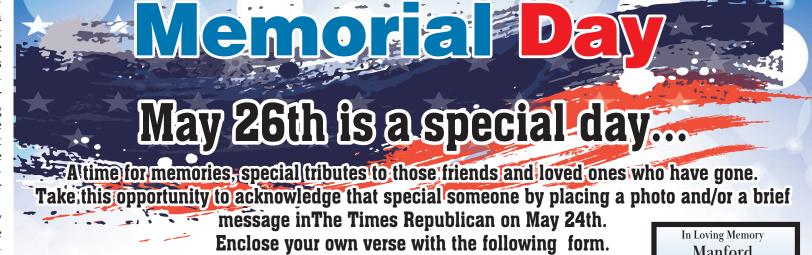
"I'm so impressed with Iowa's facility and how it's run, and it's jaw dropping to see how good this place is and how they take care of the most precious people that we have in this country, those that have served our country. And I just think it's our duty at a federal level to we are taking care of those who have served — our veterans — and I'm so proud to be here and see that that is what's happening here,"

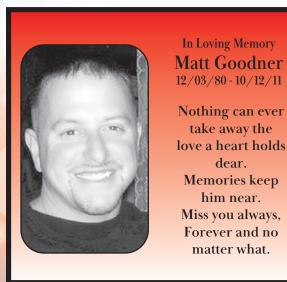
On HR 1970, Feenstra expressed general support for the idea that the financial burden for the aforementioned medications should fall on the federal government and not individual states. On the budget, the Congressman said cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security were "off the table," and he would make sure of it.

When asked about the recent controversy swirling around Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Feenstra said he would "leave it to the administration" on any decisions about Hegseth's future and whether or not he should resign or be fired. Finally, he was asked whether he would consider running for governor in 2026 since news broke that Kim Reynolds would not be seeking re-election.

"That's a great question. I'll tell you, right now I'm focused on fulfilling and making sure that we get Trump's agenda completed. That is (budget) reconciliation. I'm deep in the weeds on reconciliation right now and getting the big, beautiful bill passed, and then number two is we also have the Farm Bill. That has to get done for our farmers, and that's my critical focus," he said. "However, I always want to do what's best for our state, and I will continue to look at all aspects of what that looks like."

When Des Moines Register reporter Brianne Pfannenstiel asked Feenstra if that meant he was "keeping the option" of running for governor open, he replied "I think that's a fair statement."





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