Hello Guardians, Advocates and Supporters of Link Associates

Included—Important information about the new Managed Care Company entering Iowa and the re-assignment letters that will be coming out.

1. WE WANT TO STAY IN TOUCH
   if you have not been receiving breaking news emails and invitations to meetings, please send me your email address so we can add you to the email list. Write me at ldunshee@linkassociates.org

2. KEEP CURRENT
   Check out our website at www.linkassociates.org

Link Associates’ Mission
Providing People With Intellectual Disabilities Opportunities to Achieve Their Personal Goals

Link Associates’ Vision
Link Associates will be the recognized leader in providing quality services to persons with intellectual disabilities.

The Link Connection keeping you connected…
Hello all,

I invite you to read this new edition of the Link Connection as it has a lot of very important information. Each newsletter I think “maybe we will have a new topic of discussion other than managed care - but that seems to continue to be the dominant topic. We have all been struggling over the past three years to deal with the many changes that have accompanied the implementation of Managed Care in Iowa.

In this edition on pages 2-3-4 you will see another change with the addition of the third Managed Care Company (MCO) starting soon in Iowa. Iowa Total Care will replace AmeriHealth Caritas who left state. You will also see information about how to reach out for help or questions.

I don’t awakes want to just share gloom and doom in newsletters and I want to take am minute to share a few things about the staff you work with at Link. Are we perfect? NO Do we know everything? NO But, as the Executive Director of Link Associates, I want to acknowledge the dedication and loyalty of the staff I am blessed to work with. Each and every position at Link serves a critical role in making sure those we care for are safe, happy, fully part of their community, proud of their accomplishments and have every opportunity possible. This is not easy, this is not rewarded across our state and nation as vital – but it is these loving hands that bring peach, hope and joy to so many every day. We don’t get to stop during holidays, snow storms, and weekend – yet everyday – 365 a year – 24 hours a day they pull it off. Working together there is nothing that can stop them. We have had a lot of staff turnover, mainly due to the compressed economy our industry is trying to survive in and those staff who support your family members continue to do so without any increase in pay for many years. Their benefits have been minimized, their pay locked, their work challenging - - - - but they do it with a smile and a sense of commitment. I am so proud of them.

Having said that, I want to hear concerns you as advocates and family members have. We need to know what your stresses are and I am committed to doing all we can to provide you and your family the best services possible. Many are challenged by the multiple regulations we operate under. We understand that you know your family member better than anyone else in the world. As your provider, we are not parents - nor should we act as such - to prevent this we have very specific rules we operate under. You can only imagine the problems we would have, if we as providers, were making decision for each of those we serve as a parent. That would be like having all 300 of our staff act as a “parent” which is not what we want. Each would have the best intent - but there would be no consistency or organized plan. As your provider, it is not our role to question you as family or how you handle things in your family home. But as a Medicaid provider we must comply with Federal and State rules. As these issues challenge you and your loved one, don’t hesitate to reach out. It is only thru mutual understanding will we be best able to support you and your loved ones.

*Linda Dunshee, Executive Director*
New IA Health Link MCO Selected:

The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) announced the selection of an additional MCO, Iowa Total Care. This provides additional options and choice for members. Iowa Total Care will begin providing coverage for IA Health Link and hawk-i members July 1, 2019.

Beginning in March the DHS will be sending out letters over a four-week period to members with their MCO assignment to either United, Amerigroup, or Iowa Total Care (new MCO) to be effective 7/1/19.

You should choose the MCO that best fits your member’s needs. It is important to ensure that if there is a new MCO assigned that the members providers are with that MCO. We do expect the new MCO, Iowa Total Care, will contract with the same providers that United and Amerigroup have, but we will want to pay special attention to any specialist or out of the area providers (such as Mayo).

There are many resources available on the DHS website to assist in making your MCO choice, such as the Provider Search Portal, and the MCO Value-Added-Services Comparison Chart. All are available on the IA Health Link webpage, under 'Resources' on the left-hand navigation menu.

Link Associates can assist you with comparing your providers with a new plan. Please forward a copy of your assignment letter to your Link Case Coordinator. We need to have this document on file to ensure we are working with the correct MCO so that there is continuity of care during this transition.

It is anticipated that each MCO will be allocated comparable shares of members from each of Iowa's seven waiver population groups. We should see some members remain with their current MCO, some will shift to Amerigroup/United, and some will go to Iowa Total Care. There will be opportunities to change MCO's if desired before the lock in period of July 1, as well as a retrospectively up to 90 days after July 1 to make changes. After that point it will require a special circumstance to change MCO's until the next open enrollment date. As official dates are published, they will be shared.

Authorizations for services will be honored as followed:
If a member is with United and is assigned to Amerigroup or if a member is assigned to Amerigroup and is assigned to United, the authorizations will be honored by the new MCO for 30 days so that the new MCO can review the service plan.

If a member is assigned to Iowa Total Care, the authorizations will be honored up to 90 days so that the service plans can be reviewed.

Link Associates is preparing for this transition in advance in hopes that it will all go smoothly. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Joan Osborn. — Case Management Director josborn@linkassociates.org/515-262-8888
INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO. 1985-MC-FFS

DATE: March 1, 2019
TO: All Iowa Medicaid Providers
APPLIES TO: Managed Care (MC)
FROM: Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME)
RE: Member Open Choice Period
EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2019

Effective July 1, 2019, Iowa Total Care, a new Managed Care Organization (MCO), will join Amerigroup and UnitedHealthcare in providing health coverage to IA Health Link and Hawki members.

Because of this, all members in the IA Health Link program will be in an Open Choice Period starting March 4, 2019 through June 18, 2019. During this time, IA Health Link members will be able to choose which of the three MCOs they wish to enroll with for coverage starting July 1, 2019. Until then, members will remain with their current MCO.

Throughout the month of March, the IME will be mailing MCO assignment letters to all IA Health Link members. Some members may be reassigned to a different MCO, but they can choose a different plan. If a member is happy with their assignment, they do not have to do anything.

To minimize service disruption and ensure continuity of care, about 121,000 IA Health Link members with critical health care needs will not be reassigned to a different MCO, but they will still have the opportunity to switch MCOs if they wish to. These excluded members include pregnant women, members with severe illnesses and members who have recently transitioned from a long-term care facility back to the community.

Members who wish to change MCOs must contact IME Member Services by June 18, 2019 or they will be enrolled with the MCO assigned to them effective July 1, 2019. After that, members may change MCOs for any reason until September 30, 2019. After this date, members may change their MCO for reasons of “Good Cause” until their annual choice period.
Due to an expected increase in call volume to Member Services, providers are encouraged to remind members that the Open Choice Period runs through June 18, 2019 for coverage effective July 1, 2019. In addition to calling Member Services, members may also change MCOs by sending in the MCO Enrollment Form mailed to them or by emailing their choice to IMEMemberServices@dhs.state.ia.us.

More information about the Member Open Choice Period including frequently asked questions and a sample mailing can be found on the IME website.

Hawki members will have a similar Open Choice Period starting in June 2019. More information about this will be shared at a later date.

Providers wanting to credential with Iowa Total Care should see Informational Letter 1984 for more information.

Starting March 1, 2019, providers and members with questions about the Member Open Choice Period can contact the MCOs at:

**Iowa Total Care:** 1-833-404-1061.  
**Amerigroup Iowa:** 1-800-454-3730  
**United Healthcare:** 1-800-650-3462

If you have questions, please contact the IME Provider Services Unit at 1-800-338-7909, Monday- Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or by email at imeproviderservices@dhs.state.ia.us.
CELEBRATING THE BEST OF THE BEST
Celebrating Landmark Anniversaries in the 2018 Calendar Year

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Link Associated longevity celebrations over the past two weeks. Some of our award winners were not able to attend, but here are the photos of those who were able to gather and celebrate their success and all that they have brought to Link.

35 Years
Peggy Marriott

30 Years
Jay Bruns

20 Years
Rob Shelley, Tabetha Trowbridge, Barb Hitsman, Lorie Webb, Heidi Wedeking-Lux, Linda Knapp, Angela Pierce

15 Years
Tonya Wilson, Lisa Green

10 Years
Kay Pederson, Jessica White

5 Years
Andrea Price, Trish Robinson, Teresa Beuter, Jim Plorins, Michele Woods, Kelsey Wells

3 Years
Rocio Ramirez, Elissa Robinson, Sarah Mapes, Alina Chapman James Ramsey, Deb Berry, Nicole Cook, Salamo Ahmed, Faustin Alobo, Peterson Mwangi
Does it spark joy? If not, we will take all your stuff!

Annual Leisure Garage Sale!

Drop off your donated goods to the Leisure Department any time between now and May 1st!

Garage sale scheduled for May 2nd & 3rd
More info to come!

Please NO TV’s, mattresses, large heavy items (unless approved), no dirty clothes, soiled items, or undergarments. Thank you :)

NEW LINK ASSOCIATES LEISURE-SERVICE PROGRAM

SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED FLAG FOOTBALL STARTING AUGUST 2019

LOOKING FOR COACHES, ATHLETES, & UNIFIED PARTNERS

If Interested Contact:
Adria Smith - Leisure Manager
515-262-8888 Ext. 207 or asmith@linkassociates.org

LOL SQUAD PRESENTS

2019 BASKETBALL CONTEST

Winner gets a $25 Cash Prize
$1.00 Entry Fee

WHEN: MARCH 11TH - 13TH

TIME: ANYTIME DURING DAY

HOW: COME TO LEISURE & SHOOT AS MANY BASKETS AS YOU CAN IN 30 SECONDS!

Top 8 finalists move on to final round on Friday, March 15th to compete for the cash prize!! You will be notified on March 14th if you will be going to the final round.
Wells Fargo Donates $5,000 to Link Associates

Wells Fargo has donated $5,000 to Link to assist with providing basic needs within the Day Habilitation program. Donated funds will improve the changing room on the first floor and purchase battery chargers and slings for the mechanical lifts.

A Big Thank You to Wells Fargo for caring about persons who have an intellectual disability and supporting Link!

Facebook
I know I am old and out of style - but I am giving Facebook my all. Please check out Link Associates Facebook Page. Here is the address https://www.facebook.com/linkassociates/

We will add a lot of information that will help keep you up to date. Check out the site and see some of the photos and posts that are out there - also please feel free to “LIKE” us and share the job postings items on your site.
An Anniversary to Celebrate-Tom Burks

Tom recently celebrated his 15th anniversary as an employee of O’Donnell ACE Hardware in Des Moines and has no plans on retiring anytime soon because, “I like working here.”

At the employee Christmas dinner party, Tom was recognized for his work anniversary. He received several gifts: a model truck, a nice sweatshirt and financial bonus. After the dinner, Tom and his co-

workers went bowling together at Air Lanes Bowling Center. A long-time coworker says of Tom, “he’s quite the guy, he’s just one of the family.”

Fellow ACE employees have said about Tom: “he is the first person to ask someone if they need help” he really knows his way around the store and enjoys helping customers find what they are looking for on the sales floor. Tom is described as being curious to know more about the less common tools and products in the store. He takes the initiative to learn more than is asked of him in order to better serve the customers. His coworkers have many positive things to say about Tom but everyone agrees “he’s a good guy to work with” and that “he cares about the customers 100%”.

Tom’s mom, Marjorie Surface, states she is “truly grateful to O’Donnell Ace Hardware for employing Tom all these years. Tom is very proud of himself and He really enjoys his job.” Marjorie has also expressed gratitude for Link’s job coach assistance.

Here’s to continuing years of very successful employment for Tom Burks!!
WHAT IS LEISURE SERVICES?

Leisure is a comprehensive, year-round, community-based adult leisure program. These programs and services are based on the philosophy that constructive use of leisure time promotes healthy human development. Experiences are strengthened by our use of community resources and our promotion of integrated activities. The program employs Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists to design, implement, and supervise program options for participants as well as a corps of volunteers to assist participants in programs/activities.

"Providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to achieve an independent and healthy leisure lifestyle"
Leisure Services currently reaches 774 participants per month!

NEW PROGRAMS!

Leisure Services is expanding! There are more programs than ever! For the first time ever, Link Leisure started Special Olympic Snowshoeing and traveled to Dubuque to compete in Winter Games!

Our Club Travel program is going the distance, as we are offering day trips along with weekend trips and more! We are currently going to Branson, MO in April and more exciting longer distance trips are in the works!

Starting summer 2019, Leisure will be offering Special Olympic Flag Football. This new program will bring in new athletes, unified partners, and coaches!

Grants!

The following donated money towards the Leisure program, to offer many activities at a low cost/no cost option for our participants! Thank you!

* Rotary AM Foundation
* Prairie Meadows
* Special Olympics of Iowa
* Polk Country Betterment

Leisure Staff:

Adria Smith, CTRS - Leisure Manager Volunteer Coordinator
Katie Stephany, CTRS - Leisure Specialist
Barb Penning, CTRS - Leisure Specialist
Jillian Black - Leisure Specialist
Leisure has had 341 volunteers over the past year with 4,376 total hours!

FUNDING NEEDED:

Leisure is always looking for funding sources to assist in continuing our Leisure programming. Any donations would help ensure Leisure programs. There are options for giving such as funding a specific Leisure activity, a continuous or a one-time donation.

Leisure benefits the lives of so many individuals through multiple programs including:

- New Programs & Special Events
- River City Spinners
- Club Travel
- Community Art Connection
- Fun & Fitness
- Special Olympics Athletics

These programs promote health and well-being through socialization and physical activity. Without these programs, many of our clients would not have any leisure or social opportunities.

Thank you for your continued support of our programs!

Volunteer Opportunities are always available!

Types of volunteer opportunities are:
- *Facility Care & Repair
- *Special Event Support
- *Special Olympics Coach
- *Sports & Recreation Volunteers

If interested or want more info contact:

Adria Smith, CTRS
Leisure Manager & Volunteer Coordinator
asmith@inkasociates or 515-369-8888 Ext. 507
Like this Link
And help us find you the best co-workers

https://biteable.com/watch/embed/link-associates-1977818/14d538575216a7c4ec1d0bea6ba16c953acdf5c3?fbclid=IwAR2LgNwzTUGQ8dhZNv2C7ZORRyyekQ0cMA8Sg9yRjbrNdkZHiYXxplHRN9A.

Hey if I can get it onto my facebook page - anyone can!!

there are people in the world
who invest themselves
in the lives of others
if you are that kind of person
come and join us
working together, supporting people with intellectual disabilities

Thanks to David Spencer, Training Facilitator for creating this recruitment clip.
Two easy ways to support Link Associates!

Link is partnered with Goodshop AND AmazonSmile, both of which will donate a percentage of your online shopping to Link Associates! Check out both below and consider designating Link Associates as your charity!

Goodshop gives you the best coupons for thousands of stores like Target, Apple, Amazon, Petco and more AND a percentage of what you spend on virtually every purchase is donated to Link!

Use Goodsearch for your web searches and raise money for Link Associates! Get started at: [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com/)
MISSION ~ VISION ~ VALUES

MISSION
PROVIDING PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES OPPORTUNITIES TO ACHIEVE THEIR PERSONAL GOALS

VISION
LINK ASSOCIATES WILL BE THE RECOGNIZED LEADER IN PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICES TO PERSONS WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES

VALUES
DIGNITY AND RESPECT-QUALITY SERVICES-CARING ENVIRONMENTS PERSONAL CHOICE-LONG TERM COMMITMENT