



IOWA

In the first half of 2023, Iowa had 64 state hospital beds for adults with SMI. This puts Iowa at 2.0 available beds per 100,000 population.

Forensic Beds

No state hospital beds are specifically designated for forensic patients in Iowa. State officials told us that the hospitals do have forensic patients, however the number of forensic patients in state hospitals is not currently tracked.

When most or all of a state's beds are used for patients who are involved with the criminal legal system, it leaves people with severe mental illness who have no criminal behavior with few options for treatment. The shortage of civil beds in particular means civil patients who rely on state hospitals for care, such as those who have severe mental illness and complex medical needs, may have few options for treatment. Iowa should track the percentage of beds that are occupied by forensic patients to ensure they are accurately able to measure community need for state hospital beds.

Iowa's rank among the states
#51 in beds per 100,000 population
among U.S. states and D.C.

Unknown percentage of beds
occupied by forensic patients

Iowa's State Hospital System:

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services operates two state hospitals, which are called mental health institutes or MHIs:

[Independence Mental Health Institute](#) (Independence, IA) has 40 beds for adults and 16 beds for children. The hospital had a 91% occupancy rate in 2022 and an average length of stay of 6.6 months (157 days).

[Cherokee Mental Health Institute](#) (Cherokee, IA) has 24 beds for adults and 12 beds for children. The hospital had a 97% occupancy rate in 2022 and an average length of stay of 1.9 months (56 days).

Hospital occupancy rates greater than 85% are indicative of bed shortages. Iowa state hospitals have occupancy rates of 91% and 97%, suggesting the current number of state hospital beds in Iowa is insufficient for addressing community needs.