



2026 LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY UPDATES

Behavioral Health Legislative Updates from the Indiana Statehouse

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January 16, 2026


IRACS Highlighted in State of the Judiciary Address

**Chief Justice Rush Recognizes IRACS During State of the Judiciary |
January 14, 2026**

"As we navigate our way southeast to the Ohio River, we see that same spirit of partnership in Dearborn County. The justice team there also focuses on community safety. And for them, that means having people with lived experience as part of the solution. They accomplish that through a program called IRACS, Integrated Reentry and Correctional Support. It puts mental health and peer recovery specialists in the county jails. Prosecutor Lynn Deddens calls the program "a game changer." She says, "people need someone to help guide them out of the system, otherwise it is a revolving door."

Judge Aaron Negangard agrees. He's a former public defender, prosecutor, and defense attorney, and he says the justice system needs as many tools as possible to handle each case on its own merits. He has a practical message for us, "People are going to get out of jail. We want them to come out better." He is so right.

Forty-three-year-old Aaron Spaulding is running Dearborn County's IRACS. He has been through that revolving door since he was 13 years old, including six years in prison. He doesn't want to see others take that same path. Now, ten years into recovery, he's leading Dearborn County's award-winning six- person IRACS staff. Working in the jail, he's connecting with inmates to help them get services and develop a plan, so when they do leave jail they don't go back to the same lifestyle. He says, "Now I am empowered to be part of the change instead of part of the destruction." Aaron knows the public is skeptical, so he too keeps track of county data. Since 2022, there have been 1,600 jail participants, and 80% of them have not reoffended."



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Chief Justice Rush
(2026 State of the Judiciary)

MHA
Mental Health America
of Indiana

**Integrated Reentry and
Correctional Support**

2026 Indiana General Assembly

Priority Bills:

SB 222: Family and Social Services Administration Matters

SB 222 targets administrative improvements within the Family and Social Services Administration. The bill requires performance standards for providers and various services. Specifically, it defines a “Certified peer” and gives DMHA the authority to implement the certification of CCBHCs, RCOs, Recovery Residences and Certified peers. The proposal emphasizes efficiency and aims to formalize crisis specialists as first responders. The committee approved the bill with a 12-0 vote.

SB 262: INSPECT Program

Sen. Michael Crider, R-Greenfield, introduced SB 262, which seeks to enhance the INSPECT program by improving confidentiality and information exchange in prescription monitoring. The proposal aims to aid medical providers by providing more detailed information on controlled substances. The committee unanimously passed the amended bill with an 11-0 vote.

Other bills of interest heard this week:

HB 1432: Death Sentence and Intellectual Disabilities

Rep. Garrett Bascom, R-Lawrenceburg, outlined HB 1432, which aims to ensure individuals with intellectual disabilities are identified early in death penalty cases. The bill, amended by consent, seeks to fill procedural gaps to prevent those with such disabilities from being overlooked in expedited processes. It was met with support, passing unanimously with a 13-0 vote.

SB 282: Compounding Drugs and Medical Spas

SB 282, also presented by Sen. Charbonneau, addresses safety standards in the production of compounded drugs and medical spas. The bill suggests fines for non-compliance and stipulates standards for drug compounding materials. Discussion included concerns over the impact on safety and supply chains, with some expressing fears about the potential reduction in patient access. Several stakeholders, including pharmacist organizations and citizen representatives, voiced differing opinions on the proposal's implications. Due to the complexity of the discussions, the bill was held for further review.

SB 157: Prescription Drug Disclosures

Sponsored by Sen. Mike Bohacek, the committee approved an amendment which requires health plans to reveal the national average drug acquisition cost for generic drugs. The bill, aimed at increasing transparency in the pharmaceutical industry, received unanimous support with a 9-0 vote.

SB 285: Housing Matters

Sen. Cyndi Carrasco, R-Indianapolis, presented SB 285, designed to address homelessness statewide. The bill mandates the relocation of encampments from public property within 24 hours and provides a framework for interventions, including connections to healthcare, housing, and work opportunities. Carrasco stressed that the bill aims to reclaim public spaces and support individuals experiencing homelessness without criminalizing their status.

The committee approved amendments to lengthen the relocation timeframe to 48 hours and exclude prosecuting attorneys as political subdivisions. The amended bill passed with an 8-2 vote.

HB 1230: Updates to Professional Licensing

Rep. Doug Miller, R-Elkhart, introduced HB 1230, which seeks to streamline professional licensing by updating language and board memberships. The bill includes adjustments to civil penalties while maintaining consumer compliance. The committee adopted an amendment unanimously and passed it, promoting operational efficiency in professional licensing practices.

HB 1384: Nonprofit Hospital Property Taxes

Rep. Ben Smaltz, R-Auburn, proposed HB 1384, addressing the issue of nonprofit hospitals holding land for investment purposes rather than direct care. The bill intends to refine the criteria for property tax exemptions, linking them more closely to actual use. The bill was deferred for additional review.

MHAI Priorities for the 2026 Session:

To stay informed about the bills MHAI is tracking and sign up for future Advocacy Alerts, please see below:

[Bill List](#)

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Join Us at Hoosier Idol 2026

We hope you'll join us for ***Hoosier Idol 2026***, an inspiring evening where talent meets purpose. The event takes place February 10, from 6–9 p.m. at the Indiana Roof Ballroom, and brings together community leaders and advocates for a shared commitment to behavioral health in Indiana.

Hoosier Idol is more than a night of incredible performances—it's a celebration of recovery, resilience, and the power of community. Your attendance helps elevate behavioral health awareness and supports efforts that make a real difference across our state.

Please see the flyer below for registration details—we encourage you to save your seat early for this unforgettable evening. ***For those interested in deepening their impact, sponsorship opportunities are available and help make this event and our mission possible.***

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75 YEARS OF
Mental Health America of Indiana

Hoosier Idol

February 10, 2026

6-9 PM

@ The Indiana Roof Ballroom



Scan the QR code or click the
MHAI logo to register.



For information on sponsorships please contact Chief Operating
Officer, Stephanie Anderson at sanderson@mhai.net

