**Statement from Democratic Nominee for Iowa Governor’s Race Fred Hubbell**

Throughout my career, I’ve worked to expand access to quality health care and support those who provide it. That includes my time on the board of Mercy Hospital, as Chair of Planned Parenthood, and while helping Broadlawns Hospital expand their mental health services.

The decision to privatize Medicaid has been a disaster. More than 40,000 individuals have been denied care or experienced a reduction of services, and it’s shamelessly clear that managed care is costing the state millions of dollars. Managed care has forced more than a dozen businesses to close their doors. Complaints against the MCO’s are up more than 150 percent according to the state Ombudsman. Medical providers continue to struggle with delayed and denied payments, and the complex bureaucracy has made it more difficult to provide routine care.

That’s why on Day One of my administration, I am committed to reversing the failed experiment. As governor, I will take steps to immediately prioritize the health care of Iowans and support the good work being done by providers across the state.

Medicaid should not be a one size fits all program. This is most evident with our state’s long-term services and supports (LTSS) population. We should carve out the LTSS population with minimal disruption and place those individuals back into care that reflects their unique needs. For those who receive home and community-based services (HCBS), the state should truly prioritize the waivers that help to keep them in their home and out of costly institutional settings.

Lawmakers must work together to address the chronic underfunding of Medicaid and implement cost strategies that don’t put a target on the state’s most vulnerable populations. The state doesn’t need to choose between compassion for our fellow Iowans and addressing conditions before they become chronic or require emergency treatment; both are possible and can be cost effective.

Privatized Medicaid has exacerbated Iowa’s opioid abuse problem. Treatment providers report lengthy delays in care as they seek authorization for Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) services, only to receive authorization for 7-10 days of treatment when their requests are finally approved. Federal Medicare by contrast, approves MAT services for a period of 12 months.

I’ve spent more than a full year listening to law enforcement, community providers, consumers of mental health care, and their families. Mental health impacts every community in this state and I’m committed to addressing the crisis. It starts with the mental health plan our campaign proposed last December: investing in community-based treatment, immediately adding 50 – 75 acute care beds, establishing a youth mental health system, and investing in diversion and substance abuse programs.

I’m running for governor to put a balanced budget behind the right priorities, including investments in health care and mental health treatment. I have a proven record in the public and private sectors and know how to get our state back on track. Iowa deserves a government as good and decent as its people. It’s time to deliver on that promise together.