

Iowa | Kelly Garcia, MPA

Director

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services

Praised for transformative leadership, Kelly Kennedy Garcia serves as the Director of the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Governor Kim Reynolds appointed Garcia to oversee the state's health and social services agency in November 2019. She was unanimously confirmed by the Iowa Senate on February 26, 2020. On June 30, 2020, it was announced that Garcia would take on the role of interim Director at the Iowa Department of Public Health effective August 1, 2020.



Before moving to the Hawkeye State, Kelly served in a series of executive positions at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Most recently, Garcia was a deputy executive commissioner at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. In that role, Garcia directed 40 client service programs, managing more than 700 employees and a \$1.4 billion budget. Garcia was the architect behind the state's successful Medicaid 1115 women's health waiver application, which established a landmark federal partnership with the state's Healthy Texas Women program.

Garcia also served as the second in command for HHSC's Office of Program and Services, a division that oversaw Medicaid, eligibility operations, behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disability services, women's health, veterans' health, and aging services. She managed all policies and processes for the division, with a staff of 35,000 and an annual budget of \$38 billion.

Garcia previously directed the Office of Transformation, Policy, and Performance, where she played a leading role in the consolidation of the Texas HHS System. She also headed HHSC's government relations division, where she successfully shepherded the confirmation of the HHS executive commissioner.

Throughout her career, Garcia led improvements in organizational structure, program management, and policy development to large health care systems. She also brings to the role a commitment to building successful teams that will help Iowa families succeed.

Garcia is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin and received her MPA at The Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. She was a member of the Governor's Executive Development Program sponsored by the LBJ School of Public Affairs. She is married to attorney Dan Garcia, and they have two children.