

Iowa does not have any compassionate release laws allowing for early release of incarcerated individuals due to serious or terminal medical conditions or advanced age.¹

- The Iowa Board of Parole specifically addresses the question of Medical Parole on its web page:

Question: “Does the Board consider offenders for a ‘hardship’ or ‘medical parole’?”

Answer: “The Board of Parole does not grant paroles due to medical reasons or for family hardship cases.”²

- The Board rules do not include advanced age, disability, serious medical conditions, or terminal illnesses in its list of factors that it must consider when making parole decisions.³ However, the rules **do** say the Board will consider other factors that are “deemed relevant” to parole decisions.⁴
 - In 2016, the Parole Board chair commented that an individual’s health **may** be a factor when considering “regular” parole: “The Board does not grant paroles due to medical reasons or for family hardship cases. However, if a parolee is eligible for parole, an offender’s health or medical condition may be taken into account as a ‘factor deemed relevant’ when considering release at a review hearing.”⁵

NOTES

* *Id.* means see prior note.

¹ Note that despite the lack of a compassionate release law, in 2013 the Iowa Parole Board released Kristina Fetters, an incarcerated woman with inoperable stage 4 breast cancer. The extensive state and national press coverage referred to her release as “compassionate release,” but the Board stated it was simply parole.

² Iowa Board of Parole, FAQs [Frequently Asked Questions], <https://bop.iowa.gov/faqs>.

³ Iowa Admin. Code r. 205-8.10 (1) (2019), available through the Iowa Legislature, <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/iac/agency/205.pdf>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Robina Institute of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice/University of Minnesota, Profiles in Parole Release and Revocation: Examining the Legal Framework in the United States – Iowa (2016), 9, quoting correspondence on Aug. 4, 2016, with John F. Hodges, chair of the Iowa Board of Parole, <https://robainstitute.umn.edu/publications/profiles-parole-release-and-revocation-iowa>.