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

  o 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.


⁴ Id.