

*NEWS RELEASE*

*For Immediate Release*

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**IMCC ASSAULT WAS PREVENTABLE, CAUSED BY DANGEROUSLY LOW STAFFING LEVELS**

DES MOINES – AFSCME Council 61 President Danny Homan issued the following statement after compiling the facts surrounding the May 29, 2019 assault on a staff member at the Iowa Medical and Classification Center (IMCC) in Coralville:

“After reviewing the details of the assault that took place on May 29, 2019 at IMCC, it is clear that this incident was not only preventable, but also indicative of a dangerous trend of prioritizing inmate independence over staff safety. The inmate who attacked a support staff member was previously charged with ‘assault with intent to commit sexual abuse – bodily injury’ at the Newton Correctional Facility, where he was previously held prior to being moved to IMCC. Given this history of violent sexual behavior, why was this inmate allowed to walk freely into the office of this employee and request a piece of paper, only to hold her up against a wall with his hand over her mouth while she fought him off? To make matters worse, this same inmate was discovered wandering around the same area the day before, undoubtedly planning his attack, and was simply asked to leave. When the inmate heard calls for assistance during the assault, he took off running and, due to dangerously low staffing levels, was stopped by counselors, rather than correctional officers. He was then placed in the mental health unit, rather than administrative segregation.

“The Warden, Jim McKinney, has also decided to implement a dangerous policy of forcing nurses to deliver medications on a unit with one correctional officer present, rather than behind a window, as other correctional facilities do. Nurses have expressed their fear of going on units with a cart full of medications and only one officer to intervene in an attack, but the Warden has refused to prioritize their safety.

“Between dangerously low staffing levels and a prioritization of inmate privileges over staff safety, employees within IMCC report morale being at an all-time low.”

*The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Council 61 represents 40,000 public employees in Iowa including law enforcement and correctional officers, firefighters, mental health workers, professional school staff, emergency responders, and many other workers. AFSCME Council 61 also represents home health care and child care providers across the state and private sector workers at Prairie Meadows, Palmer College of Chiropractic, Des Moines University, and ABM (Marshalltown).*

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