

*PRESS RELEASE*

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**ASSAULT AT INDEPENDENCE MHI LANDS LPN IN HOSPITAL, STAFF FEAR FURTHER ATTACKS**

DES MOINES – AFSCME Council 61 President Danny Homan issued the following statement regarding the brutal assault of an LPN (licensed practical nurse) at the Independence Mental Health Institute:

“On Wednesday, October 24th, an LPN was severely injured during a Code Green incident at the Independence MHI. She sustained a severe concussion after being punched in the head, her knee is still too swollen to tell if any permanent damage was done, and her rotator cuff in her shoulder is believed to be torn. It took twelve people to intervene and control the individual for whom the code green was called.

“Staff are terrified that a riot is near and that they have no adequate training or tools to protect themselves. A ‘turtle shield’ was purchased for protection, but no training on its use has been provided. One staff member shared with me that, ‘I have a terrible feeling in my gut that someone up here is going to be seriously disabled or killed.’

“These workers put their lives on the line to care for some of Iowa’s most vulnerable patients, and all they are asking for in return is some sense of safety on the job. Is that really too much to ask? I hope that the Department of Human Services, the legislative Republicans setting their budget, and the Governor cutting their funding will heed the workers’ warnings and provide a safe environment for all.”

*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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