

CONTACTS:

KATY OTTO (JUVENILE LAW CENTER)
OFFICE: 215-625-0551 ext. 128 EMAIL: kotto@jlc.org
MOLLY COLLINS (ACLU OF WISCONSIN)
EMAIL: mcollins@aclu-wi.org

**Court-Ordered Monitor Files Report
on Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Juvenile Facilities**

While the report details some progress, advocates remain concerned about use of solitary, inadequate staffing, and increase in strip searches

Milwaukee, WI (April 17, 2019) – The report of the court-ordered monitor at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake was filed today, in accordance with the settlement agreement from the 2017 lawsuit brought on behalf of the youth in those facilities by Juvenile Law Center, ACLU of Wisconsin and Quarles & Brady. While this report detailed some progress, it also highlighted areas of concern.

“The report filed today underscores the need to get youth out of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake and back to their home communities,” said Karyn Rotker, Senior Staff Attorney of ACLU of Wisconsin. “We recognize that progress is being made in keeping youth are in solitary for less time, but there appears to be continued, excessive use of solitary confinement – locking youth alone in their cells – under a variety of labels. Chronic inadequate staffing and the lack of programs and activities exacerbate the problem, and reinforce the urgency of getting youth out of these facilities and back to their communities.”

Advocates were pleased to see a decrease in the use of physical restraints highlighted in the findings, and the apparent recent decline in the use of pepper spray. “It’s good to see some progress, but we are concerned that LHS and CLS staff are backsliding in use of strip searches, which can be very traumatizing for youth – many of whom have been victims of sexual abuse and other trauma,” said Karen U. Lindell, Senior Attorney at Juvenile Law Center. “We also need better data collection to detail what is happening in the facilities.”

The challenges of transforming the culture at Lincoln Hills speak to the need to take a different approach as the state works to close to the troubled facility. Juvenile Law Center and ACLU of Wisconsin urge the new administration to work to transition youth out of these prisons, to maximize community options and less restrictive placements closer to the communities from which youth come, and to minimize the size of any new secure facilities that are built, as research shows that maintaining connections to community and family are vital to effective treatment and rehabilitation for youth.

Juvenile Law Center advocates for rights, dignity, equity and opportunity for youth in the foster care and justice systems. Founded in 1975, Juvenile Law Center is the first non-profit, public interest law firm for children in the country. We fight for youth through litigation, appellate advocacy and submission of amicus (friend-of-the-court) briefs, policy reform, public education, training, consulting, and strategic communications. Widely published and internationally recognized as leaders in the field, Juvenile Law Center has substantially shaped the development of law and policy on behalf of youth. We strive to ensure that laws, policies, and practices affecting youth advance racial and economic equity and are rooted in research, consistent with children's unique developmental characteristics, and reflective of international human rights values. For more information about Juvenile Law Center's work, visit www.JLC.org.

The ACLU of Wisconsin is a non-profit, non-partisan, private organization whose 24,000 members support its efforts to defend the civil rights and liberties of all Wisconsin residents. For more on the ACLU of Wisconsin, visit our website at www.aclu-wi.org, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter at @ACLUofWisconsin and @ACLUMadison.

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