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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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Governor Walker Calls on Legislature to Pass Bipartisan Reform for Wisconsin's Juvenile Corrections System in 2018

MADISON – Governor Scott Walker today urged the Wisconsin Legislature to pass long-term juvenile justice reform this year. The bipartisan plan, developed through extensive discussions with state and local officials, the judicial system, and stakeholders, significantly reforms juvenile corrections and treatment systems.

"We're dedicated to improving long-term outcomes for both juveniles and our staff working at these facilities," said Governor Walker. "Both Republicans and Democrats collaborated on this plan and agreed it offers the best way forward. Together we can move this through the legislature to improve juvenile corrections and treatment through transitioning to smaller, more regional corrections facilities and focusing on mental health and trauma-informed care."

The plan provides a long-term solution for Wisconsin's juvenile corrections and treatment systems by moving from a system of one large juvenile corrections facility to five smaller, regional facilities located across the state and expanding Wisconsin's internationally recognized juvenile treatment program for offenders with mental health challenges at the Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center (MJTC) in Madison.

Governor Walker also announced the Department of Administration will issue a Request for Services by January 22, 2018 to select an architecture-engineering firm to develop the concept design for five regional juvenile correctional facilities located across the state. Selection will occur in February 2018.

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) has made numerous reforms at Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake Schools (LHS/CLS), including:

- The Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) has hired a Juvenile Mental Health Director position to provide dedicated management-level coordination and oversight of mental health services for juveniles.

- The DOC has reassigned a Nurse Coordinator position to solely focus on Juvenile Corrections to provide dedicated coordination and oversight of health care services for juveniles.
- DOC has increased the on-site availability of advanced medical care from 8 hours per week to 40 hours per week.
- All medication at LHS/CLS is distributed by licensed medical staff.
- Expanded on-site and on-call Psychological Services Unit coverage at LHS/CLS.
- DOC has established a seven-week Youth Counselor Pre-Service Academy which is required of all newly-hired security staff. The Academy includes instruction in use-of-force training, professional communication, verbal de-escalation tactics, and documenting use-of-force incidents, as well as several modules tailored specifically to working with juveniles.
- All security staff are required to wear body cameras and record interactions with youth.
- Additional fixed cameras have been added to eliminate blind spots throughout the institution.
- Notification protocols were standardized, requiring notices to parents of youth injuries and notices to committing counties of youth injuries and serious incidents.
- All youth injuries, regardless of cause, are reviewed on a regular basis by DOC, DJC, and LHS/CLS leadership.
- \$556,000 and 3.25 positions in the 2017 – 2019 biennial budget to expand mental health services for female youth at CLS.
- \$1.4 million and 9.0 positions in the 2017 – 2019 biennial budget to provide permanent positions for nursing staff administering medication at LHS/CLS.
- Made changes to school and treatment schedules to maximize the amount of time youth spend out of their room engaged in productive activity.

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