

PRESS RELEASE

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FAMILIES SETTLE CLAIMS AGAINST STATE OF IDAHO FOR PERVASIVE ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AT SOUTHWEST IDAHO TREATMENT CENTER

Settlement includes \$1.2M payment, unlimited access to treatment center, corrective plans and reports

Boise, Idaho – After a lengthy lawsuit, six families have settled their federal court claims against the state of Idaho for abuse, neglect and maltreatment of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who resided at the Southwest Idaho Treatment Center. Approved by the federal court in Boise, the settlement includes a \$1.2 million payment and the state’s promises not to retaliate against the families, comply with all federal and state laws, and provide corrective plans to the families. It also allows DisAbility Rights Idaho unlimited access to the treatment center, records and investigative reports, and attendance at quarterly meetings.

“This culminates a long legal road for families who suffered such unbelievable abuse, injury and death of their loved ones,” said Shamus O’Meara, counsel for the families with the law firm of O’Meara Wagner in Minneapolis. “We are proud to be part of an exceptional multi-state team advocating for this successful outcome for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.”

Co-counsel Char Quade, Managing Partner at CK Quade Law, in Boise, stated, “This settlement speaks to the intolerance of mistreating individuals with developmental disabilities, requiring vital dialog with the disabilities community to ensure the proper operation and management of the state’s treatment center so that no further abuse or neglect will occur to our vulnerable citizens. No family should ever have to worry their loved one will be neglected, abused, or die when seeking services for them in the state of Idaho.”

The lawsuit followed DisAbility Rights’ 2018 investigative report, *No Safe Place to Call Home, A Report on the Cycle of Abuse, Neglect and Injury at the Southwest Idaho Treatment Center*, finding it “consistently failed to offer the treatment, services and protections that it is by law obligated to provide those in its care” resulting in “woefully inadequate response to acts of abuse and neglect, created a cycle of abuse, neglect, and injury, affecting every person at the facility from the moment they are admitted until their discharge or, in some cases, death.” The Idaho legislature’s 2019 report also found the state “lacks a coherent vision for services to individuals with intellectual disabilities who are in crisis,” with management “winging it” without an effective approach to solving problems.

For more information, please contact



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