



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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**MDHHS suspends license of Kalamazoo facility where youth died
after being wrongly restrained by staff**
*Department moves to forbid restraints of youth to protect children
and prevent future tragedies*

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has begun the legal process to revoke the license of Lakeside for Children in Kalamazoo after a thorough investigation of the death of a youth who was wrongly restrained by staff.

MDHHS has already terminated its contracts with Lakeside to care for youth in the state's foster care and juvenile justice systems. Following the tragic death at the facility, all 125 youth were removed and placed in other appropriate settings based on their individual needs.

A 16-year-old youth at Lakeside went into cardiac arrest on April 29 while being restrained by staff. He died May 1.

"MDHHS continues to mourn the loss of this young man's life, which came needlessly to an end at the hands of those meant to care for him" said JooYeun Chang, executive director of the MDHHS Children's Services Agency. "We are committed to protecting children and will not accept the completely unnecessary death of a youth who is deprived of the opportunity to grow up, complete his education, begin a career, and start a family. Not only is it critical that we hold the agency accountable – we must also improve our policies and practices so that a tragedy like this never happens again."

The Division of Child Welfare Licensing within MDHHS completed an investigation of Lakeside following the death and is recommending the department revoke the facility's license. The investigation found 10 licensing violations, including a failure to follow rules related to resident restraint and discipline. In the meantime, MDHHS announced that it is summarily suspending the license.

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“The Kalamazoo County Prosecutor’s Office thanks MDHHS and its licensing division for completing thorough investigations that will aid our office in determining appropriate charges in this tragic case,” said Kalamazoo County Prosecuting Attorney Jeffrey Getting.

To prevent future tragedies and improve the well-being of all children in child-caring institutions, the department will change its policies to forbid the use of physical restraints in all its licensed and contracted facilities. The department will provide technical assistance to all licensed providers on alternatives to restraints prior to the policy taking effect.

MDHHS has also asked three national organizations with expertise in child welfare to conduct an independent assessment of the department’s licensing and contract oversight functions. The assessment is led by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in partnership with Casey Family Programs and the Building Bridges Initiative. Initial recommendations are expected by the end of this month. The department will make these recommendations and its response to them public.

MDHHS investigators worked cooperatively with local police. The investigation included interviews of at least 10 staff and 14 residents, review of all facility incident reports drafted by staff involved, and the viewing of two video recordings of the incident that preceded the youth’s death. The facility was cooperative during the investigation.

Lakeside may appeal the recommendation of its license revocation to the Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules.

Lakeside, 3921 Oakland Drive, is a residential treatment facility for youth. MDHHS contracted with Lakeside for the treatment of youth who were placed through the abuse/neglect or juvenile justice foster care system or by their parents to receive behavioral health services.

Revocation of the license of a child caring institution is rare and occurs when there are serious licensing violations that make closure necessary to protect children.

An executive summary of the licensing investigation is attached.

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