

## Wolverine Secure Treatment Center (WSTC)

Wolverine Secure Treatment Center (WSTC), operated by Wolverine Human Services in Buena Vista Township, Saginaw County, Michigan, faced significant licensing violations that ultimately led to its license being revoked in 2021.<sup>1</sup> WSTC is owned and operated by a private company, Wolverine Human Services.

### Revoking Licensing

In 2021, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) initiated the process of shutting down Wolverine Secure Treatment Center following repeated reports of abuse and misconduct. By February 8, 2021, the facility's license was downgraded to second provisional status due to serious and escalating violations.

Incidents dating back to 2019<sup>2</sup> included:

- The suicide<sup>3</sup> of a 14-year-old girl in the facility.
- A relationship between a staff member and youth.
- Missed refills of youth medication.
- A staff member allowing youth to use a marijuana vape pen
- Staff misconduct, including rough handling of children.
- Failure to report incidents of abuse and misconduct.

Between March 2019 and March 2021, the state found<sup>4</sup> licensing violations in 23 of 63 inspections. Below is a brief timeline leading up to the revocation of WSTC's license:

#### January 2021<sup>5</sup>: Multiple Incidents

- A 15-year-old girl was tackled from behind and placed in an unsafe restraint, causing a black eye and other injuries. The staff failed to report the incident to the Children's Protective Services (CPS). Medical attention was delayed despite the girl's visible injuries. Staffers reported seeing broken blood vessels in the girl's eye and puffiness when she returned to her unit.
  - Moments after the first improper restraint, she was restrained again around her waist and neck. On the same day, another resident was similarly mistreated. The use of improper restraints caused the youth to strike their head, leading to swelling and pain. Medical care was delayed. A second youth was inappropriately restrained on the same day.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2021/03/31/michigan-staff-restrained-youth-inappropriately-license-revocation/7058886002/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mlive.com/news/saginaw-bay-city/2021/05/lawsuit-reveals-details-on-teens-death-at-wolverine-juvenile-facility-in-saginaw-county.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2021/03/31/michigan-staff-restrained-youth-inappropriately-license-revocation/7058886002/>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

- Following an argument with a staffer, a young girl hid under a bed. The staffer did not follow de-escalation practices and grabbed her by her legs, shirt, and waistband to drag her out from under the bed.
  - The interaction escalated, resulting in the staffer grabbing the girl's neck and pushing her head to the floor. Four days later, the girl had bruising on her forehead, shoulders, ribs, and forearms and an abrasion on her neck.
  - The staff failed to immediately inform the girl's mother or Children's Protective Services of the incident.
- Another child was improperly restrained from behind when she was punching out windows with her hand. The report on the incident inaccurately reported the restraint lasted two minutes instead of the actual five and a half minutes.
  - Other residents were observed cleaning up broken glass and blood on surveillance video, which was a violation of state regulations.

#### February 2021: Staff Member Elbows Resident in the Eye<sup>6</sup>

- A staff member elbowed a youth in the eye during another unauthorized restraint, causing bruising and swelling.
- The incident is not reported correctly, violating state guidelines.
- This staff member had 18 employee counseling forms, including four suspensions, in his record for absences, failure to distribute medications, failure to properly debrief and handcuffing a child to a bed.

#### March 2021: Michigan Moves to Revoke License<sup>7</sup>

- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) initiates license revocation proceedings due to multiple violations.
- A state investigation finds systemic training, safety, and abuse prevention failures.

#### April 2021: Facility Closure<sup>8</sup>

- Wolverine Secure Treatment Center permanently closes following MDHHS action.
- Youth are transferred to other facilities.

#### 2022-2023: Additional Allegations Surface<sup>9</sup>

- Former residents began speaking out about the physical and sexual abuse they endured at WSTC.
- Survivors allege that staff members engaged in misconduct, including sexual abuse, intimidation, and neglect.

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.lawsuit-information-center.com/wolverine-secure-treatment-center-sex-abuse-lawsuits.html>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid .

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

May 2024: Lawsuits Filed for Sexual Abuse Allegations<sup>10</sup>

- More than a dozen former residents filed lawsuits alleging they were sexually abused by staff while detained at WSTC.
- Plaintiffs claim Wolverine Human Services failed to protect them and ignored warning signs of abuse.
- The lawsuit describes staff preying on 13 boys and a girl in their rooms, in showers, and elsewhere at the center.

---

<sup>10</sup><https://www.cbsnews.com/detroit/news/lawsuit-alleges-sexual-abuse-of-teens-former-michigan-detention-center/>

