

Sen. Taylor: Jail's negligent healthcare contractor needs a dose of its own medicine

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(MADISON) – Milwaukee County Jail's healthcare contractor is being charged with falsifying the records of incarcerated people, including Terrill Thomas, the 38 year old who died of dehydration while in custody. Thomas went 7 days without water and lost 34 pounds before his death in April of 2016. The provider, Armor Correctional Health Services, was contracted by the Milwaukee County Board under a court order after County supervisors failed to fill the medical service positions on their own.

The criminal complaint alleges that Armor Correctional Health Services reported checking Thomas' pulse and blood pressure twice on April 21st, however, surveillance footage of his cell shows there was no physical contact made with him during that time. Thomas was found on April 24th, dead in his cell. Original orders to cut water from Thomas' cell were allowed to take place under the loose regulations of former Sheriff David Clarke.

Additional allegations have been leveled against Armor. These complaints are the latest in the company's problematic history, including a recent law-suit by New York's Attorney General claiming their neglect led to the death of 12 people, as well as an investigation into their involvement in several deaths in Florida.

In response to the allegations Senator Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) issued the following statement, "It's unbelievable that those facing incarceration can be deprived of their humanity by so many entities. If Armor Correctional Health

Services had done its job and checked in on the health of Mr. Thomas it's likely that he'd still be alive."

"It's enraging enough that David Clarke ran a prison complex where denying someone water for over a week was considered humane. In the meantime we have paid nearly \$16 million to this healthcare contractor with a track record of neglect, whose employees are free to walk around and not do anything while fabricating data."

"People do not stop being humans when they are sentenced or detained, yet their treatment on the part of this contractor says otherwise. It's dumbfounding to see our government fail on so many different levels. First Milwaukee County is unable to fill the prison's healthcare positions on their own, then they outsource to a company that abandons its patients altogether."