

WisDems: Blockbuster new reports show Walker's mismanagement of state facilities worse than we thought

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Walker Lied About Knowledge of Lincoln Hills Crisis, Winnebago Mental Health Institute Staff Shortages Worsen

Scott Walker's failure to oversee Wisconsin's state facilities has been well documented, but it might be even worse than we thought. A blockbuster new WSAW [investigation](#) shows that Walker hasn't been telling the truth about his knowledge and response to the Lincoln Hills crisis. According to the report, Walker likely knew about the problems at Lincoln Hills much sooner, and just days before the initial story broke, Walker cancelled an independent policy review and assessment of the facility.

From the [investigation](#):

*In the days leading up to and following Gov. Scott Walker telling the public in Dec. of 2015 he was learning about the gravity of the state's youth prison scandal for the first time, a retired national prison leader said fired former Corrections Secretary Ed Wall told him **Walker's staff ordered Wall to cancel his written request, obtained by 7 Investigates, for an independent Lincoln Hills' policy review and assessment.***

The report also notes that Walker was likely aware of the situation several years

earlier:

*In 2012, now retired Racine Circuit Court Judge Richard Krueel sent Walker a letter expressing shock over the treatment a juvenile offender received in Lincoln Hills...The Walker administration made the letter public in February of 2016, saying Walker never knew about the incident until much later. However, **Wall said a note at the top, showing "Alex I, Policy," shows the governor and his senior staff have known about Lincoln Hills problems since at least 2012.***

Unsurprisingly, Walker and his campaign are refusing to talk to WSAW about the new revelations—turning down multiple interview requests even when they were in Wausau.

It's not the only scandal plagued facility in the news these days. A new *Appleton Post-Crescent* [story](#) out yesterday showed that Winnebago Mental Health Institute's staff shortages are getting worse. The overworked and under supervised staff contributed to the facility's three federal inspection failures, which were first triggered by the death of a patient last year.

From the report:

*The department **reported 18 more vacancies than it did in July**, the last time USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin requested figures. The facility houses about 180 children and adults from all over the state who are in mental health crisis or court-ordered treatment. An April report found **heavy reliance on overtime caused staff to quit and increased risk of harm to patients**. Some employees reported working 16-hour shifts back to back.*

This is just more of the same from Walker's administration. He has shown no interest in adequately maintaining the state correctional and mental health facilities until they become a PR problem for him. Wisconsin deserves far better than this type of blatant, dangerous neglect.