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OPTIMAE INVESTIGATING FIRE AT WASHINGTON SITE HOME

JUNE 20, 2016 (DES MOINES, IA) – Optimae LifeServices is working with the state fire marshall and other emergency responders to determine the cause of a weekend fire in Washington that destroyed a site home for its customers.

The home, located at 116 W. Third St., housed four customers with mental and intellectual disabilities that are served by on-site staff. Two residents and a staff member were in the house at the time of the fire. Staff was able to assist one of the residents to safety but were unable to reach the other resident, who later died. The staff member was treated at the hospital for injuries and released.

“Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family of our customer who passed away,” said William Dodds, president of Optimae. “Words cannot express the loss we are feeling. We will do everything possible to support our affected customers and staff to help them through this tragic event.”

Optimae has launched an internal investigation into the fire.

A crisis team will be on-site to offer counseling and support for staff and customers. Customers living at the home have been placed in other housing, and Optimae will work with the Red Cross to ensure their belongings are replaced.

Emergency responders were called to the home at 12:30 a.m. on Sunday. Fire fighters from Washington, Ainsworth and Kalona battled the blaze. Other responders included the Washington Police Department, Washington County Sheriff’s Department, Washington County ambulance and Washington County Emergency Management.

“We cannot thank the emergency responders enough for their quick response and efforts to extinguish the fire and treat the victims,” Dodds said. “We will continue to work with them during their investigation and provide any information necessary to determine how this happened.”

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About Optimae LifeServices

Optimae LifeServices, Inc. provides healthcare and human services for individuals with disabilities and mental illness from 37 Southeastern and Central Iowa counties. For nearly three decades, we have equipped our customers with supports and services that encourage choice, empowerment and community integration. Our programs include community-based, behavioral health, home health and residential care services. We advocate for the rights and needs of more than 3,900 Iowans each year, providing the quality of care we would want for our own family.