

# The Detroit News

## TOR SEX, LAWSUIT ALLEGES

**Robert Snell** The Detroit News

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Three Macomb County jail inmates sued a staff doctor Monday in federal court, alleging they were sexually assaulted during examinations and that he traded candy and cigarettes for sexual favors.

The lawsuit against the Macomb County jail, Steven Cogswell, and his employer, Correct Care Solutions, alleges the women were subjected to sexual abuse, sexual assault, battery, exploitation, discrimination and degrading treatment in 2018.

"Cogswell manipulated and sexually assaulted female Macomb County Jail inmates by using his position of power and by holding tobacco products, candy, prescription medication, double mattresses, and other commodities over their heads," the lawsuit reads.

The lawsuit was filed three months after Cogswell, 54, of Waterford Township, was convicted of second-degree criminal sexual conduct and acquitted of four other charges involving county prisoners. Cogswell is serving a one-year sentence at the St. Clair County jail.

In the civil lawsuit Monday, Cogswell also was accused of using his cellphone to take photographs of the inmates and alleges jail and Correct Care Solutions employees knew about the doctor's conduct.

The lawsuit seeks an unspecified amount of damages.

"Doctor Steven Cogswell's heinous sexual misconduct involving vulnerable, incarcerated young women constitutes an egregious abuse of power," said lawyer Jon Marko, who is representing the women. "Who knows how many other women were abused and kept silent?"

A Macomb County spokesman could not be reached for comment immediately Monday and a spokeswoman for Cogswell's employer declined comment. Cogswell's criminal defense attorney did not respond to a request for comment.

The three women were imprisoned at Macomb County Jail in August and September 2018 and received medical treatment by Cogswell, according to the lawsuit.

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One inmate, a 33-year-old Wayne County resident with convictions for larceny, home invasion and financial crimes, was treated by Cogswell in September 2018.

While on the examining table, Cogswell "used his hands to touch and/or stimulate her pelvic and genital areas," Marko wrote in the lawsuit.

Then, he kissed her and gave her a pill, the lawsuit alleges.

"Cogswell told (her) not to tell anyone, adding that he could lose his job if she did," Marko wrote.

A 29-year-old inmate convicted of a drug crime says Cogswell penetrated her with his fingers during multiple visits.

During one visit, Cogswell "brought her M&M's and said he 'wanted something in return,'" according to the lawsuit. Then, "Cogswell raped (her) again by penetrating her vagina with his fingers while she touched his penis."

Afterward, "Cogswell then took a photo of plaintiff with his cellphone, with her shirt lifted and her pants partially down," the lawsuit continues.

A 30-year-old inmate convicted of manslaughter alleges Cogswell assaulted her during a September 2018 examination.

During the exam, Cogswell placed a stethoscope on her nipples and breasts, according to the lawsuit.

"Cogswell then asked (her) to stand up," Marko wrote in the lawsuit. "He touched her stomach and moved his hands into her pants and touched her vagina, sexually assaulting her."

[rsnell@detroitnews.com](mailto:rsnell@detroitnews.com)

Twitter: [@robertsnellnews](https://twitter.com/robertsnellnews)