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Review of the Riverview Psychiatric Center

Riverview Psychiatric Center (RPC) is one of Maine's two state psychiatric hospitals and the only one with a forensic unit. RPC is the responsibility of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

This topic came to the attention of the Government Oversight Committee (GOC) in August 2014 as a formal review request submitted by current and former RPC employees and sponsored by the GOC Co-Chairs. Requestors reported incidents at RPC that present risk of harm to clients and staff including mistreatment of clients, and inadequate response to reported incidents due to alleged unprofessional behavior, poor supervisory and working relationships, and lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.

RPC reports publicly to various external entities with oversight responsibilities for the hospital. RPC's incident reporting process is the source of data for some of the metrics reported and one of the ways staff members report concerns and observed incidents. A Court Master appointed in accordance with the Augusta Mental Health Institute Consent Decree also oversees RPC.

DHHS' Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services (DLRS) inspects RPC for compliance with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) licensing requirements. DLRS also investigates specific complaints. In 2013, two CMS inspections identified violations at RPC. As a result, CMS decertified the hospital and terminated federal funding until RPC corrects those violations.

At its September 24, 2014, meeting the GOC approved the following scope questions for this review:

1. To what extent are reporting avenues (staff and patients) effective in ensuring timely and appropriate responses to incidents and concerns affecting patient treatment and the working environment?
2. To what extent are reports of incidents and professional concerns addressed appropriately by responsible parties?
3. To what extent are data and performance metrics reported by RPC to oversight entities accurate and reliable?
4. Are there other areas of concern OPEGA should review that are unaddressed by or further identified as a result of work by oversight and regulatory bodies currently in progress?

OPEGA expects to complete this review in the second quarter of 2015.