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**STATE OF MAINE**  
**ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE**  
**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**TO:** Senator Craig V. Hickman, Senate Chair  
Representative Jessica L. Fay, House Chair  
Government Oversight Committee

**FROM:** Senator Joseph Baldacci, Senate Chair *JB (ARB)*  
Representative Michele Meyer, House Chair *MM (ARB)*  
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

**DATE:** September 11, 2023

**RE:** Employee safety issues at Riverview and Dorothea Dix

We are responding to your request of August 18<sup>th</sup> for the Health and Human Services Committee to consider issues related to the safety of employees at Riverview Psychiatric Center and Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center, including the adequacy of staffing levels and institutional response to acts of violence experienced by employees.

Our Committee has two meetings scheduled in October (the 4<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>). We intend to request that the Department of Health and Human Services gives us an update on staffing and safety measures at RPC and DDPC at one of these meetings. Although we are not likely to have an update for the Government Oversight Committee for your October meeting, we want to assure you that our committee takes the welfare of our state employees seriously. We will provide the agenda to your Committee staff so that your members could choose to attend or listen to those presentations.

Our committee has briefings from the two state psychiatric hospitals at least once a year. Superintendents of both hospitals participate in committee orientation with lengthy presentations. Additionally, several members of the committee have toured Riverview. (Issues of patient privacy and sensitivity require tours by small groups of legislators rather than the entire committee at one time; the Covid-19 pandemic also made visits by legislators more challenging.) The committee also hears multiple bills related to behavioral health, hospitals and staffing challenges giving us multiple opportunities to hear directly from staff and union representatives regarding their work place challenges.

Both hospitals have seen significant improvement in working conditions as well as patient care over the last decade. This is particularly the case for Riverview as it has gone through a rigorous process to regain certification from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as well as

accreditation by national organizations. The Task Force to Study the Process for Bringing Criminal Cases in Situations of Violence Against Health Care Workers that was convened in the 2022 legislative interim requested data from the department regarding employee injuries as a result of patient behavior and learned that the incidence has been consistently improving.<sup>1</sup> (We will request updated data from the department as part of our discussions in October.) Additionally, the department requested, and the Legislature approved in budget bills, security and access control system replacements for Riverview and video surveillance and security systems at Dorothea Dix, as well as additional case management and social work staff for Dorothea Dix.

Improving employee safety and patient care is a continuous process and, as the committee of jurisdiction, it is a priority for our Committee. Thank you for your letter and continued interest in the welfare of state hospital employees.

cc: Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services  
Molly Bogart, Director of Government Relations, DHHS

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<sup>1</sup> <https://legislature.maine.gov/doc/8746>

## Caswell, Lynne

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**From:** Bogart, Molly <Molly.Bogart@maine.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 2, 2022 10:25 AM  
**To:** Broome, Anna; Caswell, Lynne  
**Subject:** LD 629 Request of RPC/DDPC

**This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.**

Hi Anna and Lynne,

Below is a count of injuries as a result of patient behavior recorded through workers comp at each hospital. The data are by month over the last 3 yrs. There is, of course, much nuance in these numbers and this work which we would be glad to discuss. As I said to Sen. Claxton last week, RPC and DDPC are willing, if not eager, to contribute to these conversations. Let me know if we can be of any further assistance.

Riverview Psychiatric Center			
Month	2020	2021	2022
January	5	2	2
February	0	4	1
March	5	3	0
April	0	6	3
May	1	5	0
June	1	3	0
July	3	4	2
August	2	4	N/A
September	2	1	N/A
October	3	2	N/A
November	2	1	N/A
December	4	1	N/A
TOTAL	28	36	8

Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center			
Month	2020	2021	2022
January	0	0	0
February	1	0	3
March	3	1	2
April	0	0	3
May	0	2	0
June	0	1	1
July	0	1	0
August	0	0	N/A
September	0	1	N/A
October	0	1	N/A
November	2	4	N/A
December	1	0	N/A
TOTAL	7	11	9

Take care,  
molly

Molly Bogart, Director of Government Relations  
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Pronouns: she/her



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