

Office of the Child Advocate Report to Oversight Commission on Children's Services

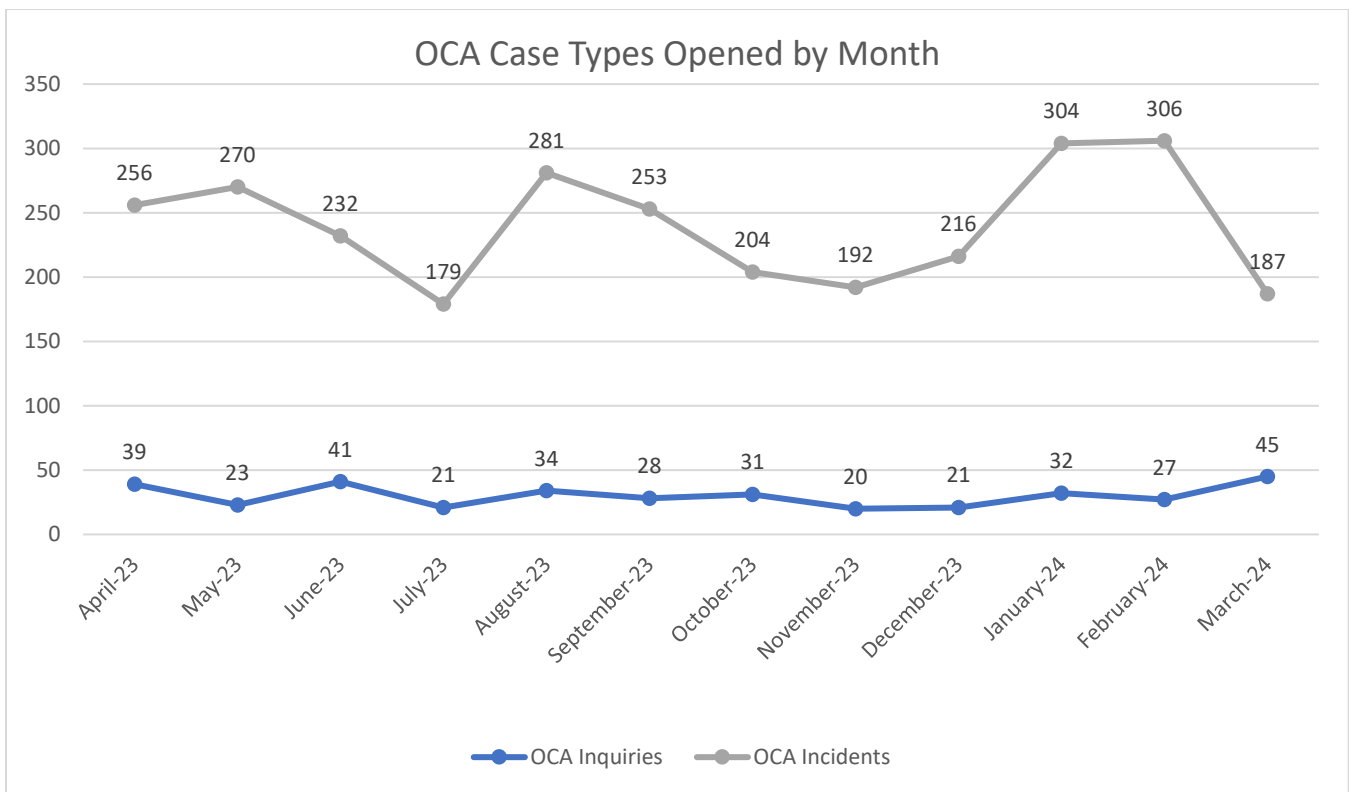
Child Advocate, Cassandra Sanchez

April 19, 2024

Total OCA Cases (Inquiries & Incidents)

Rolling 12 Month: 4/01/23 – 3/31/24

Month	OCA Inquiries	OCA Incidents
April-23	39	256
May-23	23	270
June-23	41	232
July-23	21	179
August-23	34	281
September-23	28	253
October-23	31	204
November-23	20	192
December-23	21	216
January-24	32	304
February-24	27	306
March-24	45	187
Total Inquiries:	362	2880
Total Cases:	3242	



OCA Case Explanation

- Inquiries to the OCA include phone calls, emails, and cases opened from in-person meetings with children, caregivers, providers, and stakeholders.
- Incidents include all critical incident reports from DCYF (serious injury to children, child fatalities, parent fatalities, media coverage of DCYF involvement, etc.) and incidents documented by residential programs and SYSC, including restraints and seclusion, and missing children.

Facility visits

- 3/18/24 – visit to SYSC to meet with a child
- 3/18/24 – visit to Webster House to meet with a child
- 3/19/24 – team visit to Hampstead Hospital
- 3/26/24 – visit to Nashua Children’s Home; check in with staff
- 3/27/24 – visit to SYSC, check in with staff and meet with a child
- 4/10/24 – virtual VPI Office Hours
- 4/11/24 – virtual visit with child placed in Virginia
- 4/12/24 – visit to SYSC to meet with a child
- 4/16/24 – Pine Haven general facility visit and tour
- 3/28, 4/5, 4/9, 4/11, 4/15, 4/17 – visits to Elliot Hospital to support a child ED boarding



OCA Outreach/ DCYF District Office visits

- 3/18/2024 – Lunch and Learn with NH Association of Special Education Administrators (virtual)
- 3/20/24 – Check in with Youth Villages (virtual)
- 3/26/24 – DCYF Field Service Leadership Meeting
- 3/26/24 – Presentation to Eastern Monadnock Provider Network

Conferences/Events Attended

- 3/21: CMWS: Mentoring LGBTQ+ Youth: An Urgent Need for Each of us to Act Pt. 1
- 3/26 – 3/27/24 – NAMI New Hampshire Annual Conference (virtual)
- 3/28/24 - NH Youth Voice Summit, Manchester
- 4/2/24 – Host Press Conference on anti-LGBTQ+ legislation (pictured above)**
- 4/5/24 – Wear Blue Day, Child Abuse Prevention Month, OCA team virtual meeting (pictured below)**
- 4/10/24 – OCA/NH Children’s Trust-hosted Legislative Breakfast, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Concord (pictured on following page)**
- 4/11 – 4/12/24 – DCYF Strategic Priorities Retreat, Concord NH
- 4/12 - Lives in the Balance Annual Summit on Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (virtual)

Upcoming Visits & Events

- 5/22/24 – Magnifying Voices Youth Art Contest
- 6/9 – 6/13 APSAC Colloquium, New Orleans



Other Work

- 3/19/24 Child Fatality Review Committee Meeting
- 3/25/24 - Balance of State Youth Subcommittee (virtual)
- 4/8/24 – Magnify Voices Planning Meeting (virtual)
- 4/17/24 - Quarterly Community Collaboration Call – Affirming Gender in the Juvenile Justice System

Other Work Continued

Ongoing: YDC Steering Committee

Ongoing: Commission to Study Community Impacts of the Secured Development Center & Subcommittee on Safety

Ongoing: Regular meetings with DCYF Human & Sex Trafficking Specialist

Ongoing: SYSC PREA meetings

Ongoing: Monthly meetings with DCYF leadership

Ongoing: Monthly meeting with Clinical Director at SYSC

Ongoing: DCYF Systems Review meetings

Ongoing: US Ombudsman Association (USOA), Children & Family Chapter meetings

New: Monthly meetings with management team at Hampstead Hospital

Renewed: Monthly meetings with BCBH leadership



Legislative Update

- **HB 1573** (*New Title*) making an appropriation to the department of health and human services to enhance oversight of children in residential placements. This bill, originally titled AN ACT relative to oversight of and criteria for residential placement of children, originally passed out of the policy committee 15-0 and passed the House on a voice vote on February 22, 2024. House Finance amended it to strip out all of the policy and simply left the statement of findings and \$1 million in unencumbered funds to DHHS, adding a Floor Amendment to at least require reporting on the use of those funds. It will be heard in Senate Judiciary on April 23.
- **SB 417** relative to out-of-home placements for children passed through the Senate (Judiciary & Finance) with some amendment, and a large fiscal note including 12 new positions. It will be heard in House C&FL on April 23.
- **SB 459**, originally an Act relative to the presumption of harm under the child protection act, contained a number of important amendments to the definitions in RSA 169-C, relating to abuse, neglect, serious impairment and the presumptions of harm, which are sunseting July 1, 2024. DHHS introduced a fiscal note containing 35 new positions, totally \$1.6million. The Senate amended the bill to become a study committee. It will be heard in House C&FL on April 23.
- **SB 572** relative to establishing a committee to study the sharing of confidential records among members of a multidisciplinary child protection team has passed both the Senate & House.

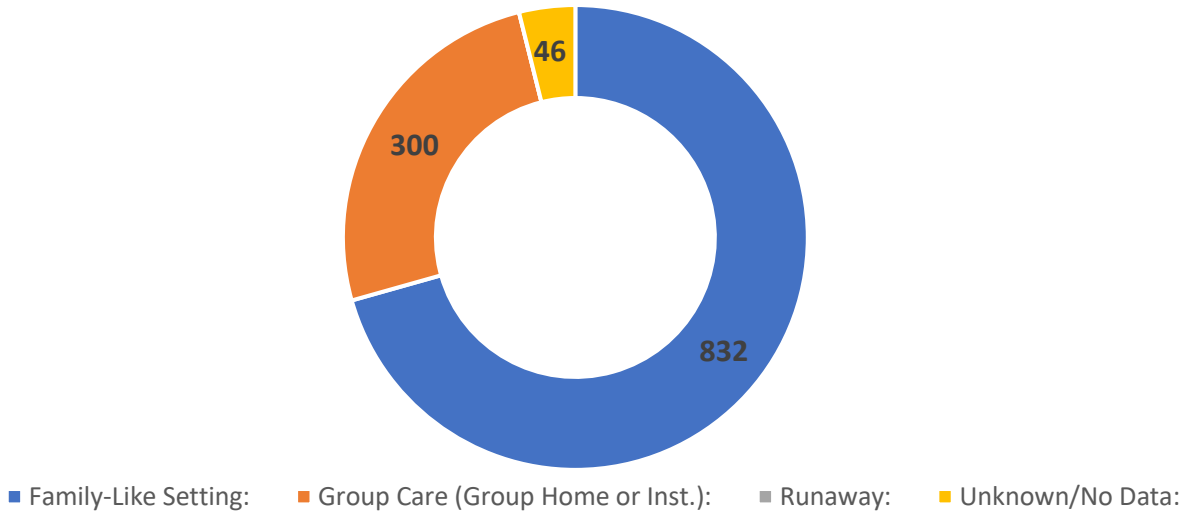


New Hampshire Children in Care

As of 3/31/24

Placement Types	Total Children	Involvement Type		
		CPS	JJS	DUAL
Family-Like Setting:	832	728	4	100
Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):	300	124	128	48
Runaway:	0	0	0	0
Unknown/No Data:	46	38	7	1
Total Children in Care:	1178	890	139	149

Placement Types for Children In Care



Family-Like Settings:

Type	Total Children
Foster Home:	408
Relative Foster Home:	383
Supervised Independent Living:	41
Total:	832

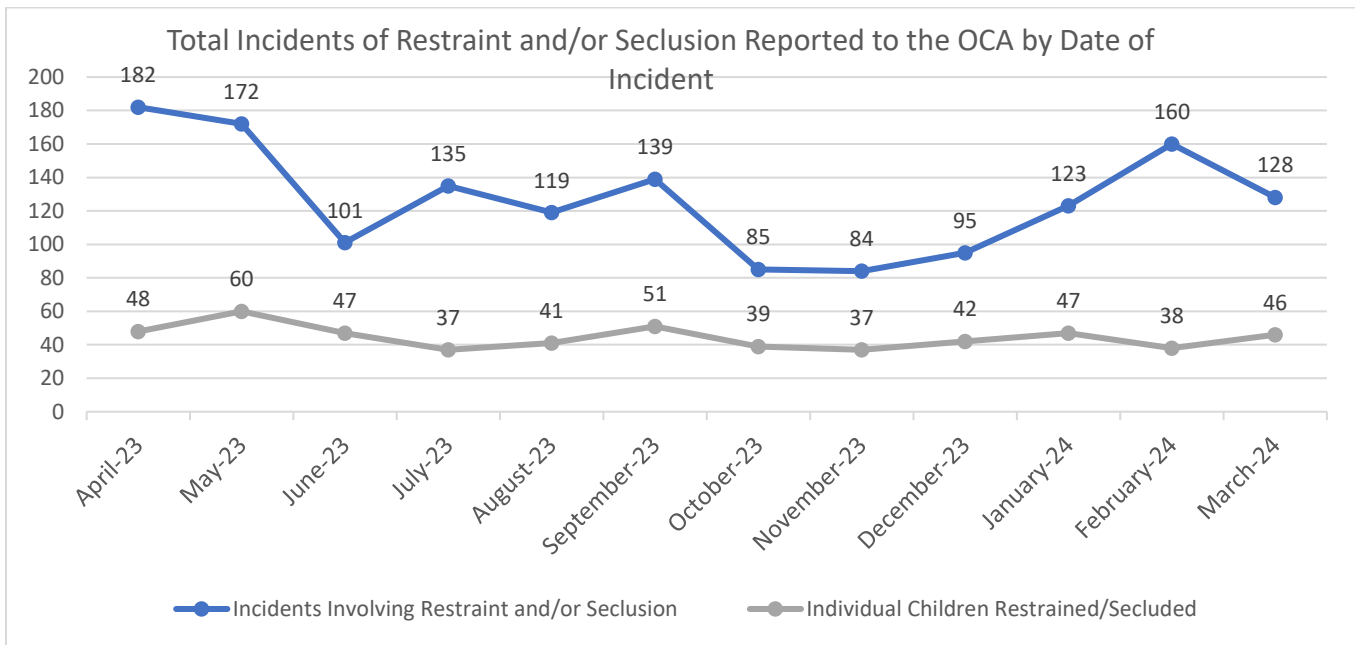
Group Care (Group Home or Institution) Locations:

Location	Total Children	Children Outside New England	
New Hampshire:	237		
New England (Outside NH):	56		
Outside of New England:	7		
Total:	300		
		Children Outside New England	
		Arkansas	3
		Florida	1
		Georgia	1
		New York	1
		Oklahoma	1
		Total:	7

Restraints & Seclusion Incidents Reported to the OCA from Residential Facilities

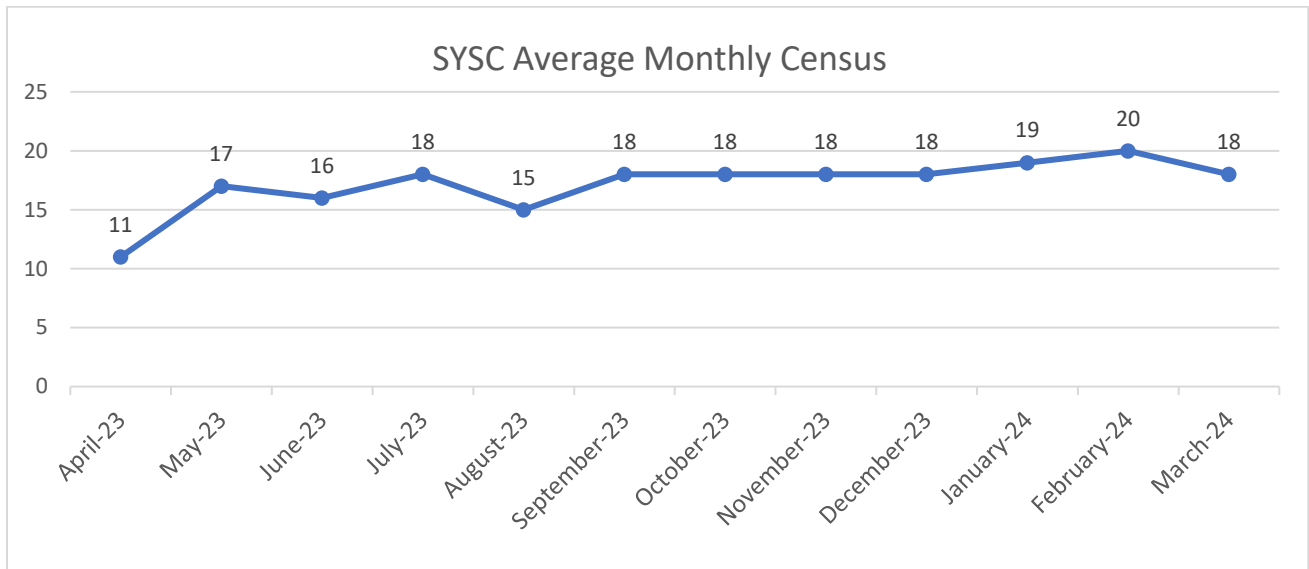
Rolling 12 Month: 4/01/23 – 3/31/24

Month	Incidents Reported to OCA Involving:			Total Incidents	Number of Children
	Restraints	Seclusions	Restraints & Seclusions		
April-23	180	0	2	182	48
May-23	147	12	13	172	60
June-23	88	6	7	101	47
July-23	131	1	3	135	37
August-23	113	1	5	119	41
September-23	127	1	11	139	51
October-23	69	1	15	85	39
November-23	80	1	3	84	37
December-23	85	3	7	95	42
January-24	112	6	5	123	47
February-24	142	5	13	160	38
March-24	108	7	13	128	46
Totals:	1382	44	97	1523	



Restraint & Seclusion Explanation

- This data includes all residential facilities which the OCA receives restraint and seclusion reports from.
- The OCA only receives restraint and seclusion reports from contracted facilities; we do not receive them for certified-only facilities, including many of the out-of-state facilities beyond the New England region.
- **Although we have made multiple attempts to receive ALL restraint and seclusion reports via the DCYF reporting email, they have been unsuccessful, so we will be sending a letter to each residential facility certified by the State to inform on our statute and the reporting we need to begin receiving regularly.**



SYSC Incidents Reported to the OCA

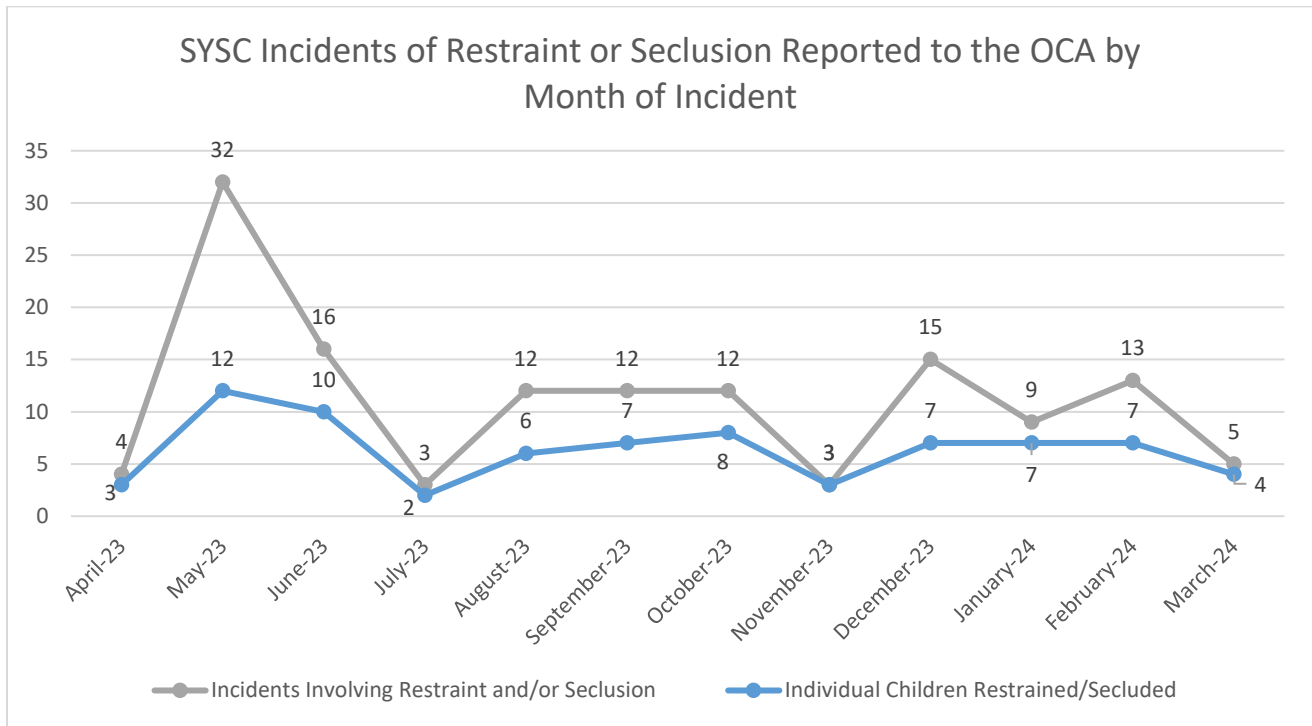
Rolling 12 Month: 4/01/23 – 3/31/24

Month	Major Incidents	Mod Incidents	Minor Incidents	Other Incidents	Total
April-23	25	13	4	5	47
May-23	66	19	6	11	102
June-23	40	11	8	12	71
July-23	24	20	4	13	61
August-23	45	12	2	18	77
September-23	50	22	4	19	95
October-23	54	17	6	19	96
November-23	34	22	7	18	81
December-23	65	18	6	25	114
January-24	68	16	6	34	124
February-24	56	13	9	26	104
March-24	39	16	4	24	83
Totals:	566	199	66	224	1055

SYSC Incidents Involving Restraints or Seclusions by Month

4/01/23 – 3/31/24

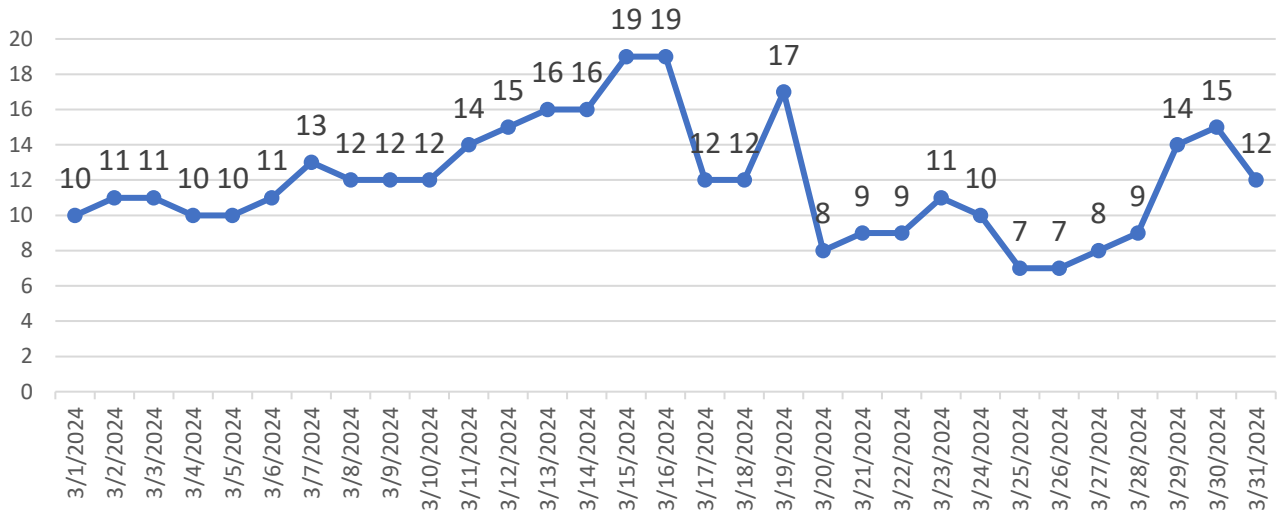
Month	Incidents Inv. Restraint or Seclusion	Individual Children
April-23	4	3
May-23	32	12
June-23	16	10
July-23	3	2
August-23	12	6
September-23	12	7
October-23	12	8
November-23	3	3
December-23	15	7
January-24	9	7
February-24	13	7
March-24	5	4
Totals:	136	



SYSC Explanation

- Although the census at SYSC can fluctuate day to day, the average monthly census data has been added to this report for additional context.

Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Waitlist for Minors March 2024
(Children who have been accepted but are waiting for a bed to open)



Data Source: Hampstead Hospital

March 2024 Inpatient (HHRTF) Disposition Data for Hampstead Hospital (Minors)			
Data source: Hampstead Hospital			
Disposition	# of Dispositions	% of Total Dispositions	% of Accepted Dispositions
Total Dispositions in March:	141		
Not Accepted (went home before acceptance, placed elsewhere before acceptance, deferred/denied)	36	26%	
Accepted:	105	74%	
Accepted but went home before a bed opened	28	20%	27%
Accepted but placed elsewhere before a bed opened	20	14%	19%
Admitted	57	40%	54%

Hampstead Hospital & East Acres Explanation

- The OCA is still NOT receiving any restraint or seclusion reports from East Acres or Hampstead Hospital. An email was sent to the CEO on March 14, 2024, requesting that we begin receiving them regularly. The OCA is currently receiving aggregate data from Hampstead Hospital, but without the narrative reports of specific incidents to review we are unable to accurately assess the use of restraint and seclusion in the program, nor can we fully review or adequately respond to complaints to our office about specific incidents.
- Above is a graph with Hampstead Hospital waitlist data that is shared publicly by DHHS (for DHHS data, see: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/about-dhhs/locations-facilities/state-run-and-designated-acute-psychiatric-bed-data>).