



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Egyptian regional Human Rights Authority
Report of Findings
10-110-9024
Chester Mental Health Center
January 26, 2010

The Egyptian Regional Human Rights Authority (HRA) of the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission has completed its investigation concerning Chester Mental Health Center, a state-operated mental health facility located in Chester. The facility, which is the most restrictive mental health center in the state, provides services for approximately 250 residents. The specific allegation is as follows:

Chester Mental Health Center has an outbreak of mold that is a potential health hazard for recipients at the facility.

Statutes

If substantiated, the allegation would be a violation of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code (Code) (405 ILCS 5/2-102 (a)).

Section 5/2-201 states, "A recipient of services shall be provided with adequate and humane care and services in the least restrictive environment, pursuant to an individual services plan..."

Investigation Information

To investigate the allegation, the HRA Investigation Team (Team), consisting of two members, and the HRA Coordinator (Coordinator) conducted a site visit at the facility. During the visit the Team spoke with the Assistant Administrator and a Representative (Representative) from the facility's Human Rights Committee. Observations were made pertinent to the allegation during two site visits to the facility. The Authority reviewed an article from an area Newspaper and a report from an environmental services agency.

I... Interviews:

A...Assistant Administrator:

The Assistant Administrator informed the Team that there were concerns regarding a potential mold problem in the carpenter's shop, which is located in the basement area of the facility. She stated the area looked as if there had been a water leak that had caused mold;

however, upon examination it was discovered that the darkened spot was dirt rather than mold. She stated that the facility requested money from Capitol Development to have the entire agency surveyed by an outside environmental agency to determine if there was any harmful mold in the facility. She informed the Team that the survey, which was conducted in late October, indicated that the facility did not have a mold problem.

B...Representative

The Representative indicated that all of the areas of the facility, including recipients' rooms and congregate areas used by recipients, had been surveyed by the outside environmental agency. She stated that the facility had received the findings from the survey. A copy of the report was provided to the HRA.

II...Newspaper Article

The Authority reviewed a 10/21/09 area newspaper article entitled, "Mold Plaguing Chester Mental Health". According to the article there was a troubling outbreak of mold that was causing recipients and staff with allergy problems to experience health complications from the situation. According to the article, a survey of the center estimated to cost \$100,000 was under way to pinpoint the source of the excessive moisture.

III...Observation

During site visits at the facility, the Team visited recipients' sleeping and restrooms, the dining area, office areas and the facility infirmary. No problems were noted in any of the areas.

IV:...Environment Services

According to the report, the environmental agency was retained by Chester Mental Health to perform an Indoor Air Quality/Microbial Evaluation at the facility. The evaluation was performed throughout the facility as a result of indoor air quality concerns from staff in the building.

Documented findings indicated that a total of fifty airborne bioaerosol (non-culturable) samples of mold spore concentrations and other constituents in select areas of the building and outdoors for comparison purposes were collected. The samples were collected from October 29, 2009 through October 30, 2009. Zefron Air-O-Cell spore trap cassettes were used to collect each air sample in rooms for ten minutes at a flow rate of 15 liters per minute. The total volume of each sample was listed as 150 liters. The non-culturable air sampling pump was calibrated before and after each sample collection, and the samples were kept individually sealed and labeled prior to laboratory submittal. The results of the air samples indicated that no additional samples were required, and the mold spore levels were within "good ranges". Additional findings indicated that no hazardous mold was detected in the samples.

Summary

According to the complaint and a newspaper article, Chester Mental Health Center had a mold problem that was creating some health issues for recipients and staff at the facility. When the Team spoke with the Assistant Administrator she stated that an area in the carpenter's shop that appeared to be mold was discovered. However, upon examination it was discovered to be dirt rather than mold. The Assistant Administrator stated that funds were obtained to have an outside environmental agency conduct a survey to make certain that the facility was free of harmful mold. During site visits at the facility, the Team did not note any appearance of mold. When the environmental agency completed findings for the October survey, a copy of the report was provided for the HRA's review. Findings indicated that the mold spore levels were in a "good range," and there were no hazardous molds detected in the samples.

Conclusion

Based on the information obtained, the allegation that Chester Mental Health Center has an outbreak of mold that has a potential health hazard for recipients at the facility is unsubstantiated. No recommendations are issued.