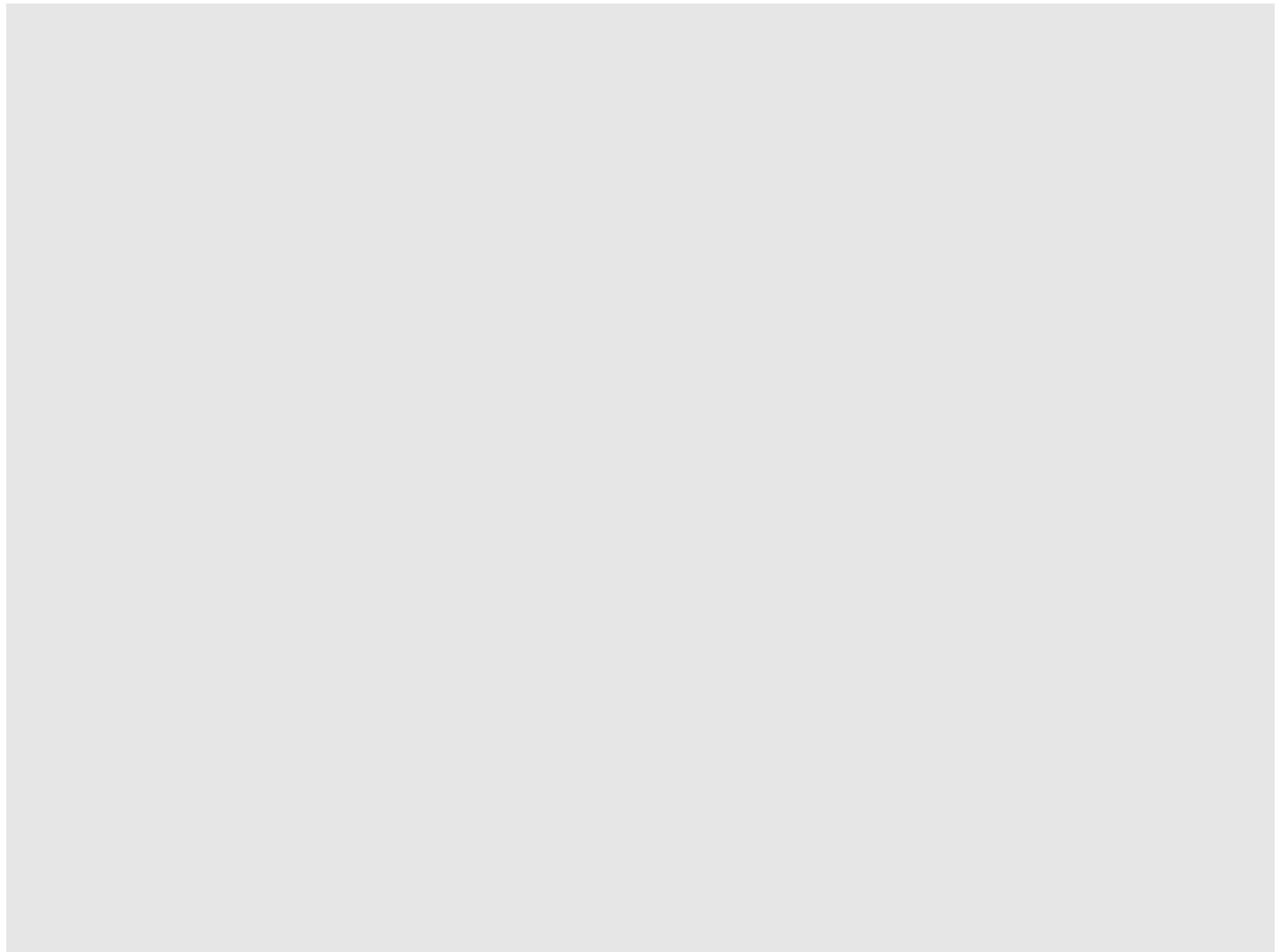


https://www.kptv.com/news/report-14-of-youth-at-oregon-correctional-facility-report-sex-abuse-within-past-year/article_53502690-5f5f-11ea-ab57-2ff84b5ed2a5.html

Report: 14% of youth at Oregon correctional facility report sex abuse within past year

SIMON GUTIERREZ

POSTED MAR 5, 2020



KPTV photo.

ALBANY, OR (KPTV) - More than seven percent of teens in juvenile detention facilities reported being sexually victimized in 2018, according to a report from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Included in the report were numbers for specific facilities in Oregon, one of which stood out.

According to the report, 14% of youth surveyed at Oak Creek Youth Correction Facility in Albany reported being sexually victimized within the past 12 months.

"I think it's something we need to take very seriously," Benjamin Chambers, a spokesperson for the Oregon Youth Authority, which oversees the facility, said.

Though the reported numbers are troubling, Chambers said the state's own data on reported sex abuse at the facility don't match those compiled by the Department of Justice.

"Our data on reported allegations for the year covered by that survey do show some allegations of abuse, but the four that were substantiated actually were youth touching each other or grabbing each other over their clothes, and that behavior was addressed," Chambers said.

Although state records show several complaints of sexual abuse at the facility in 2016, 2017, and 2018, Chambers said further investigation found most of the claims were either unfounded or unsubstantiated.

In Oregon, Oak Creek had the highest percent of reported abuse among Youth Detention Centers, but more than 10% of youth surveyed at Rogue Valley Youth Corrections Facility and St. Mary's Home for Boys also reported being sexually victimized.

On the heels of the DOJ report, the Oregon Youth Authority will be conducting an internal audit of its own surveys of youth in custody, which include questions about sexual abuse.

Two months after the DOJ report was released, a federal audit found Oak Creek Youth Correctional in full compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act.

Copyright 2020 KPTV-KPDY Broadcasting Corporation. All rights reserved.

Simon Gutierrez
Reporter