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TO: Members, Government Oversight Committee  
FROM: Lucia Nixon, Director  
DATE: March 26, 2021  
RE: Presentation of 2021-2022 Work Plan for OPEGA Evaluations and Related Work

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The OPEGA director is required by statute to prepare and present an annual work plan to the Government Oversight Committee for its consideration and approval (3 MRSA section 995). To coincide with the flow of work of the Legislature and the GOC, this work plan has been presented and maintained as a *biennial plan* coinciding with the two calendar years of each Legislative biennium. To ensure the work of OPEGA is responsive to the changing needs and interests of the GOC and the Legislature over the course of the biennium, the work plan may be amended or adjusted at any point by vote of the GOC.

As you embark on the work of the 130<sup>th</sup> GOC, I have prepared the “2021-2022 Work Plan for OPEGA Evaluations and Related Work” for your review and consideration (attached as separate document). Please note that this document presents a baseline plan for OPEGA’s work for the 2021-2022 period based on the information available at this time, with the expectation and understanding that the GOC may, by vote, direct OPEGA to add, remove, amend or otherwise adjust items on the work plan as necessary. To provide a comprehensive overview of anticipated work at this point in time, the “2021-2022 Work Plan for OPEGA Evaluations and Related Work” document is organized into four parts as follows:

1. Work Plan for OPEGA Evaluations. This part has three sections:
  - Approved Projects Continued from the 2019-2020 Work Plan (6 projects: 3 active/3 inactive)
  - Stand-By List from 2019-2020 Work Plan (1 project)
  - Upcoming Projects Required by Statute (6 projects related to tax expenditure review)
2. New Requests Under Consideration (2 projects)
3. Recently Completed Evaluations (2 projects)
4. Other OPEGA Work Required by Statute (4 items)

On the second page of this memo, you will find some background information prepared by OPEGA for two projects that have been carried over on the project list for OPEGA, in one form or another, for many years without substantive activity due to other priorities. We hope that this background information will be helpful to the GOC in determining the appropriate disposition of and direction for these projects going forward.

<b>Substance Abuse Treatment Programs in Corrections System</b>	
<b>March 2009</b> (12 yrs ago)	<p><b><u>Original Request and Placement on the On-Deck List</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In March 2009, OPEGA brought several review requests to the GOC for consideration, including a request for review of substance abuse treatment programs in the corrections system, specifically the Correctional Recovery Academy and the Intensive Outpatient Program. The proposal was to examine effectiveness and/or cost-effectiveness of the programs. The request did not seem to have a legislative sponsor.</li> <li>• GOC voted (12-0) to add the topic to the On-Deck List for potential future work.</li> </ul>
<b>February 2017</b> (4 yrs ago)	<p><b><u>Continued on the On-Deck List</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sen. Katz noted that he thought the landscape of substance abuse services in corrections has changed substantially since 2009, partially due to OPEGA reviews of health care in the prison systems (2011 and 2014). Rep. Pierce indicated he wanted to keep the project on the On-Deck list due to the opiate crisis in the state and requests for funding for services.</li> <li>• No motion was made / no vote taken</li> </ul>
<b>August 2017</b> (3.5 yrs ago)	<p><b><u>Moved from On-Deck List to Work Plan</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GOC reviewed the On-Deck List (7 projects) as the OPEGA Director was looking to determine which projects would be coming up next for staff.</li> <li>• Sen. Diamond recommended moving this from the On-Deck list to the current Work Plan, noting ongoing concerns about substance abuse services in prisons and general concerns about jails preventing contact with families and inmates. Rep. Mastraccio also had interest in the topic, noting many proposals for funding of these services at the time.</li> <li>• GOC voted (7-3) to add the topic to the Work Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>March 2021</b>	<p><b><u>Notes &amp; Updates</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No substantive work on this project has been conducted. Since August 2017, the project has “inactive” on the Work Plan, while the GOC has prioritized other projects for attention.</li> </ul>

<b>DHHS Audit Functions</b>	
<b>Feb-April 2013</b> (8 yrs ago)	<p><b><u>Original Request and Placement on Work Plan</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In early 2013, Sen. Craven expressed interest in a review of DHHS Audit Functions; at the time, some members of the HHS Committee had concerns whether DHHS had enough auditors and whether there were savings that could be identified if DHHS had enough auditors.</li> <li>• In response, the GOC requested and received information from DHHS on the agency’s audit units, staffing levels, audit analytics were being conducted and the agency’s perspective on the new audit tools it had implemented.</li> <li>• The GOC discussed a general scope of work for a project to include a review of “audit efforts, resources and capabilities, results of audit efforts, and degree to which DHHS Audit functions have sufficient resources and capabilities to be effective in identifying fraud, waste and abuse.”</li> <li>• GOC voted (12-0) to add the topic to the Work Plan in April 2013.</li> </ul>
<b>April 2019</b> (2 yrs ago)	<p><b><u>Moved from Work Plan to Stand-by (On-Deck) List</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the GOC’s April 2019 review and discussion of the Work Plan and setting of project priorities, a motion was made that included removing the review of DHHS Audit Functions.</li> <li>• At the time, Sen. Timberlake expressed hesitation about removing the project, and also an interest in whether the project would include review of Fund for a Healthy Maine expenditures. Rep. Mastracchio suggested perhaps moving it from the Work Plan to the Stand-By List.</li> <li>• Motion to remove the project was amended and GOC voted (10-0) to shift the topic from the Work Plan to the Stand-by List (previously called the On-Deck List) for potential future work.</li> </ul>
<b>March 2021</b>	<p><b><u>Notes &amp; Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No substantive work has been conducted on this project, either while on the Work Plan (2013-2019) or while on the Stand-by List for potential future work.</li> </ul>