
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

I hope everybody had a good week. I know everyone is busy. We've got a lot going on - we always do, but that's how we roll.

You probably didn't see this in the news because it wasn't around here, but it seems that New Orleans is not the only place whose jail has lots of issues. Many of you know that for a time I worked in the state of Maryland and particularly in Baltimore. I was alerted to news that came out of Baltimore this week about a serious situation at the Baltimore City Detention Center, where 13 female employees are facing criminal charges for bringing contraband, including illegal and prescription drugs, into the facility, as well as committing other serious offenses. Four of these women even got pregnant by one offender reputed to be a prison gang leader.

On its face, it might appear that the issue is that we should not be hiring females to work with male offenders. But as the Maryland secretary stated, this is not a gender issue. It's an integrity issue. The problem starts with integrity – individual integrity. It's also about accountability. It's about supervisors doing their job. It's about the premise that if you see something, say something. It's all about having a culture of integrity and having good training on professional boundaries. It's about having support systems in place for all staff.

I want to ask each of you in every OJJ facility and office to look deep inside to make sure that we are meeting our mission by doing our jobs with deep personal, individual integrity. Everyone who works for OJJ supports the same mission, whether we work in a secure care facility, a P&P field office or central office. Whether we are frontline or support staff, male or female, veteran staff or newly on board. I know in my heart that the vast majority of staff at OJJ are honest and hardworking. I want to encourage you to continue do the right thing, and be open and honest, and hold each other accountable. We're only as good as our weakest link. And we need to do whatever we can to help that weakest link become stronger, and help them to do the right thing.

On a lighter note, I saw a lot of flowers in offices this week, and a number of people were treated to lunch, as we thanked our administrative assistants for all they do to support their sections. This week was national Administrative Professionals Week, and Wednesday was the big day for honoring our administrative professionals. We should thank our support staff for all they do on a regular basis, not just once a year. To our administrative assistants, we know you keep us on track, on task and on time. Whether we tell you so often or not, I want you to know that every one of you is appreciated every day.

My thanks to each and every one of you, in every OJJ location, for all you do every day, year after year, to meet the mission. Have a great weekend.

Sincerely,

“Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*

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