
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Dear Colleagues:

I want to share some very sobering news with you concerning budget issues. All agencies have been asked to submit their budget proposals for FY 2010/11 to the Division of Administration. First, we planned for a standstill budget for next year, while we faced mid-year cuts for the current budget year. Now, we are looking at potentially deep cuts for the next fiscal year.

No agency is immune from the coming financial crunch. Each agency and each unit within agencies will have to make some serious operational changes and sacrifices next year. When we know what we will present to DoA, we will let everyone throughout OJJ know what we propose.

Please be assured that we are analyzing and recommending cuts in a thoughtful, responsible way. We are looking at everything that can be done to ensure that we continue to meet our mission and move closer to our vision for the future. We have been through this type of belt-tightening before, and we know the tough economic conditions won't last forever. We are hopeful that we will have the opportunity to build programs up later on. Right now, we'll just have to be patient and defer some of the more costly things, while we concentrate on the things that are cost-free.

We must become even better stewards of the taxpayers' money. We can spend some time refining our policies and procedures. We can re-think the way we do business. We must think creatively about the best way to utilize our scarce resources, and how to better collaborate with other agencies. And here's where you come in. While we are looking at the big picture, we need each of you to think about what you can do to join the effort to preserve our precious resources in ways that will make a difference.

We are already moving in the right direction, moving forward with projects and plans already in place, without the need for additional money. We will continue to implement the Missouri Model for treatment in our facilities. We will press forward with implementation of the SAVRY. We will work to improve our contract methodology. We will continue to expand and implement Service Coordination.

I presented at a judges' meeting in New Orleans this week, and a judge commented on how well Service Coordination is working in his court. It's really good to get that kind of feedback from members of the judiciary.

You should also be aware of our plans for the closure of Jetson. We are proceeding with a Reduction in Force plan (RIF) that has been filed with Civil Service. Once approved, we will work with Civil Service to initiate it. I have personally met with several groups of Jetson staff, during a number of shifts over several days, to let people know about the RIF plans.

We will soon be asking each operational unit to come up with ways to save. I know that OJJ staff are dedicated to our mission and that you will step up to the plate. I am very interested in hearing ways you can identify to cut costs. You know the email address: Whatsupdoc?OJJ@la.gov.

On a brighter note, next week is one for the history books. I hope each of you enjoys the Martin Luther King holiday and that you can spend a moment reflecting on his legacy. And - the United States of America is getting a new president - I hope that every one of you has the opportunity to see some of the Presidential Inauguration festivities on Tuesday.

As always, thanks for everything you do to meet the mission. Wishing you all a wonderful long weekend (for those who have to work on MLK Day, thank you again).

Sincerely,

"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

Mary L. Livers, MSW, PH.D, Deputy Secretary

Office of Juvenile Justice • PO Box 66458 • Baton Rouge, LA 70896 • e: Whatsupdoc?OJJ@la.gov • www.ojd.louisiana.gov