
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Dear Colleagues:

Hello to everyone. I hope you've had a great week. We've had several productive meetings this week that have been supportive of our Vision Statement, and I want to tell you about them. Our Vision Statement, for those who may not know it well is: *OJJ is a quality system of care which embraces partnerships with families, communities and stakeholders to assist youth in redirecting their lives toward responsible citizenship.*

As you know, no one agency can do everything to address the needs of our youth. We need all the resources of agencies, communities and stakeholders to come together. Reaching out to other agencies and organizations whose core missions are similar, will help us to meet our mission. There are several partnership projects with other departments that are moving forward that I want to share with you.

Let me tell you about a community partnership that's really going to help us. Deputy Assistant Secretary Philippe Magloire has been working diligently with the LA Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) to establish a one-year certificate program in Juvenile Justice. We are working with LCTCS on a proposed curriculum that would be offered by any community or technical college in the state, for people interested in obtaining the academic requirements to work in our facilities in the YouthCare/Juvenile Justice Specialist area. Some courses would be available through distance learning, and the curriculum would offer internships that could become a pipeline of new employees for our agency. We are hopeful that current staff members would be interested in enrolling in the program to enhance their skills and prepare for promotions. Possibly our contract providers' staffs would be interested. The one-year certificate will articulate into an associate degree, and from there a four-year bachelor's degree could be obtained. The cost through LCTCS is far less than other online degree programs.

We have been working hard on ways to make sure our youth have Medicaid coverage so they will have access to services paid for by federal programs. Representatives from DHH met with the executive team about this and we are working on an action plan so that our regional offices and secure care facilities can become Medicaid application centers. Someone on staff in each office will be able to help our kids enroll in LaCHIP or Medicaid so they will have coverage when they become eligible.

Have you ever heard of one-stop-shopping? Most of us have an idea of the concept. We are working with DSS, DHH, Department of Education and the LA Workforce Commission on a program called Neighborhood Place, that will bring one-stop service delivery to people in need of state and local services. We are moving forward quickly to open the first sites in early June, in Many and Zwolle. These two Sabine Parish Neighborhood Place sites will be staffed by Natchitoches OJJ.

I've just spoken about statewide collaboration, but there is also an outstanding local collaborative project going on in Lake Charles. The WTF Committee (Working Together for Families) is a collaboration between OJJ, DSS/OCS and the local juvenile probation office. Staff meet monthly to determine how each agency can provide services to address the needs of individual youth. WTF has been asked to present at a breakout session at the FINS conference this year. Thanks to Regional Manager Ann Vick and her staff, who have been involved with this inter-agency collaborative effort for some time.

It's all about forging partnerships so that we can work together to provide the most effective services for our kids. When we put the vision into action and make it a reality, we better meet the mission.

As always, thanks for all you do every day, to meet the mission and help make the vision real.

Sincerely,

"Doc"

Dr. Mary Livers

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