
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

It's fall and there is a lot going on. I'm just back from Washington, DC, and I have to tell you that, yep, I missed my flight leaving New Orleans. This time it wasn't the airline's fault – it was nobody's fault but mine. I did not give myself enough time to get from Baton Rouge to New Orleans. I was overconfident that I could get there in time, but the doors closed before I could get to the gate. So much for a leisurely trip. But, I got to DC by 7 p.m., with nobody to blame but myself. I was one of about 25 juvenile justice corrections administrators from across the country who went to Washington to participate in a dialogue on the next round of the PREA survey of youth, hosted by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. It was facilitated by Dr. Allen Beck, whom I have known for many years. He is a seasoned researcher with a very ethical approach to his work. Our field is very blessed to have him in a leadership role in that particular area. I will brief the PREA Steering Committee about what I learned about ways to ensure youth safety, particularly in the area of sexual abuse. We will be developing new strategies as we continue to focus on youth safety and our culture.

I want you to know that LSU fans were all over DC. I encountered an older gentleman and his wife in the hotel elevator and it appeared that he was holding an LSU baseball cap in his hand. They were from Baton Rouge, sightseeing in Washington. Yesterday morning, on a walk around the streets of Washington, I saw a young woman jogging, wearing a Tigers tee shirt. I shouted, "Go Tigers," and she responded in kind. Then I ran into a couple in front of the National Archives, who were going to see the Louisiana Purchase exhibit. It's nice to see Louisiana folks wherever you go.

While I was only away for two and a half short days, there has been a lot of activity in Baton Rouge. Undersecretary Alan Boxberger addressed the State Bond Commission with a request for funds to replace the current Jetson facility with a modern, state of the art facility such as the one we are trying to build in Acadiana. And there has been a lot of activity about the recent budget cuts. I am sure that by now you have seen our press release that states that because we have implemented systemic reform including transforming treatment services in our secure care facilities, service coordination in communities, and use of the SAVRY, our agency has seen a decrease in the need for residential services. This decrease allowed us to absorb a \$4.6 million reduction in our budget, while maintaining the current level of services to individual youth in our custody. This cut was needed to make up for the budget shortfall from the fiscal year that ended June 30. We were asked to present a budget proposal with a 35 percent reduction in next year's budget, but there has been no further discussion concerning the next fiscal year – that's something we will have to work on with the administration. I don't have any further news. Right now, I just don't know, but I will tell you that whatever information I receive that I can share with you, I will do so.

In the meantime, we all need to stay focused on the mission and continue to do what we do. If you have any ideas for more efficient operations, or if you see duplication, please let us know. We want all of our operations to be as efficient as possible. I am looking forward to a good weekend and I hope you are, too. We are going to have some good events next week at Jetson and Bridge City, and I look forward to see some of our staff at these celebrations. Have a great weekend, and my thanks to each of you in every OJJ location, for all you do every day to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

"Doc"

Dr. Mary Livers

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