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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone out there in OJJ Land:

I hope you are all well and enjoying the hint of fall in the air. I can't believe it's already mid-October!

This week I did not travel a great deal, but I had a good visit in Natchitoches with the local newspaper, the Natchitoches Times, along with two area judges, 10<sup>th</sup> JDC Judge Dee Hawthorne and Natchitoches City Court Judge Fred Gahagan. Thanks to RM Randall Hill for setting up our meeting.

Well, LSU is 5 and 0 for the season so far. Don't hold your breath for this weekend – anything can happen and did happen last week when the Tigers pulled out a win in the last four seconds of the game. Southern University has its homecoming festivities this weekend and we wish them well. As far as the other teams around the state are doing, I can't keep up with them all, so if you are cheering for LA Tech, Grambling, ULM, ULL, Tulane or any other school, not to mention the Who Dats, I hope you are enjoying your team this fall.

Speaking of teams, I want to encourage everyone to be good team players. Good team players trust each other, prepare with each other, execute with each other and critique each other. That's how you grow together. A team is only as strong as each individual who contributes to the effort. That said, we have to put the mission first, and our individual needs second. Whatever is best to accomplish the mission is what needs to happen. Egos need to be put aside and negativism out the door. Who needs it?

No matter how challenging things get we have to believe in getting the mission met, and that is exactly what we are going to do, no matter what budget challenges we face. You all can read, and you read the same newspapers that I do. And you know that we have more challenges coming our way. No agency will be exempt from what the state is facing. Let's keep our eyes on meeting the mission and doing a good job.

Here's some good news. Our one-year recidivism rate for releases from secure care is decisively lower. The rate is down three percentage points, from 20.7 percent in 2007-08 to 17.6 percent in 2008-09, since the therapeutic model has been in place over the last year. Such positive results are encouraging – we know we are going in the right direction. The recidivism rate for community-based services has not changed, but we expect to see improvement once our provider community has implemented LaMOD and we use the Correctional Program Checklist (CPC) to improve our outcomes.

Some more good news is that a new Deputy Assistant Secretary for Facilities is coming on board November 1. Sean Hamilton is a native of New Orleans and a graduate of Southern University-New Orleans, with an MSW. He is currently Superintendent of the District of Columbia Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services. Sean has experience leading the District of Columbia through agency-wide reform and implementation of the Missouri Model in his facility. I think he brings to OJJ the level of expertise and experience we need to continue moving forward.

Again, I hope your team does well this weekend, and I know the OJJ team will be working to meet the mission. Thanks for all you do.

Sincerely,  
"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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

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