
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

I hope everybody had a good Martin Luther King Day holiday. All weeks seem to pass quickly but being a short week, this week really flew by. The weather has changed for the better, too, and I hope you are enjoying this early warm weather. After the seriously cold weather we have had this winter, I just hope that groundhog in Pennsylvania predicts an early spring.

Just a bit of news - the secure care facilities are focusing on ACA Accreditation and our CQIS staff is out visiting them to look at compliance issues. They are focusing on tool and key control and FTCs (flammable, toxic and caustic materials). The Accreditation process is very important and right now they are focusing on meeting all mandatory standards, which address basic safety issues for youth and staff.

We are also looking at ways to economize on delivery of health care services in the secure facilities. One way to reduce costs is to have an executive level Health Services Administrator, someone with medical expertise who knows how health care should be delivered. I feel this position is mission critical, and we have just brought on board Kelly Smith, a highly qualified professional with several nursing credentials. Every correctional agency I have ever known has such an administrator, and OJJ never has had one. At this critical time when every dollar counts, it is vital to have our own staff member tasked with making sure that our youth receive appropriate health care while at the same time reining in the costs. I am very appreciative of the excellent service that our youth have received from the staff of the LSU Health Sciences Center, and we have asked them as well as others to address these issues.

I am sure you have all been reading the newspapers and seeing news stories about the fiscal challenges facing all state agencies. OJJ is not immune from these streamlining measures and the executive team has been holding a series of meetings to address the issues at hand. When we face challenges that we have no control over, we have to reassess where we are. We will do what we have to do as an agency to address our core mission and refine operations wherever we can. As painful as it is in the short term, we need to remember when we are undergoing changes, that good often comes out of change.

How we handle change and challenge is a testament to our character. I know the OJJ staff to be people of great character.

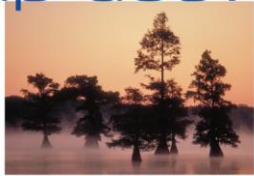
My thanks to every member of the OJJ family, in every office and facility, for the character that you display daily to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

“Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*

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

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