
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

I know I always say “what a week,” but this one really does get a “WHAT A WEEK!” For one thing, I was feeling really raunchy and had to go the doctor. Diagnosis: inner ear trouble – no wonder I have been a little more dizzy than usual. With a little rest and a lot of medicine I’m almost back to my usual – just a little dizzy - self.

As you are probably aware, OJJ along with DCFS, DHH and DOE, got some positive press this week for our work on CSoC. The Governor made a formal announcement at a press conference yesterday, so there is a lot of attention focused on CSoC. This initiative is going to make a big difference for all the children and youth served by all four agencies. As for OJJ in particular, we can look forward to having fewer youth come into our system, as more youth will receive community-based treatment interventions, and will be diverted before they get into criminal activity.

Most of you know that the CSoC multi-agency “traveling team” put on a series of 9 town hall meetings for stakeholders, in communities across the state. Every one of the meetings drew over 100 people from various stakeholder groups. OJJ was well-represented at all the meetings, and I thank all the staff who attended the meetings. Our new DAS, Karen Stubbs, was a speaker at all of the meetings, so when I said before that she hit the ground running when she came on board, I really meant that – she has been running around the state. Each of the agencies hosted meetings, and Karen reports that the two OJJ-hosted meetings were well organized. Many thanks to Alexandria RM Johnny Qualls and his team for handling all the arrangements for the Alexandria meeting: PPSs John Baker, Clay Dupuy and Pam Oakes, PPOs Trinity Adams, Donna DeSoto, Lori Johnson, Angelic McCray and Rodney McNeal. The Baton Rouge meeting held yesterday was the finale. Many thanks to the central office team that handled arrangements: Admin. Assts. Gwen Brinkley, Wanda Murray, Shaeki Shanklin and Terri Scott, Chris Allen from IT, and CD Jerel Giarrusso.

Shifting gears, more thank-yous! Governor Jindal proclaimed March as Professional Purchasing Month, so a shout-out to our hard-working Procurement staff, who keep us well-supplied with everything from paper clips to furniture and vehicles, and everything in between. Thanks to Procurement Manager Candy Comeaux and Procurement Specialists Clarett Blount, Elaine Buzbee, Nona Holmes and Amy Vincent at central office, and to all the administrative staff who handle purchasing and procurement in each regional office and secure facility. You are doing a great job, and I hope your supervisors will recognize you in some way this month. (Hello, supervisors!) And for the rest of the staff, if you appreciate having all the stuff you need to do your job, thank a procurement person.

On Monday, several members of the executive team were able to job shadow the Baton Rouge office’s PPOs and Jetson’s Juvenile Justice Specialists. What an eye-opening experience that was for all. Few of us had any idea of how the PPOs do their jobs, or where they have to go to see their kids. When we visit Jetson, we seldom have the opportunity to spend time with staff and youth. Few of the PPOs and JJSs know what central office staff do. So we were all able to share our experiences and learn from one another. Thanks so much to Baton Rouge RM Sue Larisey and her staff, and Jetson Director Daron Brown and his staff, for allowing us to have an up-close-and-personal experience with you. We look forward to more job shadowing experiences in other parts of the state.

March is also National Association of Social Workers Social Work Month. The 2011 theme is “Social Workers Change Futures,” and NASW describes the role of social workers as positive change agents who have the power to solve some of our nation’s most pressing challenges. So true! There are just too many social workers throughout OJJ to mention them all in this message, but if you are an OJJ social worker, my thanks for your important work.

Next week is Mardi Gras, and many of us will have the day off. I hope you enjoy the parades and everything else we enjoy on Mardi Gras – just be safe and have a great time. For those of you who will be at work, taking care of our kids, thanks for helping them celebrate. As ever, thanks to all of you, in every OJJ location, for all that you do, day in and day out, to meet the mission. OJJ staff, YOU ROCK!

Sincerely, “Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*

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