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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, again, Everybody:

It's Friday. Yep, it's Friday again. Thinking back on the week, all I remember are Monday and Thursday. Monday, of course, was a holiday, but Undersecretary Connie Percell and I were at the Capitol for the presentation of the proposed executive budget to the Senate Finance Committee. But they did not get to us Monday, so some of the executive team and I went back again on Tuesday because we thought we would be called to testify about the proposed budget for our agency. It was not to be. We were there until about 2 p.m. when we confirmed that we would not be called.

So, my calendar for Wednesday was somewhat clear because I had anticipated being called to the Capitol. Since I did not get called over, I used the time for catch-up. You know how much fun that is because I'm sure you do the same thing.

Well, Thursday was showtime. We had two hearings scheduled – House Judiciary Committee, and finally, Senate Finance. First we were called to the House Judiciary Committee to update the members on the progress of the Acadiana facility and on activities at Swanson. Overall, that gave us a great opportunity to talk about all the good things going on at Swanson. We had quite a crowd there in addition to the usual suspects (the executive team). Swanson Director Carolyn Atkins brought an entourage including two youth, staff, parents, two Grambling professors and a U.S. Marshal intern, to testify. Youths Quintin C. and Eric S. told the committee that they are well-treated, are learning well and receiving needed treatment. They both said the staff care about them and are helping them to become the best they can be. Quintin's parents, David and Angela C., were there to support their son, and Angela described for the committee the excellent services their son receives. She said that they had heard bad stories about Swanson, but since they visit every visitation day, and have met the staff, they can see how well treated the kids are, and they are proud to have their son at Swanson, where he is doing well and receiving the services he needs to be successful. Dr. Joyce Montgomery-Scott and Dr. Marianne Fisher-Giorlando, both criminal justice professors at Grambling, testified about the quality of care at Swanson, and discussed the mentoring program they have put into place that matches Swanson youth with Grambling students. U.S. Marshal intern Steven Jackson talked about his positive experiences in working with Swanson youth as a mentor. Shreveport PPO3 Todd Carlisle, who transported Mr. and Mrs. C from Shreveport (they live in Vivian, almost another hour further), SCY JJS Julia Jackson and JJS Gerson Garcia who transported the youth and provided security, were able to observe the hearing as well. The youth and staff also had the opportunity to view the House of Representatives in session, from the viewing gallery, to see how the House operates and how laws are made.

All of our staff and supporters who came for the hearing departed about 6 p.m. to return to Swanson, Shreveport and Vivian. The executive team and I then went to the Senate side for the hearing to discuss our proposed budget. The members of the Senate Finance Committee asked good questions and were very engaged and interested in our issues, and we had a lively discussion. I don't know if you are aware of this, but you can go to the legislative websites and look up the video archives, if you have the desire to view the committee meetings. For the House of Representatives, go to [http://house.louisiana.gov/H\\_Video/Hse\\_Video\\_Today.htm](http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Video/Hse_Video_Today.htm), and <http://senate.legis.state.la.us/video/> for the Senate. (Hold control and click the link or copy and paste the address your Explorer search line.)

Well, I was pretty spent after all that excitement, so I took a day off to recoup. So this edition of What's Up, Doc is coming to you from the road. Wherever I am, and wherever you are, my thanks for all you do every day to meet the mission.

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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