
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Yours Truly has been limping along this week, a victim of the hot, dry, multiple allergens of Texas. My body has been invaded – when they say don't mess with Texas, I guess they mean it! It has really done a number on me. I had to go to the doctor a couple of times this week. I've been sidelined a couple of times also, but our team has marched on. This goose moved to the back of the pack and we're still flying. My thanks to the executive team for picking up the slack. A lot of things got done this week in spite of me. (They are probably saying to themselves, "So what else is new?")

First and foremost, a lot of hard work has gone into the site process for the new therapeutic, state-of-the-art facility. As you might recall, we sent out an RFI (Request for Information) and received 12 applications. A review committee was formed to review the packets and make recommendations. My special thanks go out to the members of the review committee who volunteered their time and met over several weeks. Members are Andy Shealy, representing LDAA, (LA District Attorneys Association); Judge Andrea Janzen, representing the judges' association; Vee Boyd, representing family advocate organizations; Julie Kilbourne, representing the public defenders board, and DAS Sean Hamilton. And a special thanks to Asst. Sec. Dr. Girard Melancon who has covered most of south Louisiana twice, visiting with various groups and looking at proposed sites. All that work has brought us where we are today, and that is, we will make an official announcement of the site at a big press conference on Monday, and we will send out the information soon after. I am very excited and extremely encouraged about being able to move forward with this project.

Shifting gears a little – it's enrollment time for the coursework for the one-year Certificate of Technical Studies: Juvenile Justice. I really want to encourage all employees who do not have college degrees to get started on that degree. Our vision is that all staff who work directly with youth, whether in a facility or in the community, start off with a minimum qualification of a four-year degree. That's where we are going as an agency. The certificate program is a way for those of you who do not have a degree to get started working on it. We want to help you get started and this certificate program is a step in the right direction. So, please, give it some thought. There is also an incentive: upon completion of the one-year certificate, staff receive a 5 percent increase in pay. So, far, 15 OJJ staff have gotten their one-year certificates. If you don't know anything about the program, please contact Staff Development Director Fran Martin (Fran.Martin@la.gov) and she will provide you with the information. Fran is on vacation the week of July 18, but she will answer your emails when she returns.

Well, I'll sign off now. It looks like it will be a rainy weekend for some of us. Wishing you all a great weekend, with my thanks to each of you, wherever you serve, rain or shine, for all you do every day, to meet the mission.

Sincerely,
"Doc"

Dr. Mary Livers

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