
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

I hope all of you are well and beginning to enjoy the fall. I say beginning to enjoy because it is just now feeling like fall. Up here in North Louisiana, the air is crisp and the leaves on the trees are turning brilliant colors. Some of God's greatest gifts are right before our eyes, displayed in the simple wonder of nature. I encourage you to take a walk in the woods, it is truly calming and humbling.

I want to thank Assistant Secretary Sean Hamilton for his guest appearance in What's Up, Doc last week. I hope you noticed his column and enjoyed it. My Dad sent his approval and asked me to tell Sean what a good job he did. So, of course, I sent his compliments on. We might be doing more of the guest column, so keep your eyes open.

Most of you know by now that we are in the process of improving our staffing ratios in our facilities. We have improved in many ways in light of our hiring practices in our facilities. Even though we have made some improvements in retention, we continue to work towards addressing our staffing needs. As we move forward in providing adequate coverage of all of our posts, we will also be focusing additional strategies to better address retention. I want to express my sincere thanks to all of you who are volunteering to provide extra support at Jetson and Bridge City over the next several months. We all appreciate your willingness to pitch in as Team OJJ and provide a safe, healthy environment so youth can appropriately address their treatment needs and become productive, law abiding citizens. Team OJJ, you rock!

Our OJJ leadership team has been with me at a leadership retreat from Wednesday until noon today. We are able to do this because of a PREA grant we received from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance. The discussions have been very productive and I believe we will be in a much better position as an agency to move forward with seeing PREA compliance as a way for us to improve our agency culture to include safety for our staff and the youth we supervise. Our outstanding consultants Mara Dodson, Cherie Townsend, Calvin Brown, and of course, Andie Moss, have done a great job helping us become better team members, and better leaders as we continue to take on the continued challenges of being OJJ. Thanks to all of our leadership staff for their hard work and commitment this week.

I am so proud of our team. Our greatest assets are each of you, our staff. Each of you are making a difference, every day. Louisiana is so blessed to have such caring staff who care about meeting our mission. I know what we ask of you is difficult, but you show up and you get it done.

Well, we have another big weekend of football. I hope LSU doesn't lose to Furman. Don't laugh. We never know, do we? Also, Southern has homecoming and I know that will be fun. Grambling is going to get on the bus, we think. And New Orleans plays Buffalo in the Super Bowl. My Mom and I will be in New Orleans on Sunday for a lunch and a show at the Saenger. We are looking forward to that.

I hope you all have a safe and fun weekend. And of course, thanks for all you do, every day, to meet our mission.

Sincerely,

"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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