
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everybody:

Well I'm on the road again (actually in the air, and you know what that can mean...). I am at the ACA conference in Washington, DC. The place where sayings like "dive deeper," "hit the reset button," "in my wheelhouse," "in the weeds," "move the needle," "game changer," "deal breaker," "exchanges and marketplaces" and "policy wonk" originate. Yep, these sayings originate in DC where the consultants learn them, then travel everywhere and give all of us our new vocabulary. So maybe I will beat the curve. I will have all the new expressions and the latest wonkish buzzwords before the consultants bring them to us...Louisiana OJJ staff is going to be ahead of the curve with all the latest small talk.***

On a more serious note, OJJ will have a good presence at the conference this year, with two presentations. Sex Offender Treatment Coordinator Dr. Yolanda Crump will present bright and early tomorrow morning on our sex offender treatment programming (that oughta open a few bleary eyes at 8 a.m.). We will also have a presentation on Service Coordination by Chief of Operations Ellyn Toney and Regional Directors Carolyn Lewis and Susan Miller. I'm sure you remember that our Service Coordination Model received national recognition when it was named a "Bright Idea" by Harvard University. So, we should have interested crowds for both of our programs at the conference.

Of course, in order to get home, I have to get on an airplane. Mercifully I am not flying through Charlotte, if you remember all the commotion there a couple of weeks ago with bees, fire and coyotes. What's with all the animals and airplanes? There were snakes on a plane, bees and coyotes that shut down an entire international airport, and this week, as Robin would say, "Holy cow, Batman! There's a cow on the tarmac!" Yep, it's true, a plane trying to land in Indonesia hit a cow that was loitering on the runway and skidded as it landed. None of the passengers was seriously injured, but one of the three cows that were strolling along the runway departed (but not on an airplane). The airport was closed following the accident, disrupting travel plans for a lot of people heading home for a holiday. I'm only flying through Baltimore back to New Orleans - nothing too exotic. Most of the animals there are the two-legged kind. Still need to heed the higher alerts and extra travel precautions by the State Department, though. Maybe I'll rent a car and just brave the highways.

I know many of you are breathing a sigh of relief as the kids go back to school. Where DID the summer go? Oh, yeah, it's still summer in August. Just another way to push back the joys of childhood. Whose idea is that, anyway? The same folks who decided to teach algebra to second graders? I have staff who were embarrassed that they could not help fourth graders with their homework because they were studying pre-calculus. And that was 20 years ago! Now the kids are taking higher math in pre-K! (Just kidding, right?) I'm just glad I'm finished with those days. I get to wear the t-shirt that says "Deputy Secretary, YOU do the math" and point to our undersecretary Connie Percell.

Meantime, I'll head back to a conference session, with my thanks to each member of the OJJ family, in every office and facility, for being steadfast and doing whatever it takes, wherever you are, to meet the mission.

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

***Does anyone really know what "wonk" means? No one seems to know where the term wonk comes from, but there is actually a formal definition: someone who is obsessively interested in a topic or issue and studies it to death. Okay, "studies it to death" is not in the dictionary but it beats the daylights out of "thoroughly and excessively" and it fits better in the DC lexicon.

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