

what's up doc?

by Dr. Mary Livers, PH.D, MSW, Deputy Secretary

Vol. 8, No.26. July 17, 2015

Hello, Everyone:

We are still on the road again, visiting P&P offices for the annual recognition of our PPOs. This week we've visited Natchitoches, Alexandria, Lafayette and Lake Charles. As you know, this year's APPA theme is "a worldwide force for change." I am so proud of our PPOs in every office for the incredible work they do, often under less-than-optimal circumstances. No matter what the budget says, our people provide quality services and do whatever it takes to meet the mission. It's been a pleasure, as ever, to visit with staff all over the state and community partners who always take time from their busy schedules to attend the annual programs to honor and recognize our regional office staff.

As a side note—thank goodness for modern technology. Now we can sort of have an office in our vehicles and keep up with email, texts and cell phone calls. Yep—business as usual—as long we are not driving! I can work as long as someone else is behind the wheel.

Last Friday an executive order from the governor's office was issued declaring an immediate expenditure and hiring freeze. Executive agencies may not fill vacant positions and expend funds for travel, operating services, supplies, professional services and other charges, and major repairs. OJJ was given an exemption for essential expenses related to the facilities and Field Services activities. Most of our secure care expenditures will be exempt from the order. Field travel for essential employees and community-based staff are exempt as well. If we keep all purchases to essential items for the treatment, health and wellbeing of our youth, we should be alright.

I want to take just a moment to thank Southeastern Regional Director Susan Miller for her many years of service to OJJ, on her departure from the agency. Today was Susan's last day with us, and she is moving on to other opportunities and endeavors. We wish her well in all that she does in the next chapter of her life.

We have some more goodbyes today. My assistant, Nita Franklin-Shanklin, retired effective today, with 35 years of state service, the last eight years keeping me laughing and on track with my schedule. Nita was an able assistant, and she served several deputy secretaries during her time with OJJ. She always knew when people needed a boost and created the famous Morale Committee that works to keep us all fat and happy with treats and smiles!

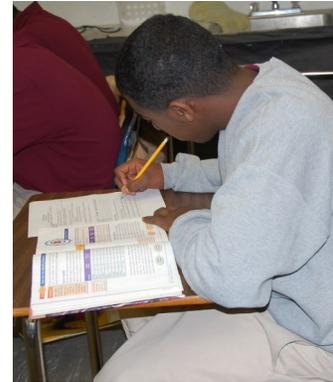
And, our Director of Investigative Services, Louis Hyatt, also left the agency today. He retired with 18 years with OJJ, and that's after retiring once as a state trooper. For years known as "The Colonel," Louis was instrumental in achieving the reforms in secure care that helped us exit the federal court settlement agreement.

Both of our retirees are key staff and I am going to miss them dearly. Please join me thanking Nita and Louis for all they have done for this agency, and wishing them well in their "new normal."

This heat "ain't no joke" as they say—we are actually under a heat advisory for the weekend. Wishing you all, in every OJJ office and facility, a safe, cool weekend, with my sincere thanks for all you do, every day and everywhere in every kind of weather, to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*



Comments?
Send them to
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