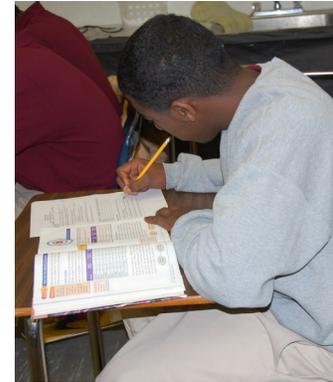


what's up doc?

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

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Hello, Everyone:

Good afternoon everyone. Some weeks it is easy to come up with my weekly message because there is a lot to talk about. This is one of those weeks.

Until the cows come home, we will be keeping you advised on the status of our work to keep OJJ funded as it should be, and how the budget may be impacting all of us. On Wednesday, Assistant Secretary Sean Hamilton and I had the chance to talk directly to some of our staff in Tallulah and in Monroe P and P offices. The news we delivered is hard to give. Again, this is not what any of us want to have happen. Basically, we have a year-end deficit of 11.3 million dollars, and we need a supplemental appropriation by the legislature sometime in early March. If we do not get a supplemental, rolling furloughs will begin in mid March. They will include all of central office, all of probation and parole, and some administrative staff from the facilities. We will have to each stay home without pay for a designated period of days through June 30th.

This is to get us out of this year's budget, and we still have to make our case for getting what we need to effectively operate in FY17. Our work is cut out for us. As the Governor has said, the state cannot cut its way out of this mess. Revenue has got to be raised for vital services to be maintained.

Yesterday, at the Capitol, several agency secretaries got the opportunity to tell a packed room of constituents and providers, what will happen to our agencies if taxes are not passed. I had the chance to communicate to all of them (must have been about 200 people there from all over the state) about the good work you do, and what would happen to our agency if we have to take a 63% cut. My message is, we cannot take any more cuts. We are cut almost to death right now.

I will take this time again to encourage you to exercise your right to contact your legislators and tell them whatever is on your mind. Be involved. That way you can always say you did your part whichever way you want it to go. This is a very critical time in our state, not just for services for youth, but impacting many other areas of life in Louisiana as well.

Let me shift to something more positive. We had the chance to take Judge Mitch Redd, Assistant District Attorney Cynthia Guillory, and Bill Sommers from Calcasieu Parish on tours of Columbia and Swanson Centers for Youth. What a day! Regional Manager Stephanie Krygowski arranged this for everyone, and it was great to see how well our treatment model is working. It is really amazing to see how these young people excel with the right treatment model and positive role modeling and direction from all the staff. Yes, all the staff. Everyone is involved with helping these young people turn their lives around. Many kudos to Regional Director Carolyn Lewis, Director Richard Robinson, Assistant Director Kim Rushing and all of the staff we met with. Outstanding! Bravo to all. I needed the lift and it was truly a gift to see it is all coming together.

This weekend is going to be nice. I hope everyone can find a way to enjoy it with family and friends. I'll close with my sincere thanks to every member of the OJJ team, wherever you serve, for all you do every day to meet the mission.

Sincerely, "Doc"
Dr. Mary Livers

Comments?
Send them to
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