

Karen's Corner



During the December Interim Session of the West Virginia Legislature, I presented to the Legislative Oversight Committee for Health and Human Resources (informally known as LOCHHRA) a plan for the restructuring of our agency. I want to share this information with you in my column this month, so that you will hear directly from me what it means to you as employees of DHHR.

There has long been discussion from a variety of sources that DHHR is too large to be effective. I do not believe that our size is a problem - large agencies can and do function effectively. It is my assessment that through appropriate reorganization of our resources, we can establish and accomplish our goals to achieve mission of our agency, that being our pledge to promote and provide the appropriate health and human services to the people of West Virginia in order to improve their quality of life.

Through our reorganization, we will focus on uniting our team and adjusting our operating procedures. We will continue to build our internal network through communications, and we will align our bureaus under three new deputies. This three-pronged structure best fits our needs to maximize our efficiency.

The Deputy of Human Services will oversee the Bureau for Children and Families and the Bureau for Child Support Enforcement. The Deputy of Health Services will oversee the Bureau for Public Health and the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities. The Deputy of Public Insurance and Strategic Planning will oversee the Bureau for Medical Services and two new entities, the Office of Health Improvement and the Office of Grant Strategy. All three deputies will report to me as the Cabinet Secretary. In reorganizing our reporting structure, we can give more specific focus to support the needs of the bureaus, as we work to improve productivity and accountability for our responsibilities to the people of West Virginia. You will see these organizational changes take place over the next few months. We will continue to communicate with you as we work toward our new structure, I know that we can count on you to help us as we make our way through the changes.

I also shared with the LOCHHRA committee positive results from other initiatives underway, including our decline in employee turnover (which has dropped from 30% to 23%), our work to streamline the hiring process and fill vacancies more quickly, and worker safety plans.

The changes ahead will lead to a better future for DHHR, our employees, and the citizens of our state. Thank you for your commitment to the work of the DHHR and to those we serve and protect.

I send to each of you my personal wish for a safe and healthy holiday season, and I look forward to working together in what I hope will be the best year ever for the Department of Health and Human Resources.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen L. Bowling".

Karen L. Bowling, Cabinet Secretary

DHHR Efforts to Curb Teen Smoking are Working

Youth tobacco use in West Virginia is declining based on the latest data released by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Division of Tobacco Prevention. The 2013 West Virginia Youth Tobacco Survey indicates that the percentage of high school students who reported they have never tried or used any form of tobacco has increased 124% from 20.6% in 2000 to 46.1% in 2013. Over the same 10-year period, there was a 107% increase in the percentage of high school students who reported never having tried smoking cigarettes (53.2% in 2013, up from 25.7% in 2000).

Data from the report indicate 18.6% of West Virginia high school students are smokers, a 52% improvement from 38.5% in 2000. Dr. Letitia Tierney, State Health Officer and Commissioner for the Bureau for Public Health, attributes much of the success in the report to the teens participating in Raze, West Virginia's teen-led tobacco prevention movement, with a membership of close to 4,000 youth and 150 "crews" statewide. "We are making significant progress, but we can do even better," said Tierney. "We must remember that Nicotine is a drug and it is addictive. We must empower our young people with information about the dangers of tobacco, before they become addicted. Nicotine puts young people at risk for life-long, serious health consequences."

To learn more about Raze visit www.razewv.com or for more info about the Division of Tobacco Prevention go to www.wdtp.org. Raze is funded and facilitated by the DHHR in collaboration with the American Lung Association of West Virginia.

Nicholas County CPS Receives Incite Hope Award



Nicholas County CPS Team Members

The Women's Resource Center recently awarded several Incite Hope Awards to members of the community who have made great efforts to combat domestic violence and raise awareness. One of this year's recipients was the Nicholas County Child Protective Services Team.

Women's Resource Center is a private, non-profit agency that provides temporary shelter, counseling, advocacy and supportive services for victims, survivors, and witnesses of domestic violence and sexual violence. Women's Resource Center operates a 36-bed shelter (largest in the state) that has been housing victims of domestic and sexual violence since 1983 in Raleigh, Fayette, Summers, and Nicholas counties.

Community Services Manager Patty Martin commented, "I am fortunate to work with such a great group of individuals that make up the Nicholas County Child Protective Service Unit. They are hardworking, dedicated professionals. This unit strives hard to maintain a good relationship with our community partners."

BCF Commissioner Nancy Exline added, "I am extremely proud of the work and dedication Child Protective Services workers across West Virginia do every day. The Nicholas County CPS Team has gone above and beyond by taking on this important social issue affecting families and the safety of children in their community. Thank you for all that you do."

Secretary Bowling visits John Manchin, Sr. & Marion County DHHR



Kitchen Crew: Wendy Field, Secretary Bowling, Donna Rhondes

Cabinet Secretary Karen Bowling and Linda Dailey, deputy commissioner for the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities, traveled to Marion County on November 21 to visit the John Manchin, Sr. Health Care Center and the Marion County DHHR office. Secretary Bowling and Deputy

Secretary Bowling later met with APS workers, child support, and all other offices located at the Marion County office. After touring, the employees met with Secretary Bowling where she spoke about her goals and expectations for DHHR and addressed questions from the audience.

Commissioner Dailey were greeted by Manchin CEO Carol Merrill.

Secretary Bowling toured all areas of the Community Clinic and Nursing Home. She met with most of the employees and residents of this facility, as well as several family members. At the conclusion of the tour, the Secretary participated in a reception open to all employees of the facility. She answered questions and discussed concerns. She complimented the staff on their work and their attitudes toward their co-workers and their patients. The visit was well received and appreciated by all.

Immediately following the reception at Manchin, Secretary Bowling traveled to the Marion County DHHR office. The tour of these offices was conducted by Paula Taylor, CSM. Richard Post, Economics Service Worker Supervisor, introduced his team of 12 to Secretary Bowling. His team has no vacancies and 0% SNAP error rate.

In the Social Service Department, Secretary Bowling met with CPS workers, who have an 83% contact rate within 72 hours, and Jessica Heflin, a Juvenile Services worker, with 100% face-to-face contact rate.



Management Team: John Manchin, Sr.



Management Team: Marion County DHHR