



Director's Message

July 15, 2014

Dear Colleagues,

As many of you may know, the 2013 Legislature noted the declining youth custody population and the deteriorating conditions of OYA's two oldest facilities, Hillcrest and MacLaren. The Legislature directed OYA to develop a 10-year plan for facility use, and to submit that plan to the Legislature a few months before the 2015 Session.

To meet this deliverable, OYA issued a request for bids and contracted with DLR Group to conduct a statewide review of facilities. DLR was asked to perform onsite visits, evaluate the data gathered from the most recent facilities assessment review, and incorporate research on best practices in youth corrections. The result of their work will be a series of recommended options for the best use of facilities to address anticipated youth population trends and provide efficient and cost-effective services within environments that support our culture of positive human development.

DLR has national expertise in adult and juvenile correctional facility design, having completed more than 80 similar projects. Their review process is now well underway. Those of you who work in facilities may have seen members of DLR doing walk-throughs and asking questions as they look at every building on the grounds of every facility to help determine the best use of our physical plant resources. This process is being overseen by a team that includes Rex Emery, Clint McClellan, Troy Gregg, Dan Berger, and Ken Jerin.

Our goal is to determine how our facilities can be upgraded to support positive human development and best practices in juvenile justice. For example, emerging research shows that the optimal number of beds per unit for juvenile close-custody facilities is smaller than our current 25-bed size, and has a higher staff-to-youth ratio. Researchers also recommend that intake units provide individual rooms for youth, as opposed to our current dormitory setting. DLR will be providing options for the most cost-effective ways we can begin to move toward these new models.

The consultant's report should be completed in September. We expect to receive recommendations for a range of options that will include suggested new configurations and consolidations of facilities. Once we receive the final report, we will share it with you.

We understand any recommendation to reconfigure living units, or to consolidate or downsize facilities, will cause anxiety and uncertainty. It is important to keep in mind that there are several steps involved in this process. After we receive DLR's report, we will be working with

legislators and staff to review and discuss the recommendations to determine which changes are feasible given costs and other factors. We expect this to be a lengthy process, as is true of all capital construction projects. Any changes the Legislature approves in response to these recommendations are not likely to occur immediately and will take time to implement.

Our commitment to you is to continue to be transparent throughout the process and to share information with you as it becomes available. In the meantime, please feel free to share your concerns and questions with us about this process.

Sincerely,



Fariborz Pakseresht
Director



Joe O'Leary
Deputy Director



Clint McClellan