



Oregon

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May 11, 2010

NEWS RELEASE

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Nurses make a difference in lives of OYA offenders

When offenders start the intake process at an Oregon Youth Authority facility, nurses are among the first professionals they see. Nurses begin a health exam and interview during the first hour of intake, at Hillcrest Youth Correctional Facility in Salem for boys and Oak Creek YCF in Albany for girls.

OYA nurses are being recognized as part of National Nurses Week. It ends Tuesday, which is the birthday of Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) who still is recognized for her pioneering work in nursing.

“Nurses represent the front line of health care for the 900 offenders in the care and custody of the Oregon Youth Authority’s 11 facilities,” said Colette S. Peters, OYA director. “They assist youth in diverse ways ranging from basic hygiene and health maintenance to helping with chronic conditions such as insulin-dependent diabetes.”

Nursing services are essential to fulfilling the OYA mission to protect public safety and reduce crime by holding offenders accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments. In 2009 OYA hired its first nurse manager to bring consistency of care across all facilities.

“Good health helps youth engage successfully in treatment, further their education and work toward becoming employed, law-abiding members of the community,” Peters said.

Besides providing a health exam at intake, OYA nurses work with offenders on unaddressed health issues, ensure immunizations are up to date, provide health education and serve as a resource to other staff on youth-related health questions.

OYA nurses work closely with other agencies, too, such as using vaccines provided by the Vaccines for Children program administered by the Oregon Department of Human Services Health Division.

One or more nurses work at all OYA facilities except Camp Florence, which contracts with a local clinic to provide medical services. OYA also has physicians on staff at MacLaren YCF in Woodburn and Hillcrest YCF in Salem and engages contract physicians for other facilities.

OYA youth receive the cost-effective standard of care that prevails in the community such as treatment for illness, pain and other factors that affect activities of daily living. However, the agency does not pay for cosmetic issues or dental braces, orthodontics or contact lenses, for example. A panel of medical professionals is available to review cases.

OYA has custody of approximately 900 offenders ages 12 to 24 in correctional and transitional facilities in Albany, Burns, Florence, Grants Pass, La Grande, Salem, Tillamook, Warrenton and Woodburn, and the agency supervises approximately 1,100 offenders on parole and probation in communities throughout the state.

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