



Department of  
Youth Services

**Message from DYS Director Harvey Reed**

**Happy Holidays!**

December 11, 2012

Dear Staff:

As we enter the holiday season, I trust that you will respond to the needs of the youth in our care with sensitivity. During this season, youth are more likely to experience sadness, frustration and anger, especially when there is minimal contact with family members. We typically see an increase in self-injurious behaviors in youth during the months of December and January.

Be watchful for any changes in the usual behaviors and attitudes of youth. Examples of situations that warrant referrals to mental health staff include the following:

- A normally talkative youth becomes distant
- A calm youth becomes easily angered or agitated
- A sociable youth begins to withdraw
- A youth begins to give away personal items

Youth should be closely observed during and following family visitation. Stress on the visiting family members and the youth who will remain at the facility can lead to strained interactions. Remember to continue to treat all visitors respectfully and courteously. Watch youth to ensure that frustrations are handled appropriately. Likewise, parole staff should be mindful to family dynamics throughout the holiday season.

Happy holidays to everyone! For those staff who work on the holidays, I thank you for expressing the spirit of the season to our youth while fulfilling your work responsibilities.

Harvey J. Reed, Director  
Department of Youth Services