



Department of  
Youth Services

**Message from DYS Director Harvey Reed**  
**It's the Holiday Season**

December 11, 2013

Dear Staff:

The holiday season is here, I appreciate how you respond to the needs of the youth in our care with sensitivity. During this time of year, youth are more likely to experience sadness, frustration and anger, especially if there is infrequent contact with family members. We typically see an increase in self-injurious behaviors in youth during the months of December and January.

Please be observant of any changes in the usual behaviors and attitudes of youth. Examples of situations that warrant referrals to behavioral 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 visits with family. 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.

I wish all of you very happy holidays! For those staff who work on the holidays, I thank you for making the holidays special for our youth while fulfilling your work responsibilities. I also thank your families and loved ones for supporting the important work you do every day, but especially during the holiday season.