

**Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women  
Regular Meeting**

**April 22, 2010**

**Commission Members Present:** Fern Bowling, Patty Bryant, Deena Fisher, Catherine Haynes, Lyn Hester, Ashley Kehl, Rebecca Kennedy, Lou Kohlman, Joyce Martin, Bernice Mitchell, Patricia Presley, Nancy Rothman, Joyce Horton, Sanders, Peggy Thompson, Mary Walker, and Adeline Yerkes

**Commissioner Members Excused:** Rita Aragon, Bob Darcy, Lee Denney, Katherine Jones, Denise Kinzie, Debbe Leftwich, Carolyn McLarty, Chris Morriss, Jennifer Paustenbaugh, Pam Peterson and Nancy Smith

**Commissioner Members Absent:** Marilyn Harmon, Valaska Littlefield, and Valerie Thompson

**Advisory Committee Members present:** Heather Simon, Pat Martin, Debbie Boyer, Leslie Thomas

**Staff:** Tya Smith

**Guests:** None

Agenda Topic	Discussion	Action Taken
<b>Minutes of March 25 Meeting</b>	Roll call conducted with a quorum present. Call to review and approve the minutes of the March 25, 2010 Commission General Meeting.	Lou Kohlman moved approval of minutes. Motion seconded by Patti Bryant. Minutes approved by Commission Members.
<b>Financial Report</b>	Leticia Edwards from the Office of Personnel Management presented the financial report for Marilyn Capps. The Commission received a 9.1% reduction which was \$2,061. \$15,750 has been encumbered to pay expenses for the Incarceration Summit. A listing of purchased orders processed for the Summit was disseminated. Dollars have been set aside to cover advisory board member pens and \$1000 still available for Women’s Health Week – May 9-15.	
<b>History Moment</b>	The History Moment presented by Heather Simon. Her moment acknowledged her mentor Patti Bryant and her leadership and supportive skills. She has given her support to Heather as she has developed a confidence as a woman, in her career and in the development of a non-profit organization called “Hearts of Confidence.” Organization provides make-overs for women who have suffered domestic violence. She also announced that she is running for the state legislature for House District #79.	

Agenda Topic	Discussion	Action Taken
<b>Reports</b>	<p><b>Mary Walker, Chair</b> recognized Patty Presley for her award presented by Zonta. Zonta is an international women’s group interested in women worldwide. Mary also reported as a part of <b>Unfinished/Ongoing Business</b> that Chris Morriss is still attempting to make arrangements to present the Guardian Award.</p> <p><b>Vice-Chair, Retreat Chair: Lyn Hester</b> reported on potential sites for the June retreat. The scheduled date for the retreat is June 24 our regularly scheduled date for Commission meetings. She has reviewed several sites: Post Oak Lodge in west Tulsa and two sites in Guthrie – Sand Plum and the Old Train Station. Costs for the two sites in Guthrie were within the Commission’s price range.</p> <p><b>Secretary: Kathryn Jones</b> is not present, due to parent illness and her move to Arkansas. Minutes are being taken by Adeline Yerkes.</p> <p><b>Advisory Council: Chair Joyce Martin</b> introduced Advisory Members present: Heather Simon, Pat Martin, Debbie Boyer, Leslie Thomas</p> <p><b>NACW Representative: Bernice Mitchell</b> reported on the nation NACW forthcoming annual conference, July 22-25 in Rockville, MD. See the attached NACW conference information attached. Bernice will be conducting national board orientation and she continues on the nominating committee. Oklahoma has 15 affiliate members. Bernice suggested that the SIS summit and process be submitted for a national award. Achievement award paperwork was given to Rebecca and Adeline. This past week Dorothy Hight, 98 years and a woman of color died. She was an early activist in the women’s movement. Bernice also announced that the national History Museum on Women funding to expand efforts has been passed out of senate committee.</p> <p><b>Nominating Committee: Bernice Mitchell</b> presented the slate of officers. President – Mary Walker, Vice- Chair – Joyce Martin, Secretary – Adeline Yerkes, Advisory Board Chair – Fern Bowling, Nominating Committee – Patty Bryant and Deena Fisher. Mary Walker called for additional nominations. No additional nominations. The slate of officers will be elected at the June meeting.</p>	<p>Motion made by Adeline Yerkes to hold the retreat June 24 at the Sand Plum in Guthrie and to authorize funds to cover costs up to \$850. Motion seconded by Catherine Haynes. Motion approved by Commission Members.</p>
<b>Unfinished Business</b>	<p>During March meeting, the funding of Bernice’s travel to the National Commission on Status of Women was delayed due to need for a financial status report.</p>	<p>Catherine Haynes moved \$1400 be allocated for Bernice’s travel to NACW. \$500 - airfare, \$450 -hotel,</p>

Agenda Topic	Discussion	Action Taken
		<p>\$350 –registration and \$50 for miscellaneous expenses. Deena Fisher seconded the motion. Motion approved by Commission members.</p>
<p><b>Committee Reports</b></p>	<p><b>Policies and Procedures Committee: Chair Lou Kohlman</b> discussed proposed changes to the Commission’s policies and procedures. The Guardian Award is not in the proposed changes to the policies and procedures. The changes were based on current practice of several years – Guardian Award is new and has not been practice. Lou and the Committee were commended for job well done.</p> <p><b>Website and Communications Committee: Chair Lyn Hester</b> reported that the same cumbersome issues on updating the website remain, but that Committee continues to work with the OPM staff to resolve issues.</p> <p><b>Legislative Committee: Patty Bryant</b> reported that the committee is tracking a total of 33 bills. Of the 33 bills, 6 have been passed and signed by the Governor, 13 are dead. SB1597, not listed, is on term limits of Commissioners and should be added to bills tracked. <b>See attached listing.</b></p> <p><b>Health Committee: Adeline Yerkes</b> reported that National Women’s Health Week is May 9-15 and the theme is “Its Your Time.” See attached letter and 10 points on healthy women. <b>Bernice Mitchell</b> reported that Stillwater will be holding a Bone Health Conference at the Meridan Career Tech May 18<sup>th</sup> from 2-4 pm.</p> <p><b>Leadership Committee: Joyce Martin</b> – no report</p> <p><b>Women Incarcerated Committee: Rebecca Kennedy</b> reported the summit is next week and the planning efforts have been superb due to the work of Commissioners, Advisory Board members and our partners. At this time, there are more exhibitors wishing to exhibit then there is space available. The Blue Ribbon Panel will have one more meeting to prioritize the strategies.</p>	<p>Commissioners agreed Guardian Award and its criteria not be a part of policies/procedures due to newness.</p> <p>Quorum not present at the time policies and procedures discussed, so voted delayed.</p> <p>Bernice Mitchell moved that \$500 be allocated for the conference for healthy calcium rich snacks – dollars are to come from NWHW Federal funding in revolving fund. Motion was seconded by Fern Bowling. Motion was approved by Commissioners.</p>
<p><b>Announcements</b></p>	<p>Wilma Mankiller, former Chief of Cherokee Nation and long standing women’s activist died from cancer in April. Bob Darcy and Lou Kohlman visited with</p>	

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
	<p>delegations from Malaysia and the Republic of Georgia on the status of women in Oklahoma. The delegation members were curious about religion and civil law, domestic violence and economic development. The delegations were presented with the Almanac and poster.</p> <p>May is National Arthritis Month and Leslie Thomas invited members to be part of the various area walks, Tulsa, Norman and Oklahoma City.</p> <p>If you are aware of issues that impact women or child, please send to Tya so that she can post on the listserv.</p> <p><b>Pat Martin</b> reported that she will be attending the Southern Women's Conference in Atlanta April 30<sup>th</sup>. She also disseminated an article on incarceration from the Tulsa County District Attorney's "Pursuit of Justice" Journal.</p>	
<b>Next Meeting</b>		<b>May 27th</b>
<b>Adjournment</b>		Patricia Presley moved to adjourn meeting. Lou Kohlman seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.

2010 Bills Concerning Women and Children

Measure	Short Title	Senate Author	House Author	Current Chamber	Status 3-24-10	Status 4-21-10
SB1793	Children: allowing waiver of jury trial under certain circumstances. Effective date.	Paddack	Thomson	House	Referred to Judiciary	House Amendments read
SB1890	Public health and safety: prohibiting abortions solely on account of the sex of the unborn child.	Lamb	Sullivan	House	Do Pass Judiciary	Approved Gov. 4-2-10
SB1891	Public health and safety: creating the Freedom of Conscience Act. Emergency.	Sykes	Peterson	House	Do Pass Judiciary	Approved Gov. 4-2-10
SB1902	Public health and safety: regulating the provision of RU-486.	Lamb	McNiel	House	Do Pass Judiciary	Approved Gov. 4-2-10
SB1977	Marriage: prohibiting recognition of common law marriage.	Garrison	Faught	House	Referred to Judiciary	Not heard in committee
SB2022	Criminal procedure: relating to the Protection from Domestic Abuse Act: allowing court to authorize victim to monitor location of defendant. Effective date.	Leftwich	Tibbs	House	Referred to Judiciary	
SB2064	Crimes and punishments: modifying provisions relating to zones of safety and sex offenders. Emergency.	Gumm	Terrill	House	Referred to Judiciary	Approved Gov. 4-19-10
SB2150	Domestic Abuse Offenses Modify	Sparks	Schwartz	House	Do Pass Judiciary	House Amendments read
SB2219	Prisons and reformatories: authorizing certain pilot program. Effective date	Lamb	Hamilton	House	Referred to A&B	Not heard in committee
SB2258	Greater Protecting Victims of Human Trafficking Act of 2010	Jolley	Terrill	House	Referred to A&B	House Amendments read
SB2301	Prisons and reformatories: creating Tabby's Law. Effective date.	Newberry	Duncan	House	Referred to Judiciary	House Amendments read
SB2304	Child Trafficking Increase Penalties	Newberry		Senate	DEAD	DEAD
SB1967	Task Force on Parental Responsibility for Runaway Youth	Rice	McAffrey	House	Referred to Human Services	Not heard in committee

4-21-10

2010 Bills Concerning Women and Children

Measure	Short Title	Senate Author	House Author	Current Chamber	Status 3-24-10	Status 4-21-10
*	HB2297 Intoxicating liquors; increasing penalties for underage drinking. Effective date.	Brown	Duncan	Senate	Do Pass A&B Sub Public Safety - Referred to FULL A&B	Senate Amendments received
	HB2325 Rape; adding circumstance to definition	Burrage	Hoskin	Senate	Do Pass Public Safety	Approved Gov. 4-9-10
	HB2561 Human Trafficking Add and modify definitions	Brown	Cooksey	Senate	Referred to A&B	Not heard in comm.
	HB2634 Marriage; modifying fees and requirements; providing for covenant marriage; establishing divorce restrictions; requiring premarital counseling prior to covenant marriage; specifying that common law marriages shall no longer be recognized; specifying requirements for divorce in covenant marriages; codification; effective dates.		McCullough	Senate	Do Pass Judiciary	Not heard in comm.
	HB2648 Children; relating to the jurisdiction in certain child custody cases; relating to adoption-related expenses and requirements; providing for the selection of an attorney for birth mothers in some circumstances; fees; effective date.	Russell	Nelson	Senate	Do Pass Judiciary	Conference Granted
	HB2721 Children; Uniform Parentage Act limitations; effective date.		Sherrer	House	DEAD	DEAD
	HB2920 Public health and safety; creating the Oklahoma Maternal-Infant Quality Care Act; creating the Oklahoma maternal-Infant Quality Care Collaborative; providing for purpose; codification; effective date; emergency.	Jolley	Treblcock	Senate	Referred to Health and Human Services	Senate Amendments received
*	HB2965 Sex crimes; modifying and adding penalties; Emergency.	Sykes	Duncan	Senate	Do Pass A&B Sub Public Safety - Referred to FULL A&B	Engrossed to House
	HB2968 Sex offenses and sex offenders; relating to the Sex Offenders Registration Act; modifying address registration requirement; effective date.	Jolley	Sanders	Senate	Do Pass Judiciary	Approved Gov. 4-19-10

3-11-10  
4-21-10

2010 Bills Concerning Women and Children

Measure	Short Title	Senate Author	House Author	Current Chamber	Status 3-24-10	Status 4-21-10
HB2998	Prisons and reformatories; authorizing Department of Corrections to implement a pilot program for certain inmates.	Lamb	Steele	Senate	Referred to A&B Sub Public Health	Senate Amendments received
HB3075	Public health and safety; mandating certain sign posting for facilities performing abortions; Emergency.	Justice	Hamilton	Senate	Do Pass Health and Human Services	Sent to Gov. 4-20-10
HB3076	Prostitution; affirmative defense; pandering; clarifying and expanding scope of acts	Eason-McIntyre	Hamilton	Senate	Referred to A&B Sub - Public Safety	NOT heard in comm.
HB3077	Human oocytes; requiring certain consent; prohibiting valuable consideration. Effective date	Crain	Hamilton	Senate	DEAD	DEAD
HB3110	Public health and safety; creating the Freedom of Conscience Act; repealer; codification; emergency.	Jolley	Peterson	House	DEAD	DEAD
HB3258	Children; providing for the outsourcing of foster care; codification; effective date.	Newberry	Blackwell	Senate	Referred to A&B Sub Health and Human Services	Referred to Engrossment
HB3290	Public health and safety; prohibiting provision of RU-486 under certain circumstances; repealer; codification; emergency.		McNiel	Senate	Referred to Health and Human Services	Senate Amendments received
HB3393	Developmental disabilities; modifying the Self-Directed Care Pilot Program; creating the Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program; codification; effective date; emergency.	Anderson	Nelson	Senate	Referred to A&B	Senate Amendments received
SB1251	Insurance; prohibiting health insurance plans from taking certain actions. Effective date.	Wilson	Brown	House	Referred to Econ. Development and Financial Services	Did not get 3rd hearing on Senate side
SB1612	Children; creating the Advisory Council for Children of Incarcerated Parents. Effective date. Emergency.	Anderson	McDaniel	House	Referred to Human Services	Did not get 3rd hearing on Senate side
SB1762	Intoxicating liquors; providing penalties for operators of certain buses transporting minors consuming alcohol.	Leftwich	Terrill	House	Referred to Public Safety	Did not get 3rd hearing on Senate side

3-11-10

4-21-10

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
 FY 2010 BUDGET PROGRESS REPORT  
 COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN  
 As of March 31, 2010

10-10013 EXPENDITURE	OBJ		ACTUAL	FY-10	FY-10 YTD	BUDGET		NET
CATEGORY	CODE	BWP	CURRENT	YTD	MO. AVG	BALANCE	COMMITTED	BALANCE
BUDGETED FTE:	0.5							
AVERAGE FILLED FTE:	0.3							
SALARIES	11	8,565	604	5,156	573	3,409	1,811	1,598
LONGEVITY	11							
DIFFERENTIAL	11							
OT,TOB,L,SL	11							
INSURANCE	12	175				175		175
INSURANCE WC	12	61	6	36	4	25	25	
INS. NON PAYROLL	12							
RETIREMENT	13	802	46	394	44	408	139	269
RETIREMENT NON PAYROLL	13							
PROF SVCS	15							
INTERIINTRA-PROF SVCS	19							
TOTAL PERS SVCS		9,603	656	5,586	621	4,017	1,975	2,042
TRAVEL	21	3,000				3,000		3,000
TRAVEL-DIRECT	22							
MISC ADM EXPENSE (utilities)	31	47,637	356	653	73	46,984	200	46,784
RENT	32							
MAINT/REPAIR	33							
SUPPLIES/MAT	34							
PRODUCTION EXPENSE	35							
OFFICE EXPENSE	36	1,000	864	1,735	193	(735)	279	(1,014)
OFFICE FURN/EQUIP	41							
LIBRARY EQUIP & RESOURCES	42							
INCENTIVE AWARDS	52							
PROGRAM REIMBURSEMENT	54							
OTHER DISBURSEMENTS	60						5,500	(5,500)
ENCUMBRANCE - OBJ. CODE	61							
TOTAL OPERATING		51,637	1,220	2,388	265	49,249	5,979	43,270
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		61,240	1,876	7,974	886	53,266	7,954	45,312
FY-2010 FUNDING:								
GENERAL REVENUE 2010	19911	16,837				16,837	16,837	
GENERAL REVENUE 2010	19001	26,710	1,876	7,974	886	18,736	(8,883)	27,619
OPM REVOLVING FUND	205							
OPM REVOLVING FUND	215	17,693				17,693		17,693
TOTAL FUNDING		61,240	1,876	7,974	886	53,266	7,954	45,312

4/6/2010

Oklahoma Commission on  
the Status of Women

Outstanding Encumbrances  
for the Month of March 2010

Fund Class	ID Dept	Ref Bud	Name Vendor	No PO	Date PO	No Account	Remaining Amount
19001	1010013	10	COMPSOURCE OKLAHOMA	5489002046	6/18/2009	512310	\$ 25.00
19001	1010013	10	INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S POI	5489002134	9/1/2009	531260	\$ 200.00
19001	1010013	10	STAPLES CONTRACT & COMMER	5489002087	7/1/2009	536140	\$ 244.05
19001	1010013	10	MTM MIDWEST TROPHY	5489002151	9/28/2009	536140	\$ 35.00
19001	1010013	10	AUTHORITY ORDER VENDOR	5489001932	3/23/2009	601100	\$ 5,000.00
19001	1010013	10	AUTHORITY ORDER-PCARD TVL	5489002088	7/2/2009	601100	\$ 500.00
Department Total							\$ 6,004.05

Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women  
Detailed Expenditures for the Month of March 2010

Fund	Department	Bud Ref	Claim #	Vendor Name	
19001	1010013	10	00006258	COMPSOURCE OKLAHOMA	\$25
19001	1010013	10	00006309	COMPSOURCE OKLAHOMA	\$200
19001	1010013	10	00006277	DEPARTMENT OF CENTRAL SERVICES	\$244.05
19001	1010013	10	00006277	DEPARTMENT OF CENTRAL SERVICES	\$ 115.27
19001	1010013	10	00006261	DALE ROGERS TRAINING CENTER	\$ 33.00
19001	1010013	10	00006261	DALE ROGERS TRAINING CENTER	\$ 5.00
19001	1010013	10	00006288	NATIONAL ASSOC OF COMMISSIONS FOR WOMEN	\$ 150.00
19001	1010013	10	00006262	THE PRAIRIE GYPSIES INC	\$ 838.75
19001	1010013	10	00006262	THE PRAIRIE GYPSIES INC	\$ 25.00
				Payroll	<u>\$ 426.70</u>
				Department Total	<u>\$1,652.79</u>

# Save the Date!



## NACW's 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Business Meeting & Conference

July 22 - 25, 2010

Hilton Washington DC|Rockville  
Hotel & Executive Meeting Center  
Rockville, MD

*Hosted by the Montgomery County  
Commission for Women; Supported by the Commissions for  
Women of Delaware and Baltimore County, Maryland*

*Montgomery County, Maryland:*

*The Upside of Downtown*

*Your gateway to the nation's capital!*

- Briefing with national leaders on women's issues
- Wonderful workshops with panelists leading the way on women's equality
- Special seminars on effective strategies for Commissions for Women
- Beautiful, newly remodeled hotel with all the amenities, including in-room wireless connections, pool, exercise room, and much more
- Direct access to and from Reagan National Airport, the Smithsonian, Union Station, and other area attractions via Metro rail station right across the street!
- Complimentary parking at the hotel for guest conferees
- Refreshments available continuously throughout the day
- Great shopping and dining within minutes of the hotel

*Registration opens in Spring 2010*

*\$350 Members \$325 Members Early Registration \$400 Non-members \$375 Non-Members Early Registration*

Check this site frequently for new developments.

Call 240-777-8330 for more information

[www.nacw.org](http://www.nacw.org)

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## Call to Conference

The Officers and Board of Directors of the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) extend to you and your colleagues an invitation to attend our 40th Annual Conference and Business Meeting in Rockville, Maryland July 22-25, 2010. This year's conference, "Capital Opportunities for America's Women and Girls" is hosted by the Montgomery County Commission for Women with support from the Commissions for Women of Baltimore County, Prince George's County, Maryland and Delaware.

We have so many exciting things planned for you at the conference! There will be sessions crammed with information you can use in your Commission's work, meetings with high level officials and leading advocates for women and families, along with a trip to the nation's capital!

Please read the enclosed forms, make copies to share as needed, and note the deadlines carefully:

- ~ Registration Form (Early registration by May 30; regular registration deadline is July 2)
- ~ Hotel Reservation Information (Room rate guaranteed until July 2, 2010)
- ~ Achievement Award Entry Form (Deadline May 14, 2010)
- ~ Official Delegate Designation Form (Deadline May 1, 2010)
- ~ Call for Resolutions (Deadline May 1, 2010)
- ~ Call for Nominations - ~orms for Election to NACW Board (Deadline June 1, 2010)

Everyone is invited to attend! However, only delegates of commissions whose NACW membership is in good standing will be able to vote in association business meetings. Dues are payable no later than May 1. Information and dues applications are available on NACW's website, [www.nacw.org](http://www.nacw.org). If you need an invoice, contact NACW National Office at 240.777.8308.

We look forward to welcoming you to Montgomery County, Maryland for three days of professional development, strategy building and leadership training. Bring the family for this unique opportunity to visit the gateway to our Nation's capital with all it has to offer!



**Register Early!**

**The first 10 individuals to register will receive a \$50 rebate!**

*The National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) is committed to equality and justice for women by increasing the effectiveness of member commissions and serving as their national voice.*

OCSW  
2<sup>nd</sup> REPORT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE  
APRIL 22, 2010

The following names are being submitted for consideration of office;

CHAIR	MARY WALKER
CO-CHAIR	JOYCE MARTIN
SECRETARY	ADELINE YERKES
ADVISORY COUNCIL CHAIR	FERN BOWLING

NOMINATING COMMITTEE - 2011

PATTY BRYANT  
DEENA FISHER

Respectfully submitted,

Bernice Mitchell, Chair  
Members - Rebecca Kennedy & Denise Kinzie

# Womenshealth.gov

The Federal Government Source for Women's Health Information



## Dear Colleague,

We invite you to join us in celebrating National Women's Health Week. National Women's Health Week is a weeklong health observance coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health (OWH). National Women's Health Week empowers women to make their health a top priority. With the theme "It's Your Time," the nationwide initiative encourages women to take simple steps for a longer, healthier, and happier life. Important steps include:

- Getting at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous physical activity, or a combination of both each week
- Eating a nutritious diet
- Visiting a health care professional to receive regular checkups and preventive screenings
- Avoiding risky behaviors, such as smoking and not wearing a seatbelt
- Paying attention to mental health, including getting enough sleep and managing stress

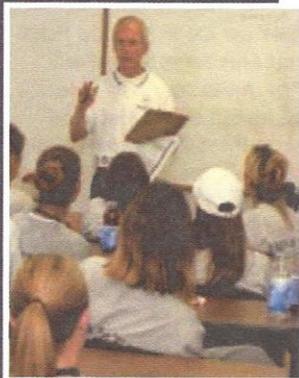
Please visit the national website <http://www.womenshealth.gov/whw/>. This web page directs you to finding over 30 free materials for the public, for professionals, information on the National Women's Checkup Day, the Woman Challenge and tools/calculators. Please register your event, so that we may help you promote it.

Please also visit the Quick Health Data Online and check out the data for Oklahoma Women and also men. <http://www.healthstatus2010.com/owh/>

Secondly, we would like to introduce the Oklahoma team representing the US Office on Women's Health.

- Amy Carte, RN, MS - she serves as your state liaison to the US Office on Women's Health. Currently she is the Program Manager of the Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program, Chronic Disease Services, Oklahoma State Department of Health. She can be reached at 405-271-4072 or [amyc@health.okgov](mailto:amyc@health.okgov)
- Pam Iron, MEd - she serves on the Region VI Alliance on Women's Health. Currently she is the Executive Director of the National Indian Women's Health Resource Center. She can be reached at 918-456-6094 or [pam@niwhrc.org](mailto:pam@niwhrc.org)
- Adeline Yerkes, BSN, MPH - she serves on the Region VI Alliance on Women's Health and the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women. Currently she is an owner of AMY Consulting, LLC and serves as a women's health consultant. She can be reached at 405-760-3915 or [adelineyerkes@adelineyerkes.com](mailto:adelineyerkes@adelineyerkes.com)

# The Costs of Sending Women To Prison



Offenders attending programs in prison

**Public Safety is always the most important factor the DA's office considers in determining whether alternative sentences are appropriate.**

Visiting Day at an Oklahoma prison for women



**M**OST everyone agrees that when women go to prison, their children

suffer. Recent efforts to find a "better solution" to incarcerating non-violent women offenders include a statewide summit, and a Women in Recovery Program which provides comprehensive treatment and support for 25 Tulsa County women otherwise headed to prison.

A judicial committee recommends reduced penalties for drug crimes, presumptive probation, multiple sentences run at the same time, and expanded eligibility for alternative courts. Public safety is always the most important factor the District Attorney's Office considers in determining whether alternative sentences are appropriate. The DA's office supports alternatives to incarceration if public safety allows and places more offenders in alternative courts than any other county in the state.

While there are negative effects on children whose mothers are incarcerated, there are also negative effects on children who live in homes where mothers cook meth or are passed out while children go hungry and unsupervised. There are negative effects when women use drugs or alcohol while pregnant. And children often suffer emotional and/or physical abuse at the hands of addicted parents. Placing a woman in treatment doesn't always safeguard her children. Discussion of this issue must acknowledge that sometimes a mother's behavior puts her children more at risk than her incarceration.

Some women are in prison for non-violent crimes. But if you think that non-violent offenders are sent to prison without first being given alternatives, you are wrong. Unless a woman is convicted of a violent crime or drug dealing, or has a lengthy criminal history, it is almost certain she will be given repeated chances to

stay out of prison. There are compelling stories of women (and men) who successfully complete alternative sentences. There also are many in alternative courts who fail treatment repeatedly and their addictions make them a threat to themselves, their children and others.

Consider Jeanne Henderson, 19. This mother spent days on a meth binge while her children fended for themselves. In the end, she passed out with her 3-year-old next to her on the couch and her 8-month-old baby nearby in a walker. When the wheel of the baby's walker jammed in the floor furnace grate, his sister couldn't free him. Mom couldn't hear the children screaming and the baby burned to death five feet from her. This mother's drug use was a non-violent crime with a violent ending. In 2005, a Tulsa County jury convicted her of second-degree manslaughter and drug possession in the presence of a child and sentenced her to four years on each count.

And consider the children of Tracy Palm, 27, who pleaded guilty to charges of stolen property, forged checks and possession of drug paraphernalia in September 2005. She was given a 3-year deferred sentence, placed in drug court, and absconded within two weeks. When officials found her three months later, she was allowed to enter treatment and later released on a monitor. Two months later, she was arrested for Public Intoxication, and then sent to another treatment facility. Two weeks later, she failed to appear for drug court. In April 2006, the judge sent her to a third treatment facility. Upon completion, she entered an independent living home and they secured full-time employment for her. She was again arrested for Public Intoxication in March 2007. A plan was developed to move her back into intensive treatment. She refused to go and absconded. In June 2007, she was sent to another inpatient program. She was later released and ordered to use a sobriety. In February 2008, she tested positive for alcohol and opiates. In October 2008, police found her, 7 months pregnant and passed out near a road. A bystander was holding her 10-month-old who'd been crying in a nearby

stroller. Her blood alcohol was .30 - more than three times above the .08 the law considers intoxicated. After three years in drug court, 21 sanctions, and five treatment programs, she was sent to prison for four years. She served 10 months and was released by the Department of Corrections.

Lena Oss, 38, already had four felony convictions and was believed to be dealing methamphetamine from her home in 2008. Police found a 4-year-old and 5-month-old there in addition to her four older children. The septic tank was not functioning and trash, laundry and drugs were strewn throughout the house. Her oldest three had already been removed from the home four times due to substance abuse. One child tested positive for methamphetamine when she was born in 1996. When police arrested Oss and she learned she was going to jail and her children to a shelter, she said, "I'm sure gonna miss my dogs." She is serving a 7-year prison term.

Rosetta Ralls, 30, was sent to prison in 2008 for manufacturing methamphetamine and child endangerment. Her five children, ages 3 months, 2, 5, 7 and 8 years, were in the house where she cooked meth. This was her second felony conviction. She entered prison in October 2008 and was released in January 2010. She is serving the remainder of a suspended sentence.

Melissa Sweet, 28, was given a 2-year suspended sentence for grand larceny and sent to 7 treatment programs while on probation. She tested positive for cocaine 6 times, was kicked out of 2 inpatient facilities and tested positive for drugs while pregnant before her suspended sentence was revoked and she was sent to prison in April 2008 and released in January 2010.

Treatment for addiction often is a good solution. But it doesn't always save taxpayers money as proponents argue. A January 23 opinion piece in the Tulsa World claimed the cost of incarcerating women is "up to \$22,000 per offender annu-

See *When Treatment Fai/\$ Page*

# When Treatment Fails, What is the Best Solution?



**Health  
Fair in an  
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Prison**

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ally," compared to \$18,000 per offender for Women in Recovery. According to the Department of Corrections, the most expensive Oklahoma women's prison costs \$43.67 per day or \$15,939 per year per offender. In Tulsa, the cost is \$37.57 per day, or \$13,640 per year.

There are costs for alternative courts where judges, prosecutors and public defenders oversee dockets and offenders are seen in court over and over (sometimes weekly) for as long as three or four years. There are costs for staff who arrange transportation, locate treatment beds and keep track of violations and sanctions. There are costs for treatment, ankle monitors, sobriety tests, and drug testing. And there are costs to victims when defendants commit new crimes - shoplifting, burglary, bogus checks, stolen cars and property, vehicles damaged in car crashes.

In 2008, 329 women were sent to prison from Tulsa County for terms ranging from less than a year to life in prison. Five women were sentenced to prison at trial, all others pleaded guilty. Forty-two women were sent to prison for violent crimes: murder, armed robbery, child abuse, and assault with a deadly weapon, and 287 women were sent to prison for non-violent crimes. Most charged with non-violent crimes failed alternative treatment before they were sent to prison, and dozens were charged with new crimes while on probation. More than half were sent to prison for 3 years or less - and rarely served more than one-third of a sentence.

Those sent to prison with one or more prior felony convictions, numbered 251; 95 had four or more prior felony convictions. Eleven women sent to prison had 10 or more prior felony convictions.

In 2008, 55 women with no prior felony convictions were sent to prison. However, 17 of the 55 were charged with manufacturing, distribution or trafficking drugs - indicating they were dealing drugs, not just using them.

Following are some drug cases where

women with no prior convictions were sent to prison from Tulsa County in 2008:

**Courtney Sittel, 27:** Charged with felony DUI in July 2007 when an officer saw the car she was driving go left of center five times in less than a mile. She admitted taking "a couple of Xanax" and had marijuana in her pocket. She already had six drug/alcohol-related misdemeanor convictions in three counties and had received two one-year suspended sentences, one four-month suspended sentence and fines. She also had been court-ordered to attend treatment four days a week. She pleaded guilty to the new charge in February 2008 and was given a 3-year suspended sentence and placed on an electronic monitor. While on probation, she had two positives for alcohol and 27 ignored alcohol alerts from 2-25-08 to 6-8-08. Her suspended sentence was revoked July 16, 2008 and she was sentenced to 3 years in prison and ordered to attend a treatment program. She was released from prison one year later in September 2009.

**Carrie Sanders, 29:** Sentenced to 2 years deferred for drug possession. On probation when an ambulance was called because she was high on crack cocaine and went into premature labor. She was combative with EMSA attendants while taken to the hospital, where she delivered the child and then left against medical advice. Her sentence was accelerated and she was sent to prison in June 2008. She was released Nov. 30, 2009.

**Lisa Ohearn, 47:** Arrested in August 2007 and charged with felony DUI after she ran a red light and T-boned a car in which a man, his wife and child were riding. Police said she admitted to taking hydrocodone and clonazepam. She had a prior misdemeanor conviction for DUI in Tulsa County in 2003 for which she was given a one-year suspended sentence. She also had arrests for DUI in Pryor, Broken Arrow, and Locust Grove and a 2002 DUI charge in Wagoner County that was dismissed. Ohearn pleaded guilty to the new charge in September 2007, was given a 2-year suspended sentence and placed on a Community Sentence in Tulsa County. She was to attend 2 support meetings per week and seek employment. On Jan. 8, 2008, she reported to her case manager "very intoxicated" and tested positive for Oxycontin, morphine and benzodiazepines. She reported Intoxicated in April 2008 and was again

positive for drugs. In June 2008, she reported intoxicated, was placed in custody for a month and ordered to report to a treatment facility when released. She reported to the facility intoxicated, was taken to the hospital for a drug overdose and placed in detox for five days. She was admitted back into treatment, but discharged five days later for taking morphine from a resident. The case manager reported she had attended only one support meeting and "has failed every opportunity for treatment." Her suspended sentence was revoked and she was sent to prison for 2 years on August 20, 2008. She was released in May 2009 by DOC.

**Cathy Schaffer, 38:** Arrested in August 2007 for selling crack cocaine near Bell Elementary School in Tulsa. She was already on a suspended sentence for a misdemeanor charge of obtaining merchandise by bogus check. She had a second prior misdemeanor conviction for shoplifting and possession of drug paraphernalia. Schaffer pleaded guilty in October 2007 to a reduced felony charge of drug possession and given a 3-year deferred sentence under Community Sentencing. In April 2008, she was again arrested for a new drug charge. On August 20, 2008, her deferred sentence was accelerated and she was sentenced to 3 years in prison. She was released in October 2009.

The DA's office supports Women in Recovery, Drug Court, Community Sentencing and other programs that include treatment for addiction and other root causes of crime. The reality is, though, that not everyone succeeds in these programs and there must be meaningful consequences for continued non-compliance with court orders and/or continuing criminal behavior. And sometimes, that results in incarceration.



**Women Offenders in an Oklahoma Prison**

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