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Statement from Commissioner Hall on sentencing of former prison nurse

JACKSON – Corrections Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said a seven-year sentence handed to former prison nurse Sara Lana Denning shows the consequences of bringing contraband into prisons.

“As District Attorney Tony Lawrence said, ‘I hope this case sends a message that smuggling contraband into prisons will not be tolerated,’ ” Hall said.

Denning, 54, of Wiggins was sentenced Thursday in Greene County Circuit Court to serve four of the seven years in prison with the remainder on post-release supervision. She also was fined \$5,000.

Denning was convicted Aug. 17 of possession of controlled substance in a correctional facility. She was caught with 27.88 grams of marijuana and 9.64 grams of spice at the South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI), where she worked as a licensed practical nurse, on April 28, 2014.

“If anyone takes the chance to disrupt the orderly running of MDOC by introducing contraband into a facility or fraternizing with offenders, we will pursue prosecution under the fullest extent of the law,” Hall said. “We fight every day to earn respect for corrections, but the reputation is continuously tarnished by this behavior.”

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