



FY 2011 PERFORMANCE PLAN Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

MISSION

The Mission of the Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) is to ensure that justice is served and that the health and safety of the public is improved by conducting quality death investigations and certification, and providing forensic services for government agencies, health care entities and grieving families.

SUMMARY OF SERVICES

OCME provides forensic services to local and federal government agencies, health care providers, institutions of higher learning and citizens in the District and metropolitan area. Forensic services include: forensic investigation and certification of certain deaths (i.e., deaths occurring as a result of violence (injury) as well as those that occur unexpectedly, without medical attention, in custody, or pose a threat to public health); review of deaths of specific populations; grief counseling; performance of a full range of toxicological examinations; cremation approvals; and public dispositions of unclaimed remains.

PERFORMANCE PLAN DIVISIONS

- Death Investigation and Certification
- Forensic Toxicology
- Fatality Review
- Offices of the Chief & Administration

AGENCY WORKLOAD MEASURES

Measure	FY 2010 Actual
Number of Postmortem Examinations performed: Full/Partial	942
Number of Deaths Due to Traffic Accidents (i.e., cars, Metro, motorcycles)	40
Number of deaths due to hypertensive cardiovascular disease	257
Number of Court-related Activities (i.e., pre-trial conferences, depositions, testimony)	66
Number of DUI cases performed	322
Number of Court-related Activities (i.e., pre-trial conferences, depositions, testimony)	421
Number of child deaths due to inappropriate bedding (with or without crib in the dwelling)	5



Death Investigation and Certification

SUMMARY OF SERVICES

The Death Investigation and Certification Division is responsible for forensic pathology, forensic investigation and mortuary services. Forensic pathology involves conducting decedent examination, certifying the cause and manner of death and providing that information to next of kin and law enforcement, as well as designated government entities and interested parties. Forensic investigation includes evidence gathering, medical interpretation and provision of information to aid in the determination of the cause and manner of death. The purpose of mortuary services is to provide body disposition and autopsy support to forensic pathology staff and the funeral industry.

OBJECTIVE 1: Provide efficient, timely and accurate death investigation and certification of cases within the jurisdiction of the agency as statutorily mandated.

INITIATIVE 1.1: Meet National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) standards for autopsy and postmortem examination reporting.

After overcoming a large backlog and hiring challenges, for the first time in years, OCME met NAME standards for postmortem examination (autopsy) reporting during the 3rd quarter of FY10. NAME standards require that 90 percent of reports of all postmortem examinations be completed within 60 calendar days from the time of autopsy. OCME will continue to optimize staffing resources and technological applications/advances in order to ensure that reports of postmortem examinations be completed according to standard. Staffing is one of the items reviewed for accreditation purposes and is also an industry standard. FY2010 is the first year that the agency has had a full staff of medical examiners that has remained steady. In FY2011, the agency hopes to maintain the current staffing and will continue to work toward consistency in meeting this measure. Further, the agency continues to implement procedural and technological modifications to workflow process to improve effectiveness in this area. Due: End of FY2011.

INITIATIVE 1.2: Conduct First Annual Employee Death Investigation and Certification Summit.

The OCME employees perform job duties and work within their respective divisions to accomplish the agency's mission in providing timely and accurate death investigation and certification. A summit will be held to ensure that all employees understand: 1) their role in the full scheme of the mission; 2) the work of other employees and services provided by other divisions; and 3) the interaction between divisions. The goal of the summit is to foster a team approach to achieving the agency's mission. Due: End of Third Quarter of FY2011.



INITIATIVE 1.3: Improve Medical Examiner Case Management through enhancement of Forensic Automated Case Tracking System (FACTS)

The agency’s Forensic Automated Case Tracking System (FACTS) will undergo additional development in order to improve forensic science and medical examiner services. The system will be updated and converted to the upgraded software applications. Specific activities include: customization of existing death investigation and certification database modules; application and development of new documentation forms to be used in the database; installation of FACTS enhancements and conversions; and forensic photograph conversions. The IT team will undergo application development training and end users trained in the use of additional modules. Due: End of FY2011.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – Death Investigation and Certification

Measures	FY2009 Actual	FY2010 Target	FY 2010 YTD	FY2011 Projection	FY2012 Projection	FY2013 Projection
Percent of reports of all postmortem examinations completed within 60 calendar days from time of autopsy ¹	Not Available	90	86.37	90	90	90
Percent of positively identified bodies ready for release within 48 hours	94	95	94.27	95	95	95
Percent of primary contacts (case decision for jurisdiction) made within eight hours of case assignment to investigator	93	95	91.45	95	95	95
Percent of mortuary scene response within one hour of notification that case has been accepted for OCME jurisdiction by an investigator or medical examiner	91	90	92.79	95	95	95

Forensic Toxicology

SUMMARY OF SERVICES

The OCME Forensic Toxicology Laboratory maintains standards of practice for the detection, identification and quantitation of alcohol, drugs and other toxins in biological specimens. The Laboratory provides scientific support services to OCME in order that the agency may provide accurate death investigation and certification information in a timely manner to next of kin, law enforcement agencies, legal counsel and the community when required.

¹ This measure is an industry standard, adopted in September 2009, by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) within its accreditation guidelines. The previous standard, which set forth a different percentage for completion of cases and varied deadlines for homicide and non-homicide cases, was used by the agency as a measure for FY09 and previous fiscal years. The agency is currently provisionally accredited and continues to work toward meeting the newly adopted measure.



OBJECTIVE 1: Prepare and submit an application for accreditation of the Forensic Toxicology Laboratory by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT)

INITIATIVE 1.1: Complete inspection process of forensic toxicology laboratory by the ABFT toward accreditation status.

The forensic toxicology laboratory will undergo the ABFT inspection process. Subsequent to inspection the laboratory staff will work in conjunction with management and other divisions to address any deficiencies noted, if any, toward achievement of accreditation status. Due: End of FY2011.

INITIATIVE 1.2: Contribute to the scientific community through academic presentation/publication of toxicological findings.

As part of its function to contribute to the scientific community specifically, the forensic toxicology laboratory will assess toxicological findings, conduct trend analyses and present at least one specified study to key stakeholders (i.e., scientific community, health care entities, law enforcement and academic community). The goals are to: 1) highlight data findings and trends relevant to stakeholders; 2) provide training for staff in analyzing findings and trends and presenting such information in an academic setting; and 3) provide visibility to the District's forensic toxicology laboratory. End of Third Quarter FY2011.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – Forensic Toxicology

Measures	FY2009 Actual	FY2010 Projection	FY 2010 YTD	FY2011 Projection	FY2012 Projection	FY2013 Projection
Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 90 calendar days of case submission ²	Not Available ³	90	99.91	90	90	90
Percent of Litigation Packages prepared within 10 business days of formal written request	N/A	N/A	Baseline	90	90	90

² This measure is an industry standard, adopted in September 2009, by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) within its accreditation guidelines. The previous standard, which set forth a different percentage for completion of cases and varied deadlines for negative and positive cases, was used by the agency as a measure for FY09 and previous fiscal years.

³ This new measure establishes the performance of the Forensic Toxicology Division in the preparation of Litigation Packages per Standard Operating Procedures that are required for laboratory accreditation by the American Board of Forensic Toxicologists (ABFT). After receipt of a formal written discovery request for litigation purposes, the turn-around time for completion of the legal documentation package is 10 business days.



Fatality Review

SUMMARY OF SERVICES

The Fatality Review program reviews the circumstances of the deaths of individuals within certain populations, including their interaction with District government services. The purpose of the reviews is to provide analysis and recommendations to the public and District entities serving defined populations, so they can address systemic problems, provide better services and be held accountable. The current Fatality Reviews include the Child Fatality Review Committee (CFRC) and Mental Retardation & Development Disability Fatality Review Committee (MRDD FRC).

OBJECTIVE 1: Provide analysis and make recommendations that result in improved services and outcomes for those populations served by the Fatality Review Unit.

INITIATIVE 1.1: Realign staffing model.

Within the past two fiscal years, the fatality review division has been reduced from 13 full time staff to three. This significant reduction requires the division to realign its staffing model. In FY11, OCME will evaluate workflows and processes of the Fatality Review Division toward improved efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of fatality reviews and adherence to statutory mandates for annual reporting. By September 2011, OCME will have re-established baselines, determined staffing capabilities, and developed a new set of processes for the Division

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – Fatality Review

Measures	FY2009 Actual	FY2010 Projection	FY 2010 YTD	FY2011 Projection	FY2012 Projection	FY2013 Projection
Percent of CFRC fatality reviews held within six months of notification of the death	90	85	85.71	90	90	90
Percent of MRRD fatality reviews held within three months of receipt of the investigative report from DHS/DDS and determination of the cause and manner of death	94	85	100	90	90	90

Offices of the Chief & Administration

SUMMARY OF SERVICES

The Office of the Chief is responsible for oversight of the operational and programmatic functions of the OCME. The Office of Administration program provides administrative services and support to the staff of the OCME. These services include personnel management (timekeeping, training and educational development, and labor relations); contracting and procurement; risk, fleet, property and financial management; information technology and legal services; communications; and agency performance management.



OBJECTIVE 1: Maintain high quality office and system operations to support effective medicolegal death investigation, efficient and quality autopsy reporting, and accurate certification of deaths.

INITIATIVE 1.1 Prepare for agency transition to the Consolidated Forensic Laboratory by developing an agency “facility occupancy” plan and collaborating with CFL stakeholders to ensure readiness to occupy the new facility in a timely manner and with continuity of critical operations.

The agency will prepare for the planned occupancy of a new facility by developing and implementing a plan to assess current inventory and fixed assets. The agency will also continue to collaborate with the CFL stakeholders in determining co-occupancy best practices that will result in maintenance of high quality agency operations. Further, as the time period for occupancy approaches, the agency will work with stakeholders and various support agencies to coordinate a systematic method to move into the facility, including establishing an internal plan for continued critical operations. This includes provision of information to various clients such as next of kin, funeral homes, vendors etc. Due: End of FY2011.

INITIATIVE 1.2: Enhance OCME incident management response including revision of plans, coordination of training efforts and implementation of technological advances in the agency case management system.

The agency’s mass fatality program must be revised and updated to: 1) address changes in the forensic pathology industry; 2) renew existing and establish new external partnerships and ensure partners are knowledgeable about the agency’s role in an emergency incident; 3) ensure the agency incident management plans are updated; and 4) provide refresher and new training to employees and partners. This includes modification of the agency Mass Fatality and Continuity of Operations Plans, continued development of the Forensic Automated Case Tracking System (FACTS) to include a fully functional mass fatality module and coordination with external partners to develop plans and procedures for operation of a Family Assistance Center. The program also includes ongoing agency training in incident management. Due: End of FY2011.

INITIATIVE 1.3: Implement a customer service satisfaction program in order to improve services to agency “clients” and provide a mechanism for external evaluation of office and system operations.

Develop a formalized system to obtain external evaluation of the agency’s performance in service delivery. The agency will solicit input and feedback from its clients, such as next of kin, funeral directors, law enforcement entities and other stakeholders. The data will be assessed and utilized for improved customer service. Due: End of Third Quarter FY2011.