

FY2016 PERFORMANCE PLAN
D.C. 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.

The mission is achieved through:

- provision of vision and leadership for the Medicolegal Death Investigations within the District of Columbia;
- achievement and maintenance of excellent forensic service, education and research in the critical areas of:
 - Investigation, Response, and Reporting of the Cause & Manner of Death;
 - Expert Witness Testimony;
 - Education and Training of law enforcement, health care providers and other stakeholders; and
 - Provision of family assistance in understanding the cause and manner of death of decedents;
- support of law enforcement and public health related initiatives at the state, local, and county levels (i.e. Gang Violence, Drug Abuse); surveillance of critical mortality data; and identification of emerging public health/law enforcement trends; and
- development of partnerships with county/state agencies geared toward mass fatality preparedness.

SUMMARY OF SERVICES

OCME provides forensic services to local and federal government agencies, health care providers, institutions of higher learning and citizens of 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

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

AGENCY WORKLOAD MEASURES

Measures	FY2013 Actual	FY2014 Actual	FY2015 YTD¹
Number of Postmortem Examinations performed: Full/Partial (Not including External Exams)	1049	763	1030
Number of Public Dispositions	99	125	118
Number of Deaths Due to Traffic Accidents (i.e., cars, Metro, motorcycles, pedestrian, bicycle)	49	51	34
Number of drug deaths (illicit/rxn) diagnosed	Not Applicable	137	98
Number of deaths due to hypertensive cardiovascular disease/obesity	358	368	319
Number of Infant deaths (1 year and under) (Note: This number includes pending cases)		32	27
Number of child deaths due to inappropriate bedding/SUID (with or without crib in the dwelling)	2	10	5
Number of elder deaths due to falls (age 65 and over)		81	66
Number of youth (ages 10-19) homicides where gun violence is a factor		6	10
Number of DUI cases performed	707	381	244
Number of Anthropologic Analyses Performed	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	6
Number of Synthetic Drug Samples Tested	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	252

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 also has the responsibility for the continued development of comprehensive emergency response planning and preparedness, employee and stakeholder training. The Office of Administration 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: Provide forensic services in the areas of medicolegal death investigation, forensic pathology and toxicology through academic engagements with community stakeholders to include law enforcement; medical and health care providers; Residents and students; and other government officials. Fulfill mission of providing forensic services.

INITIATIVE 1.1: Focus on partnerships focused on community education geared toward promotion of careers in the field of forensic science, investigation and pathology.

The agency will participate in various engagements with community groups (i.e., ANCs) in targeted Wards, including 7 and 8, throughout the fiscal year to consist of lectures regarding the professions of medicolegal death investigator, forensic pathologist and toxicology and the operations of the agency. The agency will continue to maintain and enhance its partnerships with UDC's Mortuary Science School, as well as George Washington, Howard University and Georgetown in the area of forensics. The purpose is to encourage an interest in the fields of forensic science, investigation and pathology and the credentials and education required to successfully obtain employment in these areas. **Completion Date: September 30, 2016**

District Priority Area: A Strong Economy for All

District Priority Goal: Reduce unemployment by 35% in Wards 7 and 8

OBJECTIVE 2: Obtain agency accreditation status with the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME).

INITIATIVE 2.1 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) Revision & Staff Training

The agency will continue preparation for inspection and accreditation by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) to include revising Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure compliance with federal and District laws, Mayoral orders, industry protocols and agency practices and conducting staff trainings on revised SOPs. The agency will also review an evaluation report of the agency per NAME accreditation standards conducted by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). The agency will address all deficiencies noted within the report. Next steps include application for accreditation and completing an initial inspection by NAME. Accreditation is an endorsement that the agency well serves its jurisdiction and assists in the development and maintenance of a high caliber of forensic/medicolegal death investigation for the jurisdiction.

Completion Date: March 31, 2016

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

OBJECTIVE 3: Implementation of Mass Fatality Management Preparedness Strategies

INITIATIVE 3.1: Disaster Plan Evaluation & Training/Exercises

The OCME will continue its evaluation of mass fatality and continuity of operations planning; emergency response standard operating procedures; local and regional planning and cooperation; and training and exercising. This will involve coordination with regional entities, such as other local Medical Examiners, District agency stakeholders, funeral homes, universities and hospital, federal partners and other community stakeholders. The agency will host an internal mass fatality exercise. This initiative focuses on agency preparation and collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to ensure the safety and security of the District during natural disasters, public health emergencies and terrorist and criminal threats.

Completion Date: September 30, 2016.

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

INITIATIVE 3.2: Build-Out of Agency Fatality Management Operations Center (FMOC)

The agency must have a centralized location for disaster operations and coordination. As such, the agency plans to construct a fatality management operations center to include “emergency communications and office infrastructure.” The Fatality Management Operations Center (FMOC) would provide the agency with initial and ongoing situational awareness for pre-planned or emergency incidents; the ability to centralize operations, assess the situation and provide rapid response; provide appropriate staff preparedness on an ongoing basis; allow communication with other stakeholders (i.e., jurisdictional law

enforcement, fire and rescue, emergency agencies and hospitals); and provide a training center for staff and stakeholder partners for emergency preparedness. The center will also be utilized on a day-to-day basis for operational assessment meetings of medical examiner caseload. Build-out of an FMOC also supports the agency's accreditation efforts as related to accreditation standards requiring a sound mass disaster plan and resources. This initiative ensures that the agency has the appropriate resources and infrastructure to fulfill its role in emergency preparedness situations.

Completion Date: September 30, 2016.

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

OBJECTIVE 4: Data Analysis Fusion Center Quarterly Reporting

INITIATIVE 4.1: Public Health Surveillance Reporting

As part of its mandate as a public health surveillance, the agency will utilize its Data Analysis Fusion Center to produce quarterly reports. The Data Analysis Fusion Center concept is a collaborative effort between agencies to provide and/or share data with the goal of "prevention," "detection," "law enforcement" or other types of evaluation or analysis, particularly in the areas of public safety or health. For example, the agency's mortality data is critical data that can be formatted in a manner that can provide key information to the Department of Health on various issues that can be formulated for various "prevention" messages. Further, the agency IT staff has been trained in GIS mapping wherein mortality data can be utilized by public safety cluster partners. Such data analysis used in a collaborative effort within a fusion center can play a vital role within the District in providing enhanced support services to District residents and visitors. During FY2016, the following quarterly reports will be produced: elder falls; youth homicides, suicides and trends in drug overdoses. **Completion Date: September 30, 2016.**

District Priority Area: A Healthy Community

District Priority Goal: Promote Health Equity

Medicolegal Death Investigation

SUMMARY OF SERVICES

The Death Investigation Division is responsible for forensic pathology and forensic death investigation 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 death investigation is comprised of the Forensic Anthropology and Identification, investigation and mortuary units. The Forensic Anthropology and Identification Unit ensures that decedent identification is made in an accurate and efficient manner and manages the caseload of unidentified decedents for public disposition. The Forensic Investigation Unit conducts a death investigation to include evidence gathering, medical interpretation and provision of information

to aid in the determination of the cause and manner of death. The purpose of the Mortuary Services Unit is to provide body transport 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) industry standards for postmortem examination reporting – 90% of reports postmortem examinations completed within 90 days from the time of autopsy in all cases.

The OCME’s Medicolegal Death Investigation Division will focus efforts on meeting NAME standards for postmortem examinations – 90% of reports of postmortem examinations completed within 90 days from the time of autopsy in all cases. The agency has implemented a myriad of initiatives to enhance the reporting autopsy reporting time periods to include: improved management modules and work processes, dictation services, staffing models and scheduling.

Completion Date: September 30, 2016.

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

District Priority Area: A Healthy Community

District Priority Goal: Promote Health Equity

INITIATIVE 1.2: Public Disposition

The Anthropology & Identification Unit will work to enhance the agency’s public disposition process or the burial of unclaimed decedents. The agency’s function is to provide disposition of those decedents that are not claimed by next of kin or other persons whether identified or unidentified. The Unit will work with the Office of Contracting and Procurement to determine whether the burial site for these decedents can be moved within five miles of the District’s border. Currently, there are two sites that range from about twenty to forty miles. This will assist those next of kin or others that may ultimately want to visit the sites once they discover the death of a loved one.

Moreover, the Unit will work to ensure that all gravesites are clearly marked and well maintained. **Completion Date: December 31, 2015.**

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

INITIATIVE 1.3: Identification of Unidentified Decedents

The Anthropology & Identification Unit & Laboratory will expand its initiative to research and process of unidentified remains. This includes the local dissemination of “Unidentified Decedent Fliers” with certain demographic information and photographs

to media outlets and working federal, regional and local organizations, and national dissemination a federally supported website. Further, this Unit is working with the IT Unit on the implementation of technology for electronic fingerprint submission or digital scans of fingerprints. This initiative not only focuses on providing a positive identification for a decedent for case completion on identification, but more significantly on bringing closure to next of kin.

Completion Date: July 31, 2016.

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

INITIATIVE 1.4: Establishment of Mortuary Examiner Transport Team

The agency will establish a Mortuary Examiner Transport Team consisting of Forensic Mortuary Technicians. The formation of the METT fulfills the standards established by National Association of Medical Examiner (NAME) Accreditation Guidelines. These guidelines require proper body handling during Mass Fatality as well as during day to day case response. The body transport function is currently performed by a vendor. Alternatively, the METT will perform this service and fill gaps identified in: fleet maintenance; decedent intake and release; mass fatality response logistics; post-mortem radiology and identification; supply inventory and tracking; and mortuary quality assurance and control processes. In order to satisfy its emergency preparedness and response function, the agency requires self-sufficiency as related to decedent transport services. The METT will provide such self-sufficiency and perform a myriad of duties, thereby, reducing costs and increasing efficiency. This initiative will be implemented via a phased approach with the initial establishment of the team during FY2016 with two to three existing staff members and two new FTEs. The remainder of the team -- three additional FTEs -- will be brought on staff in future fiscal years. **Completion Date: March 31, 2016.**

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

OBJECTIVE 2: Death Investigation Training Program

INITIATIVE 2.1: American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) Certification of Investigator Staff

In order to maintain a quality investigative unit, it is critical that staff obtain the necessary industry training and required licensures and certifications. The American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) is a voluntary national, not-for-profit, independent professional certification board that has been established to promote the highest standards of practice for medicolegal death investigators. ABMDI certifies individuals who have the proven knowledge and skills necessary to perform medicolegal death investigations. Certification provides official recognition by an independent professional certification body that an individual has acquired specialized knowledge and

demonstrated proficiency in the standards and practice necessary to properly conduct medicolegal death investigations. NAME accreditation standards require a certain number of agency investigators to be AMBDI certified. The purpose of this initiative is to provide a training module for staff to be able to obtain ABMDI certification which will enhance the quality of death investigation within the District. Death investigation completed in a quality manner results in timely and accurate forensic results ultimately promoting the health and safety of District residents. **Completion Date: September 30, 2016.**

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – *Medicolegal Death Investigation*

Measure	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2015 (Actual or YTD)	FY 2016 Projection	FY 2017 Projection	FY 2018 Projection
Percent of all reports of postmortem examinations completed within 90 calendar days from the time of autopsy in all cases ² .	Not Applicable	50%	66%	90%	90%	90%
Percent of all reports or postmortem examinations completed within 60 calendar days from the time of autopsy in all cases ³ .	Not Applicable	50%	43%	50%	75%	80%
Percent of public dispositions ready for release within 45 days ⁴	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	90%	90%	90%
Percent of preliminary investigative reports complete for utilization in the daily case review morning	95%	95%	90%	95%	95%	95%

meetings						
Percent of mortuary/transport service scene response within one hour of transport notification by an investigator or medical examiner of an accepted case	90%	95%	90%	95%	95%	95%
Percent of specimens transported to reference laboratory within 1 day after notification by a medical examiner (excluding weekends and holidays). ⁵	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	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. The Forensic Toxicology Laboratory also provides toxicological analyses and interpretive services on a variety of drug and alcohol related matters for the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), Public Defenders Service, United States Attorney’s Office, United States Park Police, Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), U.S. Capitol Police, U.S. Secret Service, and Office of Victims Services. The laboratory also administers the District’s Breath Alcohol Testing Program and currently conducts the testing of the Synthetic Drug Surveillance Project.

OBJECTIVE 1: Testing and Reporting Enhancement

INITIATIVE 1.1: DUI Testing Enhancement

The Forensic Toxicology Laboratory will work to develop a new rapid drug testing methodology that will increase the scope and performance of DUI testing. More

specifically, the new methodology will decrease turnaround time for DUI casework and test for an increased number of impairing drugs in addition to alcohol.

Completion Date: December 31, 2015.

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

INITIATIVE 1.2: DUI and Traffic Fatality Statistical Data Reporting.

The Forensic Toxicology Laboratory will collect, compile, and report available DUI and traffic fatality data. This data will be made available to specific stakeholders in order to assist with increasing traffic safety measures within the District of Columbia.

Completion Date: September 30, 2016.

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

OBJECTIVE 2: Synthetic Drug Surveillance Project - Testing

INITIATIVE 2.1: Surveillance Project Testing

The District has experienced a surge in the use and sale of synthetic drugs. The Administration has worked with the agency and the Department of Health (DOH) to implement a project for improved surveillance of synthetic drug use within the District, specifically the level and prevalent locations of such use. The data will inform DOH on how to best educate the community on the inherent dangers of synthetic drug usage and implement appropriate measures for those who have become habitual users. In Since its inception, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) has had jurisdiction over the testing aspect of the surveillance program. FY16, the agency will continue to administer the testing portion of the project. **Completion Date: March 31, 2016.**

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

OBJECTIVE 3: Increase Contributions to the Scientific Community

INITIATIVE 3.1: Contribute to the scientific community through academic research, publications and presentations 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 research papers, publications and presentations 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.

Completion Date: September 30, 2016.

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC
District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – *Forensic Toxicology*

Measure	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2015 (Actual or YTD)	FY 2016 Projection	FY 2017 Projection	FY 2018 Projection
Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 30 calendar days of case submission	30%	75%	54%	75%	75%	75%
Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 45 calendar days of case submission ⁶	63%	50%	51%	54%	60%	60%

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), Developmental Disabilities Fatality Review Board (DDFRB) and the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee (DVFRC).

OBJECTIVE 1: Improvement in delivery service and outcomes for those populations served by the Fatality Review Division.

INITIATIVE 1.1: Fatality Review WebPortal

The agency will implement utilization of a secure WebPortal for sharing of documents with the Fatality Review Committee members via the build-out of a ‘Sharepoint’ type model. This will allow sharing of documents by the agency and committee members via a computerized system while maintaining the confidentiality and security of documents as statutorily mandated and required. The system is developed by the Office of the Chief Technology Officer and the IT Unit of the agency via a Memorandum of Understanding.
Completion Date: September 30, 2016.

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America; Reduce domestic and sexual violence, and improve outcomes for victims

INITIATIVE 1.2: Fatality Review Annual Reports

The fatality review annual reports will be published in a timely manner (i.e. child, disabled and domestic violence). **Completion Date: September 30, 2016.**

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America

INITIATIVE 1.3: Fatality Review Programmatic Recommendations

The overall process for all fatality review programmatic recommendations will be reviewed toward improvement in critical services within specific fatality populations (i.e. child, disabled and domestic violence). **Completion Date: September 30, 2016.**

District Priority Area: A Safer, Stronger DC

District Priority Goal: Make DC the safest big city in America; Reduce domestic and sexual violence, and improve outcomes for victims

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – *Fatality Review*

Measure	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2015 (Actual or YTD)	FY 2016 Projection	FY 2017 Projection	FY 2018 Projection
Percent of CFRC fatality reviews held within six months of notification of the death	80%	70%	88%	70%	70%	80%
Percent of DDS fatality reviews held within three months of receipt of the investigative report from DHS/DDS and determination of the cause and manner of death	100%	80%	100%	80%	80%	90%

¹Year To Date (YTD) data included in all charts within this document reflects data through September 30, 2015. There are 92 pending medical examiner cases. This number reflects all remaining pending cases for deaths that occurred between 10/1/2014 and 9/30/2015 and is not a tally of all quarters.

² This measure is an industry standard adopted by NAME within its accreditation guidelines as revised 2014.

³ IBID.

⁴ This is a new measure for FY2016 and, as such, the agency will begin to track data beginning October 2, 2015.

⁵ IBID.

⁶ The industry standard adopted by National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) is “the percent of toxicology Examinations completed within 60 calendar days of case submission.” As such, the agency’s goal is above industry standard in measuring a completion rate of 45, calendar days.