

# Office of the Chief Medical Examiner FY2016

**Agency** 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.

## 2016 Objectives

### FY16 Objectives

Objective Number	Objective Description
<b>Fatality Review (1 Objective)</b>	
1	Improvement in delivery service and outcomes for those populations served by the Fatality Review Division
<b>Forensic Toxicology (3 Objectives)</b>	
1	Testing & Reporting Enhancements
2	Drug Testing
3	Professional Papers and Presentations
<b>Medicolegal Death Investigation (1 Objective)</b>	
1	Provide efficient, timely and accurate death investigation and certification of cases within the jurisdiction of the agency as statutorily mandated.
<b>Office of the Chief &amp; Administration (3 Objectives)</b>	
2	Obtain agency accreditation status with the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME).
3	Implementation of Mass Fatality Management Preparedness Strategies
4	Data Analysis Fusion Center Quarterly Reporting
<b>Offices of the Chief &amp; Administration (1 Objective)</b>	
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.

## 2016 Key Performance Indicators

Measure	Division	Frequency of Reporting	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
<b>1 - Improvement in delivery service and outcomes for those populations served by the Fatality Review Division (2 Measures)</b>							

Percent of CFRC fatality reviews held within six months of notification of the death	Quarterly	80	90	92.98	70	70
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	Quarterly	100	100	100	80	80
<b>1 - Provide efficient, timely and accurate death investigation and certification of cases within the jurisdiction of the agency as statutorily mandated. (6 Measures)</b>						
Percent of all reports of postmortem examinations completed within 90 calendar days from the time of autopsy in all cases	Quarterly			66.54	50	90
Percent of all reports or postmortem examinations completed within 60 calendar days from the time of autopsy in all cases.	Quarterly			41.62	50	90
Percent of public dispositions ready for release within 45 days	Quarterly					90
Percent of preliminary investigative reports complete for utilization in the daily case review morning meetings	Quarterly	91	89.8	80.77	95	95
Percent of mortuary/transport service scene response within one hour of transport notification by an investigator or medical examiner of an accepted case	Quarterly	84	90.3	90.21	95	95
Percent of specimens transported to reference laboratory within 1 day after notification by a medical examiner (excluding weekends and holidays)	Quarterly					95
<b>1 - Testing &amp; Reporting Enhancements (2 Measures)</b>						
Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 30 calendar days of case submission	Quarterly	51	29.9	51.92	75	75
Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 45 calendar days of case submission	Quarterly			58.65	50	50

## 2016 Workload Measures

Measure	Frequency of Reporting	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
<b>Workload Measure (11 Measures)</b>				
Number of Postmortem Examinations performed: Full/Partial (Not External Exams)	Quarterly	1,049	763	1,030
Number of Public Dispositions	Quarterly	99	125	118
Number of drug deaths (illicit/rxn) diagnosed	Quarterly		137	98
Number of deaths due to hypertensive cardiovascular disease/obesity	Quarterly	358	368	319
Number of infant deaths (1 year and under) (Note: This number includes pending cases)	Quarterly		32	27

Number of child deaths due to inappropriate bedding/SUID (with or without crib in the dwelling)	Quarterly	2	10	5
Number of elder deaths due to falls (age 65 and over)	Quarterly		81	66
Number of youth (ages 10-19) homicides where gun violence is a factor	Quarterly		6	10
Number of DUI cases performed	Quarterly	707	381	244
Number of Anthropologic Analyses Performed	Quarterly			6
Number of Synthetic Drug Samples Tested	Quarterly			252

## 2016 Initiatives

Objective Number	Objective Title	Initiative Number	Initiative Title	Initiative Description
<b>Fatality Review - 1 (3 Initiatives)</b>				
1	Fatality Review Delivery Service	1.1	Implement the Fatality Review Web Portal	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.
1	Fatality Review Delivery Service	1.2	Mandated Annual Reports	The fatality review annual reports will be published in a timely manner (i.e. child, disabled and domestic violence).
1	Fatality Review Delivery Service	1.3	Review Fatality 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).
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<b>Forensic Toxicology - 1 (2 Initiatives)</b>				
1	Testing & Reporting Requirements	1.1	Enhance DUI Testing	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.
1	Testing & Reporting Requirements	1.2	Report DUI and Traffic Fatality Statistical Data.	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.

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**Forensic Toxicology - 2 (1 Initiative)**

2	Drug Testing	2.1	Continue the Drug Surveillance Project	The District has experience 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. 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.
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**Forensic Toxicology - 3 (1 Initiative)**

3	Scientific Contributions to Community	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 Districts forensic toxicology laboratory.
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**Medicolegal Death Investigation - 1 (4 Initiatives)**

1	Death Investigation & Certification	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.
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1	Death Investigation & Certification	1.2	Public Disposition	<p>The Anthropology &amp; 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.</p>
1	Death Investigation & Certification	1.3	Identification of Unidentified Decedents	<p>The Anthropology &amp; Identification Unit &amp; 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.</p>

1	Death Investigation & Certification	1.4	Establishment of a Medical Examiner Transport Team (METT)	<p>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.</p> <p>Alternatively, the METT will perform this service and fill gaps identified in: fleet maintenance decedent intake and release mass fatality response logistics postmortem 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.</p>
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**Office of the Chief & Administration - 2 (1 Initiative)**

2	NAME Administration	2.1	Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) Revision & Staff Training	<p>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.</p>
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**Office of the Chief & Administration - 3 (2 Initiatives)**

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3	Fatality Management	3.1	Disaster Plan Evaluation & Training/Exercises	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
3	Fatality Management	3.2	Build-Out of Agency Fatality Management Operations Center (FMOC)	<p>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 preplanned 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.</p>

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**Office of the Chief & Administration - 4 (1 Initiative)**

4	Agency Public Safety & Health Surveillance	4.1	Data Analysis Fusion Center Quarterly 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.
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**Offices of the Chief & Administration - 1 (1 Initiative)**

1	Forensic Services	1.1	Community Education	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 UDCs 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.
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