

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner FY2021

Agency Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

Agency Code FXO

Fiscal Year 2021

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.

Strategic Objectives

Objective Number	Strategic Objective
1	Provide efficient and quality forensic services related to: a) the medicolegal investigation and certification of the cause and manner of death; b) toxicological analyses and interpretations; c) family assistance in understanding the cause and manner of death; d) expert testimony; and e) education and training of law enforcement, health care providers, academic institutions, and other stakeholders.
2	Provide efficient and effective service through a quality management system supported by continuous process improvement, quality control measures, adherence to accrediting body guidelines, training, and best practices.
3	Serve as a public health and safety surveillance organization providing statistical data to law enforcement, health care entities and social service entities tasked with prevention, detection and deterrence, and ultimately preventing deaths.
4	Provide sound expertise as the District's fatality management authority maintaining a comprehensive District-wide plan to respond to all types of fatality incidents and ensure decedent disposition, family assistance, and continuity of operations.
5	Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent, and responsive District government.

Key Performance Indicators

Measure	Directionality	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target
1 - Provide efficient and quality forensic services related to: a) the medicolegal investigation and certification of the cause and manner of death; b) toxicological analyses and interpretations; c) family assistance in understanding the cause and manner of death; d) expert testimony; and e) education and training of law enforcement, health care providers, academic institutions, and other stakeholders. (8 Measures)					
Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 90 calendar days of case submission	Up is Better	98.5%	99.6%	96.4%	80%
Percent of all reports of postmortem examinations completed within 90 calendar days from the time of autopsy in all cases	Up is Better	93.2%	95.5%	92.4%	90%
Percent of mortuary/transport service scene response within one hour of transport notification by an investigator or medical examiner of an accepted case	Up is Better	97.3%	95%	97.2%	95%
Percent of decedent cases scientifically identified within five days	Up is Better	33.6%	56.7%	48.3%	30%
Percent of storage requests from hospitals filled within two business days of receipt.	Up is Better	New in 2021	New in 2021	New in 2021	New in 2021
Percentage of decedents with no known next of kin to be entered into Namus Unclaimed prior to the release of the decedent for public disposition.	Up is Better	New in 2020	New in 2020	34.8%	80%
Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 60 calendar days of case submission	Up is Better	90.9%	91.8%	85.8%	50%
Percent of decedent storage unit spaces unoccupied within the morgue during normal operation periods.	Up is Better	New in 2020	New in 2020	55.7%	55%
2 - Provide efficient and effective service through a quality management system supported by continuous process improvement, quality control measures, adherence to accrediting body guidelines, training, and best practices. (3 Measures)					
Percent of employees completing and maintaining licensure, certification, industry-specific, web-based, internal agency training	Up is Better	100%	100%	100%	90%
Percent of external autopsy requests responded to within 2 business days of receipt	Up is Better	99%	99.9%	99.9%	90%
Percent of forensic pathologists (medical examiners) that are board certified or board eligible	Up is Better	100%	100%	100%	90%
3 - Serve as a public health and safety surveillance organization providing statistical data to law enforcement, health care entities and social service entities tasked with prevention, detection and deterrence, and ultimately preventing deaths. (4 Measures)					
Percent of Child Fatality Review Committee (CFRC) fatality reviews held within six months of notification of the death	Up is Better	100%	100%	100%	70%
Percent of Developmental Disabilities Fatality Review Committee (DDS FRC) fatality reviews held within three months of receipt of the investigative report from DHS/DDS and determination of the cause and manner of death	Neutral	100%	66.7%	100%	90%

Measure	Directionality	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target
Percent of FOIA requests responded to within fifteen (15) days	Up is Better	94.1%	87%	97.8%	90%
Percent of CFRC case summary reports that will be uploaded to the web portal three days prior to the scheduled case review meetings	Up is Better	96.4%	100%	100%	80%
4 - Provide sound expertise as the District's fatality management authority maintaining a comprehensive District-wide plan to respond to all types of fatality incidents and ensure decedent disposition, family assistance, and continuity of operations. (1 Measure)					
Percent of agency employees completing a mass fatality training annually	Up is Better	96.6%	95.6%	100%	95%

Operations

Operations Header	Operations Title	Operations Description	Type of Operations
1 - Provide efficient and quality forensic services related to: a) the medicolegal investigation and certification of the cause and manner of death; b) toxicological analyses and interpretations; c) family assistance in understanding the cause and manner of death; d) expert testimony; and e) education and training of law enforcement, health care providers, academic institutions, and other stakeholders. (5 Activities)			
MORTUARY	Decedent Handling/Postmortem Examination	Provide body transport, body release and postmortem examination support services. Support forensic pathologists in postmortem examination toward the determination of the cause and manner of death; release of bodies to the funeral industry in a timely manner; and transport of bodies from public spaces, homes, hospitals and other facilities.	Daily Service
FORENSIC PATHOLOGY	Forensic Pathology Services	Provide timely decedent examination and cause and manner of death determination. Investigation and analysis services performed by forensic pathologists resulting in certification of cause and manner of death provided to next of kin, law enforcement, government agencies, and other interested parties.	Daily Service
FORENSIC INVESTIGATIONS	Medicolegal Death Investigations	Gather information and collect evidence and perform medical interpretation services for agency forensic pathologists, law enforcement agencies, and legal counsel. Utilize information obtained from investigations toward identification of decedents and to aid in the determination of the cause and manner of death by forensic pathologists.	Daily Service
FORENSIC TOXICOLOGY LAB	Toxicology Analysis	Provides toxicological analyses, interpretive services and expert testimony. Provides toxicological testing on postmortem cases, as well as, testing on a variety of drug and alcohol related matters for law enforcement entities, other District agencies and federal entities, as well as, administers the District's District's Breath Alcohol Testing Program.	Daily Service
FORENSIC SUPPORT SERVICES	Forensic Analytic Testing	Provide scientific support services in the form of analytic testing for OCME and law enforcement agencies. Provide support toward the timely determination of cause and manner of death determinations via testing of specimens at forensic laboratories.	Daily Service
2 - Provide efficient and effective service through a quality management system supported by continuous process improvement, quality control measures, adherence to accrediting body guidelines, training, and best practices. (4 Activities)			
CUSTOMER SERVICE	Records Management	Serve as the custodian of agency records providing premier customer service to all parties requesting records the agency is entrusted to secure. Process, maintain, and secure error-free quality records for the District to include autopsy reports, photographs, and other documents as requested by next of kin, the legal community, insurance companies, courts, and other entities.	Daily Service
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	Standard Operating Procedures	Manage agency operational documents providing effective and detailed tracking, auditing, and reporting. Maintain and update standard operating procedures, work processes and instructions, and other related documentation utilizing document management and control systems and process automations to ensure compliance with industry standards.	Daily Service
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	Case Management System	Utilize system to manage death investigation and toxicology documents and data, as well as, for decedent tracking. Maintain and continue development of case management databases utilized to track: a) all relevant case types from case initiation through disposition; b) testing and analysis toxicology data; c) inventory; d) decedents; and e) other key documents and resources.	Daily Service
TRAINING	Professional Training/Career Development	Provide training and career development services to agency staff so they can maintain licensure and certifications, meet accrediting guidelines, and adhere to best practices. Establish innovative ways to obtain training opportunities for staff through District, university, industry-specific, web-based, and internal programs.	Daily Service
3 - Serve as a public health and safety surveillance organization providing statistical data to law enforcement, health care entities and social service entities tasked with prevention, detection and deterrence, and ultimately preventing deaths. (2 Activities)			
Fatality Review	Committee Recommendations	Review circumstances of the deaths of individuals within certain populations, including their interaction with District government services. Conduct fatality reviews to provide recommendations to District entities serving defined populations, so they can address systemic problems, provide better services, and be held accountable.	Daily Service

Operations Header	Operations Title	Operations Description	Type of Operations
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	Data Analysis Fusion Center	Provide data collection, surveillance, and analysis resulting in the promotion of public safety and health. Establish scientific and technical methods and practices to identify and evaluate data in order to determine outcomes and trends in mortality statistics to improve the quality of life of District residents.	Daily Service
4 - Provide sound expertise as the District's fatality management authority maintaining a comprehensive District-wide plan to respond to all types of fatality incidents and ensure decedent disposition, family assistance, and continuity of operations. (3 Activities)			
HEALTH AND SAFETY	Medical Surveillance Program	Provide a safe and healthy workplace for all employees and visitors. Implement an employee medical surveillance program involving a formal safety program that involves management, supervisors, and employees in identifying and eliminating hazards that exist or may develop during work processes and testing.	Daily Service
FATALITY MANAGEMENT	Mass Fatality Training and Education	Provide training and education to agency staff and District stakeholders in order to ensure preparedness for mass fatality incident. Develop and coordinate emergency response/incident training and exercise programs amongst District, regional, and federal stakeholders to ensure the appropriate implementation of incident plans and standard operating procedures, availability and use of equipment and resources, and interoperability.	Daily Service
FLEET MANAGEMENT	Vehicle Operations and Accountability	Implement and maintain a system for managing the use of agency vehicles and accountability for agency drivers. Work throughout the year to manage, maintain, and purchase new vehicles utilized for death scene investigation, transport of decedents, emergency incident management, and administrative functions.	Daily Service
5 - Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent, and responsive District government. (4 Activities)			
CONTRACTS AND PROCUREMENT	Procurement Process Management	Support the District's contracts and procurements process through adherence to the District's rules and regulations, particularly the percentage of budget spent on CBEs. Provision of contracts management, purchasing, and technical assistance to agency staff to obtain products and services within budget, in a timely manner, and according to customer specifications.	Daily Service
PERSONNEL	Human Resources	Recruitment and retention of a highly skilled, professional, and diverse workforce. Focus on staff development, hiring candidates with requisite qualifications, licenses and certifications, maintaining a low vacancy rate, and an efficient onboarding time.	Daily Service
CUSTOMER SERVICE	Customer Service	Provide service information and responses to internal and external customers to have their needs met in a courteous, reliable, and timely manner. Engage next of kin, the funeral industry, law enforcement, health care providers, legal entities, educational institutions, emergency response entities, the public health entities, elected officials, other agencies and residents in the: a) dissemination of requested information; and b) the awareness of agency programs, issues, and challenges.	Daily Service
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	Performance Management	Provide support to overall organizational performance via agency leadership, administrative support services, and employee performance management. Develop short and long term strategic plan for the agency, manage agency and employee performance planning, reporting and evaluating, and provide the administrative support necessary to operate.	Daily Service

Workload Measures

Measure	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual
1 - Forensic Pathology Services (9 Measures)			
Number of Postmortem Examinations performed: Full/Partial (Not including External Exams)	1252	875	1639
Number of Deaths Due to Traffic Accidents (i.e., cars, Metro, motorcycles, pedestrian, bicycle)	57	58	56
Number of drug deaths (illicit/rxn) diagnosed	225	190	246
Number of deaths due to hypertensive cardiovascular disease/obesity	329	305	363
Number of Infant deaths (1 year and under)	25	25	23
Number of child deaths due to inappropriate bedding/SUID (with or without crib in the dwelling)	17	21	18
Number of elder deaths due to falls (age 65 and over)	62	60	77
Number of youth (ages 10-19) homicides where gun violence is a factor	15	16	27
Number of Anthropologic Analyses Performed	113	111	158
1 - Toxicology Analysis (1 Measure)			
Number of DUI cases performed	534	512	308

Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Initiative Title	Strategic Initiative Description	Proposed Completion Date
Committee Recommendations (1 Strategic Initiative)		
Safe Sleep Campaign	Through the Fatality Review Unit the agency will implement a Safe Sleep Campaign focused on developing an innovative mobile technology based application and safe sleep campaign to decrease the number of pre-term births and other precipitating risk factors. Primary audiences include District residents who provide care to infants and secondary audiences include professionals providing medical care, human service supports and daycare providers.	09-30-2021
Customer Service (1 Strategic Initiative)		
Enhanced Language Access Line Reporting	The agency will revamp its Language Access Line utilization and reporting program and protocols to ensure all employees are aware of the services, that services are readily available to the public, to establish a case tracking system and ensure compliance with mandated reporting.	09-30-2021
Decedent Handling/Postmortem Examination (1 Strategic Initiative)		
Body Release Procedures	The agency shall assess body release procedures with regard to a possible need for a sole body release technician. This includes the SOPs, number of releases per day and customer evaluation (funeral homes).	09-30-2021
Forensic Analytic Testing (1 Strategic Initiative)		
Forensic Analysis Testing	The agency shall develop a trends analysis report on all forensic analysis testing (consultations) in order to align budgetary needs.	09-30-2021
Forensic Pathology Services (1 Strategic Initiative)		
Forensic Pathology Fellowship	A Forensic Pathology Fellowship shall be established to include entering into a MOU with George Washington and developing protocols and procedures for a fellowship within the Death Investigations Division.	09-30-2021
Mass Fatality Training and Education (3 Strategic initiatives)		
Fatality Management Operations Center	The agency will continue to work with DGS for the construction of a Continuity of Operations Site that will serve as a fatality management administrative, investigative and mortuary operations site, as well as an operations center for initial and ongoing situational awareness during pre-planned or emergency incidents. During FY21 this will include use of capital monies to procure a vendor for design and purchase of furniture and associated resources/items. This will serve as a regional asset to allow fatality management entities to converge in a single location to plan for and response to regional catastrophic events that cross state boundaries.	09-30-2021
Continuity of Operations Center Site Build-Out	The agency will work with DGS on the renovation of the Blue Plains Annex to serve as a Continuity of Operations Plan Site (COOP). This includes renovation of the facility, implementing new security measures (including a fence surrounding the property) and repavement of the parking lot.	09-30-2021
COVID-19 After Action Reporting & Planning	The agency shall assess operations, resources and staffing during COVID-19 and develop an After Action Report to include successes/issues, gaps and resources required of a similar emergency incident. The agency shall review its COOP and Mass Fatality Plans for update based on the After Action Report.	09-30-2021
Medicolegal Death Investigations (1 Strategic Initiative)		
Adaptation of Industry Standard Investigations (SUIDI) Reporting	The Forensic Investigations Unit will review and adapt a nationally utilized reporting form for Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Investigations Reporting Form. The purpose is to comply with best practices and industry standards in the development of an agency specific form. Such form will incorporate jurisdictional statutory and regulatory mandates, as well as agency policies and procedures.	09-30-2021
Performance Management (2 Strategic initiatives)		
OCME Renovation Project	The agency will work with DGS for a phased approach to the renovation of the 5th and 6th floor offices per the design that was completed in FY18-20. The agency will also work with DGS for the construction of an operations center for initial and ongoing situational awareness during pre-planned or emergency incidents. The project also includes build out of a laundry facility and technological advances.	09-30-2021
Health & Wellness Initiative	The agency will continue to enhance the work environment via the provision of health and wellness activities. This is critical given the front-line work the staff performs in an environment that involves COVID-19, as well as protests and possible environmental hazards.	09-30-2021
Records Management (1 Strategic Initiative)		
Systems Interoperability Initiative between OCME and DCHealth	The agency will continue with implementation of a project between the agency's Case Management System (CMS) and DC Health's Electronic Death Registration System. The purpose is to eliminate the need for staff to enter data into either system separately. Instead, data will only be entered once into one of the systems and will flow automatically to the other. This will improve the process with recording requirements to DC Health's Vital Records Division as related to vitality data.	09-30-2021

Strategic Initiative Title	Strategic Initiative Description	Proposed Completion Date
Standard Operating Procedures (1 Strategic Initiative)		
NAME Accreditation	The Agency shall review and update Standard Operating Procedures for provision to the National Association of Medical Examiners for inspection toward accreditation (per NAME Checklist Guidelines).	09-30-2021
Toxicology Analysis (2 Strategic initiatives)		
Laboratory Information System (LIMS)	The implementation of a Laboratory Information System (LIMS) will allow for ease of case tracking, streamlined data handling and the reduction of transcription errors. The LIMS will directly interface with the instrumentation and provide a mechanism for direct transfer of results and allow for a more efficient means for responding to stakeholders who require case status updates.	09-30-2021
Provision of National & International Toxicology Services	The Forensic Toxicology Laboratory will explore the ability to provide testing services to national and international entities as a way to bring revenue to the District in support of the agency's laboratory operations.	09-30-2021