

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner FY2022

Agency Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

Agency Code FXO

Fiscal Year 2022

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 (KPIs)

Measure	Directionality	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 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	99.6%	96.4%	98.7%	80%
Percent of all reports of postmortem examinations completed within 90 calendar days from the time of autopsy in all cases	Up is Better	95.5%	92.4%	93.4%	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	95%	97.2%	97.6%	95%
Percent of decedent cases scientifically identified within five days	Up is Better	56.7%	48.3%	43.7%	30%
Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 60 calendar days of case submission	Up is Better	91.8%	85.8%	86.4%	50%
Percent of storage requests from hospitals filled within two business days of receipt.	Up is Better	New in 2021	New in 2021	84.2%	90%
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	34.8%	61.8%	80%
Percent of decedent storage unit spaces unoccupied within the morgue during normal operation periods.	Up is Better	New in 2020	55.7%	49.5%	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%	99%	90%
Percent of external autopsy requests responded to within 2 business days of receipt	Up is Better	99.9%	99.9%	100%	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	66.7%	100%	33.3%	No Target Set
Percent of FOIA requests responded to within fifteen (15) days	Up is Better	87%	97.8%	91%	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	100%	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	95.6%	100%	100%	95%

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)		
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 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
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
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 Breath Alcohol Testing Program.	Daily Service
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)		
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
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
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
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)		
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
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)		
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
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
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)		
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
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	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

Operations Title	Operations Description	Type of Operations
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 (WMs)

Measure	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual
1 - Forensic Pathology Services (9 Measures)			
Number of elder deaths due to falls (age 65 and over)	60	77	94
Number of Deaths Due to Traffic Accidents (i.e., cars, Metro, motorcycles, pedestrian, bicycle)	58	56	54
Number of deaths due to hypertensive cardiovascular disease/obesity	305	363	438
Number of Infant deaths (1 year and under)	25	23	28
Number of Anthropologic Analyses Performed	111	158	229
Number of youth (ages 10-19) homicides where gun violence is a factor	16	27	20
Number of Postmortem Examinations performed: Full/Partial (Not including External Exams)	875	1639	1220
Number of drug deaths (illicit/rxn) diagnosed	190	246	116
Number of child deaths due to inappropriate bedding/SUID (with or without crib in the dwelling)	21	18	0
1 - Toxicology Analysis (1 Measure)			
Number of DUI cases performed	512	308	403

Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Initiative Title	Strategic Initiative Description	Proposed Completion Date
Committee Recommendations (1 Strategic Initiative)		
Fatality Review Committee Recommendations	Fatality Review Recommendations Process Assessment: The Agency/Fatality Review Unit leadership will work with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety & Justice to develop strategies to ensure that recommendations made by fatality review committees are addressed. This includes: a) provision of such recommendations to the appropriate entities, including District agencies; b) review of the agency performance management process to determine the efficacy of placing District agency recommendations within their performance plans for implementation for applicable agencies; and c) assisting in developing an overall strategy for enforcement. The Agency/Fatality Review Unit will work with the Chairs of the fatality review committees to include in meeting agenda developing a recommendation enforcement strategy for the District.	09-30-2022
Forensic Pathology Services (2 Strategic initiatives)		
Mortuary Feeder Program	The agency has a mortuary unit and a medical examiner transport team unit (METT). The METT team is responsible for body transport and release but also provides assistance in the mortuary unit. The agency will develop a "feeder program" to allow METT employees to receive specific mortuary training toward the goal of promotion to mortuary positions. This will increase employee morale as they understand the potential to move upward and provide a pool of trained candidates for the mortuary unit when vacancies occur.	09-30-2022
Agency Accreditations	Agency Accreditations: The agency will undergo a review of all Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and facility requirements in preparation for the following accreditations: National Association of Medical Examiners, American Board of Forensic Toxicologists, ANSI National Accrediting Board (ANAB) and International Organization of Standards (ISO).	09-30-2022
Mass Fatality Training and Education (4 Strategic initiatives)		
FMOC/COOP Technological Advances	FMOC Technological Advances: The agency will continue to work with DGS on the buildout of the agency's Fatality Management Operations Center which serves as the epicenter for the COOP and Fatality Field Morgue operations. The IT team will work to implement several technological advances to ensure intercommunication between employees, District agencies and regional entities. The operations center will include a video wall, video-conferencing equipment, real-time regional data feeds, and 24-hour situational awareness.	09-30-2022
Agency Reporting	Agency Annual Reporting: The agency will produce a special report on COVID operations and mortalities as a part of its agency annual report. This report will include the overall agency COVID operations mass fatality plan as implemented at the start of the pandemic (including taking jurisdiction of all confirmed and suspected District COVID fatalities), the logistics and build-out of the Field Morgue Center, the assistance with the Victims Identification Center, COVID case daily reporting and overall COVID cases. The report will also include after-action information.	09-30-2022
Continuity of Operations Planning	Continuity of Operations Center: The agency will continue to work with DGS toward 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. The site will also serve as a regional asset to allow fatality management entities to converge in a single location to plan for and respond to regional catastrophic events that cross state boundaries. The agency will evaluate the use of its current and requested renovation capital funding in that a phased approach to the construction of the site can be developed. The site slated for renovation into the COOP site is at Blue Plains	09-30-2022

Strategic Initiative Title	Strategic Initiative Description	Proposed Completion Date
Fatality Management Preparedness	Employee Fatality Management Training: Fatality management training and exercise ensures District preparedness in emergency response to include District-wide coordination amongst agencies, operability in communications, and compliance with District-wide mass fatality plans (District and stakeholder facilities such as hospitals and funeral homes). Evaluation enables the District to identify gaps and challenges and to improve upon plans through after-action reporting following an emergency response exercise and to revise and improve training modules.	09-30-2022
Medical Surveillance Program (2 Strategic initiatives)		
Health & Wellness Initiative	Employee Vicarious Trauma Training: The agency will develop a Vicarious Trauma Training Series for employees based on grant funding from the Office of Victims Services & Justice Grants (OVSJG). This training will include educational workshops, group and individual counseling sessions, and stress relief exercises and activities.	09-30-2022
Health & Wellness Initiative	Employee Wellness Day: The agency will host its annual Employee Wellness Day which involves setting up booths focused on specific health issues and screenings, extracurricular activities. The focus is to provide educational health information to encourage healthy lifestyles amidst the work as responders within forensic death investigation and emergency incidents.	09-30-2022
Performance Management (4 Strategic initiatives)		
Facility Longterm Planning	OCME Renovation Project: The agency will continue to work with DGS on its phased approach to the renovation of its 5th and 6th floors within the Consolidated Forensic Laboratory. The project plan also includes build out of the Fatality Management a laundry facility and technological advances.	09-30-2022
Fiscal Accountability	Fiscal Process Improvement: The agency will undergo a financial process improvement project aimed at enhancing agency operations toward efficient and effective personnel and non-personnel budgeting. This includes training of a new agency fiscal officer slated for onboarding during FY22 and subsequently developing an action plan for evaluation of the current agency internal budgeting and financial procedures and update of the financial/budget Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).	09-30-2022
Agency-wide Supervisory Training	Management Masters Series: The agency will provide its annual Leadership Training Series, and will augment the series with a self-assessment tool designed to help individuals identify the essential characteristics of successful leadership. This tool will be utilized to evaluate manager leadership strengths/weaknesses in order to create an action plan for improving their leadership skills.	09-30-2022
Agency Mortality Data Reporting	Mortality Data Reporting: The agency will work to hire an employee qualified to serve as its in-house epidemiologist. This position will be responsible for reprising the agency's data fusion center reporting in specific areas: opioids, public disposition and data associated with the agency performance plan workloads. The agency will determine key mortality data reports to be developed and provided to other District agencies, private entities, and the public. Note that the Data Fusion Center, headed by the agency epidemiologist, has not in full operation since 2019 and this initiative will focus on the reopening of the center for specific topics as outlined herein. Other topics will be considered on a case by case basis.	09-30-2022
Professional Training/Career Development (1 Strategic Initiative)		
Agency Training	Professional Training: The agency's mandate includes an academic component. Providing academic training ensures that staff obtain requisite training to maintain licensures and certificates and to implement agency standards within work processes and procedures.	09-30-2022