



**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER
FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN**

DECEMBER 1, 2023

CONTENTS

Contents	2
1 Office of the Chief Medical Examiner	3
2 2024 Objectives	4
3 2024 Operations	5
4 2024 Strategic Initiatives	8
5 2024 Key Performance Indicators and Workload Measures	11

1 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.

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.

2 2024 OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objective

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.

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.

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.

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.

Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent, and responsive District government.

3 2024 OPERATIONS

Operation Title	Operation Description	Type of Operation
<p>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.</p>		
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
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
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
<p>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.</p>		
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

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Operation Title	Operation Description	Type of Operation
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

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.

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

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.

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
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Operation Title	Operation Description	Type of Operation
Fatality Management Facility, Operations, Training, Supplies/Resources/Equipment	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
Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent, and responsive District government.		
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
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

4 2024 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Title	Description	Proposed Completion Date
Budgetary Analysis of Supplies and Contractual Services	Mortuary, Medical Examiner Transport Team (METT) and Forensic Pathology supplies and contractual services are critical to agency operations and achieving the agency mission of death investigation and certification. Funding for supplies and services is one of the largest components of the agency budget. The agency experienced a significant increase in caseload during the COVID pandemic as it took jurisdiction of the COVID cases. However, while the agency no longer accepts COVID cases, the caseload has not returned to pre-COVID levels which has impacted operational funding needs. As such, a budgetary analysis of supplies and contractual services will be conducted to re-evaluate funding requirements for optimum operation in the Mortuary, METT and Forensic Pathology units.	9/30/2024
Forensic Pathology Staff Training	The Forensic Pathology staff, comprised of Medical Examiners, attends conferences each year to maintain licensure, to stay abreast of industry best practices, to provide presentations and workshops, and to network. The agency staff can benefit from knowledge gained at conferences or from the expertise of their field. The Medical Examiner staff will coordinate a presentation for agency staff to be presented during the fiscal year on a topic of their choice.	9/30/2024
Agency-wide Compilation of Forensic Support Services	The agency's Forensic Support Services are a critical component of mortuary and forensic pathology operations. While the agency has budgetary and unit awareness of all forensic support services (i.e., consultations, testing etc.), the agency will compile a comprehensive listing in a grid format for use by all managers. Such listing will be used in the future to evaluate services needs, vendors and funding as related to industry best practices and vendor evaluation in the provision of such services.	9/30/2024
Toxicology Analytical Case Management (LIMS)	Over the past two fiscal years, the agency has worked toward the development of a Laboratory Information System (LIMS) for the Forensic Toxicology Laboratory. Upon completion of the buildout in F22, the designated vendor worked throughout FY23 toward full implementation to include testing/debugging and establishing user training. During FY24, the agency will continue staff training and will develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and protocols associated with the utilization of the LIMS. Staff will also be trained on such SOPs.	9/30/2024

Customer Service Evaluation	The Records Management/Quality Management unit will spearhead the development of a newly revised customer service evaluation system. The Unit will work with Forensic Investigation, METT, Forensic Pathology and any other unit that interacts with the public. The customer evaluation will include overall unit operations, as well as individual staff evaluation of interactions with the public.	9/30/2024
Case Management System (CMS) Integration	Over the past two years, the IT Unit has worked with a vendor on revision of the agency's case management system to a new platform. During this fiscal year, the unit will provide an agency-wide presentation on the system enhancements, as well as staff training; work with the Toxicology Laboratory on possible integration of the new system with the laboratory's newly developed information management system (LIMS); will ensure integration with agency devices and other systems; and will update or develop SOPs associated with the new system.	9/30/2024
Professional & Career Development	The agency will support professional and career development through its travel and training program and budget. This includes opportunities: to maintain licensure, as required; to gain additional expertise or knowledge of industry best practices; for networking; and to gain additional skillsets. The travel and training program includes in-house as well as external opportunities, to include the agency's Management Leadership Training Series, in-house presentations; and the District's training center. The goal is not only to ensure compliance with all licensures and certifications required of staff, but to also enhance agency effectiveness and efficiency in operations.	9/30/2024
Annual Reporting & Committee Recommendations.	The Fatality Review Committee will continue its annual reporting for all fatality review committees/boards, which includes committee recommendations resulting from the reviews. The unit will ensure that recommendations made by fatality review committees/boards are provided to the impacted entities and will assist the Mayor/Administration as they seek to enforce implementation of such recommendations. (There has previously been a challenge in recommendation implementation. The agency /committees do not have enforcement power).	9/30/2024

Agency Facility Renovation	During FY23, the agency worked with the Department of General Services (DGS) to implement a second phase of the agency facility renovations at the CFL. The agency underwent a renovation project between the years 2017 and 2022 to accommodate a growth in staff from about 70 employees to 100, as well as needs for additional storage and work space. During this time, the agency obtained additional FTEs and expanded its academic training to include a forensic pathology fellowship and additional internships, as well as medical students and residency physicians. This expansion amongst staff required additional office/cubicle space beyond that planned in "Phase I" of a renovation. The agency worked with DGS toward use of capital funding for such a buildout. This initiative is included for FY24 given the likelihood that the project will cross into the fiscal year.	9/30/2024
Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Site Renovations	The agency will continue to work with DGS toward a Phase III of agency renovations targeted toward buildout of a Fatality Management Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Site. The agency began discussion with DGS regarding the COOP Site in 2018 and requested funding for the buildout of a site. The agency was able to secure a DC government-owned building (Blue Plains Annex) and was formally approved to use the site as its COOP site. The agency will work with DGS toward concept, design and ultimately construction to renovate the site to include mortuary, emergency response and administrative space to be able to operate as an alternate site as required by its accrediting body (National Association of Medical Examiner). This initiative has been included in the past few fiscal years, as it is dependent on funding that is either available after Phase I and Phase II or additional capital funding awarded.	9/30/2024
Vehicle Replacement Plan	The agency vehicle replacement plan must be implemented at this time given the age of current vehicles. During the first quarter of FY24, the agency will conduct and complete an assessment of vehicles and develop a strategic and budgetary plan to be submitted as an FY25 capital budgetary request.	11/1/2024
Fatality Management Training & Exercise	The agency will develop and implement fatality management training and an exercise during the fiscal year, to include training, review of SOPs, the Mass Fatality Plan and COOP, as well as an actual working exercise (either Tabletop or Full-Scale).	9/30/2024

5 2024 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND WORKLOAD MEASURES

Key Performance Indicators

Measure	Directionality	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024 Target
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.					
Percent of all reports of postmortem examinations completed within 90 calendar days from the time of autopsy in all cases	Up is Better	93.4%	84%	88.6%	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	97.6%	96.5%	96.4%	95%
Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 60 calendar days of case submission	Up is Better	86.4%	83.3%	81.4%	50%
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	61.8%	Not Available	76.3%	65%
Percent of decedent storage unit spaces unoccupied within the morgue during normal operation periods.	Up is Better	49.5%	50.7%	58.3%	50%
Percent of decedent cases scientifically identified within five days	Up is Better	43.7%	Not Available	55.9%	35%
Percent of storage requests from hospitals filled within two business days of receipt.	Up is Better	84.2%	89.5%	99.1%	85%
Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 90 calendar days of case submission	Up is Better	98.7%	98.7%	98.2%	80%
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.					
Percent of employees completing and maintaining licensure, certification, industry-specific, web-based, internal agency training	Up is Better	99%	94.8%	100%	90%
Percent of external autopsy requests responded to within 2 business days of receipt	Up is Better	100%	100%	100%	90%
Percent of forensic pathologists (medical examiners) that are board certified or board eligible	Up is Better	100%	96%	100%	95%

Key Performance Indicators (continued)

Measure	Directionality	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024 Target
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.					
Percent of Child Fatality Review Committee (CFRC) fatality reviews held within six months of notification of the death	Up is Better	100%	100%	90.7%	80%
Percent of FOIA requests responded to within fifteen (15) days	Up is Better	91%	100%	100%	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%	90%
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	33.3%	60.7%	96.2%	55%
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.					
Percent of agency employees completing a mass fatality training annually	Up is Better	100%	100%	95%	95%

Workload Measures

Measure	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Forensic Pathology Services			
Number of Postmortem Examinations performed: Full/Partial (Not including External Exams)	1,220	1,227	1,360
Number of Deaths Due to Traffic Accidents (i.e., cars, Metro, motorcycles, pedestrian, bicycle)	54	62	64
Number of drug deaths (illicit/rxn) diagnosed	116	175	570
Number of deaths due to hypertensive cardiovascular disease/obesity	438	368	350
Number of Infant deaths (1 year and under)	28	20	36
Number of elder deaths due to falls (age 65 and over)	94	92	77
Number of youth (ages 10-19) homicides where gun violence is a factor	20	31	45
Number of Anthropologic Analyses Performed	229	Not Available	159
Number of child deaths due to inappropriate bedding/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) (with or without crib in the dwelling)	0	7	40
Toxicology Analysis			
Number of DUI cases performed	403	512	334