

# Office of the Chief Medical Examiner FY2023

**Agency** Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

**Agency Code** FX0

**Fiscal Year** 2023

**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 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Target	FY2022 Actual	FY 2023 Target
<b>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 Measure records)</b>						
Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 90 calendar days of case submission	Up is Better	96.4%	98.7%	80%	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	92.4%	93.4%	90%	84%	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	97.2%	97.6%	95%	96.5%	95%
Percent of toxicology examinations completed within 60 calendar days of case submission	Up is Better	85.8%	86.4%	50%	83.3%	50%
Percent of storage requests from hospitals filled within two business days of receipt.	Up is Better	New in 2021	84.2%	90%	89.5%	85%
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	34.8%	61.8%	80%	Not Available	65%
Percent of decedent storage unit spaces unoccupied within the morgue during normal operation periods.	Up is Better	55.7%	49.5%	55%	50.7%	50%
Percent of decedent cases scientifically identified within five days	Up is Better	48.3%	43.7%	30%	Not Available	35%
<b>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 Measure records)</b>						
Percent of employees completing and maintaining licensure, certification, industry-specific, web-based, internal agency training	Up is Better	100%	99%	90%	94.8%	90%
Percent of external autopsy requests responded to within 2 business days of receipt	Up is Better	99.9%	100%	90%	100%	90%

Measure	Directionality	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Target	FY2022 Actual	FY 2023 Target
Percent of forensic pathologists (medical examiners) that are board certified or board eligible	Up is Better	100%	100%	90%	96%	95%
<b>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 Measure records)</b>						
Percent of Child Fatality Review Committee (CFRC) fatality reviews held within six months of notification of the death	Up is Better	100%	100%	70%	100%	80%
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%	33.3%	55%	60.7%	55%
Percent of FOIA requests responded to within fifteen (15) days	Up is Better	97.8%	91%	90%	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%	80%	100%	90%
<b>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)</b>						
Percent of agency employees completing a mass fatality training annually	Up is Better	100%	100%	95%	100%	95%

## Operations

Operations Title	Operations Description	Type of Operations
<b>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 Activity records)</b>		
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
<b>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 Activity records)</b>		
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

Operations Title	Operations Description	Type of Operations
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
<b>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 Activity records)</b>		
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
<b>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 Activity records)</b>		
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 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
<b>5 - Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent, and responsive District government. (4 Activity records)</b>		
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

Measure	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY2022 Actual
<b>1 - Forensic Pathology Services (9 Measure records)</b>			
Number of elder deaths due to falls (age 65 and over)	77	94	92
Number of Deaths Due to Traffic Accidents (i.e., cars, Metro, motorcycles, pedestrian, bicycle)	56	54	62
Number of deaths due to hypertensive cardiovascular disease/obesity	363	438	368
Number of Infant deaths (1 year and under)	23	28	20
Number of Anthropologic Analyses Performed	158	229	Not Available
Number of youth (ages 10-19) homicides where gun violence is a factor	27	20	31
Number of Postmortem Examinations performed: Full/Partial (Not including External Exams)	1639	1220	1227
Number of drug deaths (illicit/rxn) diagnosed	246	116	175
Number of child deaths due to inappropriate bedding/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) (with or without crib in the dwelling)	18	0	7
<b>1 - Toxicology Analysis (1 Measure)</b>			
Number of DUI cases performed	308	403	512

## Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Initiative Title	Strategic Initiative Description	Proposed Completion Date
<b>Committee Recommendations (1 Strategic Initiative)</b>		
Fatality Review Annual Reporting & Committee Recommendations	The Fatality Review Committee will continue its annual reporting for all fatality review committees which includes committee recommendations resulting from the reviews. The agency will continue to 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. There has previously been a challenge in recommendation implementation. While the agency /committees do not have enforcement power, they will assist the District's Performance Mgt arm in the placement of recommendations in District agency performance plans when appropriate and obtaining response to recommendations in a timely fashion.	09-30-2023
<b>Data Analysis Fusion Center (1 Strategic Initiative)</b>		
Data Fusion Center	The agency will hire two epidemiologists in FY22: one from local funding and a second via CDC Foundation. During FY23, the new staff will undergo extensive training on agency in-house systems, process and data needs, as well as those of its stakeholders, such as DOH, DBH, MPD, OVSJG and the CDC. The staff will also be provided training on those data analytical tools and software utilized in the epidemiological environment. By the end of Q3, it is anticipated that the Data Fusion Center will be fully functional with ability to provide ore robust trend reporting to include a "reboot" of the agency's Data Fusion section on its website.	06-30-2023
<b>Fatality Management Facility, Operations, Training, Supplies/Resources/Equipment (2 Strategic Initiative records)</b>		
Fatality Management Facilities	The agency will work with DGS toward a Phase III of agency renovations targeted toward build out 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).	09-30-2023
Fatality Management Preparedness Training	The agency will implement a fatality management exercise for all staff to ensure preparedness for emergency response in fatality incidents. The agency has had extensive real-life experience throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency has onboarded several staff since the height of the pandemic and an exercise/training is timely. The goal is to conduct a tabletop exercise at a minimum with all staff focused on a specified fatality incidents that would trigger activation of the agency's Mass Fatality Plan and Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).	09-30-2023
<b>Forensic Analytic Testing (1 Strategic Initiative)</b>		

Strategic Initiative Title	Strategic Initiative Description	Proposed Completion Date
Forensic Analytic Testing	The agency will work with its AFO to align the budget for forensic support services starting in FY24. Historically, the forensic support services budget line item was established to capture trends in forensic analytic testing or contractual consultations services that support forensic pathology, mortuary, histology and medical examiner transport team. Due to budget cuts in and reprogrammings from this line item, the actual spending for these types of services is to be categorized in one area. For more effectiveness and efficiency, the agency will work to align estimated spending in this line item by identifying all spending within the whole budget. This project will provide the agency with a better sense of spending moving forward and will allow the agency to implement cost-saving measures or innovative approaches to its budget planning.	12-31-2022
<b>Forensic Pathology Services (1 Strategic Initiative)</b>		
Forensic Pathology Academic Program	As part of its academic mission, the agency will continue to support a Forensic Pathology Fellowship, in partnership with George Washington University and will work to maintain federal funding from DOH's Bureau of Justice Assistance to support the fellowship. The goal of the program is to certify a forensic pathologist with completion of a fellowship. The agency will also utilize the past year's fellowship as a pipeline to hiring a forensic pathologist permanently. The 2021-2022 fellow whom has been certified, will be hired as a part-time pathologist. During FY23, the agency will identify resources and equipment to be utilized during the fellowship training period. The agency will monitor a new application for federal funding to support a Forensic Pathology Fellowship to be implemented in the fourth quarter of FY2023, the start of fellowships on July 1.	09-30-2022
<b>Medical Surveillance Program (1 Strategic Initiative)</b>		
Risk Management & Medical Surveillance	The agency will enhance its current safety program to combine Risk Management and Medical Surveillance for a comprehensive approach to "safety." This includes risk management prevention and mitigation strategies through the existing Risk Assessment Control Committee focused on employees, the facility and administrative issues, as well as through the current medical surveillance which will be expanded beyond employee surveillance (i.e., radiation and fit testing) to increased laboratory safety measures. The agency will develop a Health & Safety Officer position and hire within such position by the end of FY23.	09-30-2023
<b>Performance Management (3 Strategic Initiative records)</b>		
Performance Management - Facility Operations	The agency will work with the Department of General Services (DGS) to implement a second phase of the agency facility renovations at the CFL. While 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 has garnered additional FTEs and has expanded its internship, residency and local FTEs and has been approved for a forensic pathology fellowship program. This expansion amongst staff requires additional office/cubicle space beyond that planned in "Phase I" of a renovation. As such, the agency will work with DGS toward use of capital funding to buildout additional staff office/cubicle spacing to accommodate the expansion. The first part of this Phase will include development of the concept, procurement of a design vendor and completion of the design. This may also include procurement of additional FF&E	09-30-2023
Performance Management - Training	The agency will maintain its Management Leadership Training Series with an enhancement of a comprehensive leadership assessment module. Such module, conducted via a vendor, will focus on the strengths, weaknesses, leadership style and improvement techniques for each individual manager. Such training is utilized in government and companies for overall process improvement with regard to management of operations and supervision of staff. The goal is increase agency effectiveness and efficiency.	09-30-2023
Performance Management - Accreditation	The agency will undergo review of all Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and facility requirements in order to maintain or be reaccredited by the following entities: National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME); International Organization of Standards (ISO); and American Board of Forensic Toxicologists (ABFT); and ANSI National Accrediting Board (ANAB).	09-30-2023
<b>Toxicology Analysis (2 Strategic Initiative records)</b>		
Toxicology Analytical Case Management (LIMS)	The agency procured a vendor to build out a Laboratory Information System (LIMS) for the Forensic Toxicology Laboratory in FY22. Upon completion of the buildout in FY22, the system will be set for full implementation in FY23. Staff will be training on the use of the system which will allow for ease of case tracking, streamlined data handling and direct transfer of results and response to stakeholders. The agency will also work on integration of the LIMS with its agency Case Management System (CMS) via an interoperability grant with DC Health.	09-30-2023
Forensic Toxicology Laboratory Services	The agency's Forensic Toxicology Laboratory and Legal Department will continue to 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 to include procurement of supplies, equipment and maintenance services. This is an ongoing endeavor which involves the structure of legal agreements, cost analyses and establishment of fees for service.	09-30-2023