

Appropriations Requests for Additional Information
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
3/11/21

1. Representative Walker requested information about our CARES Act monies for COVID19 deaths.
 - A. The OCME received \$32,300 from OPM as a sub-recipient for Coronavirus Relief Fund money. All of the funds were used for COVID-19 testing.
2. Representative Dillon asked for more information on our homicide and drug intoxication deaths.
 - A. Homicides increased from 120 (2019) to 156 (2020) for a 30% increase. This is the highest the homicide deaths have been in the past 24 years (1996 there were 171 homicides).
 - B. Drug intoxication deaths increased from 1200 (2019) to 1374 (2020) for a 14.5% increase and a near doubling in the past 5 years.
3. Rep Candelaria requested information regarding the agency's requested budget.
 - A. We requested 8,995,230 for FY 2022 and 9,255,029 for FY 2023.
 - B. This request included budgeting for an additional medical examiner, investigator, and autopsy technician (see below).
4. Representative McCarty asked about staffing needs with regard to our work volume and accreditation.
 - A. We have staffing concerns for **Medical Examiners**: For NAME accreditation without any deficiencies, we would need 12 medical examiners to meet the 250 autopsy/pathologist metric.
 - We currently have 9 full-time medical examiners. There are 7 Associate Medical Examiners, a Deputy Chief, and Chief. The Deputy and Chief typically each perform 250 or more autopsies a year (the Deputy and Chief ideally should count as 1 FT).
 - We will have two training fellows which count as 1 FT equivalent.
 - We believe that one additional medical examiner (bringing our staffing to 11 full time medical examiners would allow us to maintain full accreditation with only a minor accreditation deficiency. This is reflected in our budget request.
 - B. We have staffing concerns in regards to **Mortuary Operations, Investigations, and Medical Records**.
 - Without adequate support in these areas OCME could potentially lose accreditation.
 - The volume of death investigations has resulted in marked increases in examinations and the number of records we have to maintain and the record requests that OCME receives.
 - We need 1 special investigator and 1 forensic technician, which is reflected in our budget request.
 - In addition, we would greatly benefit from an additional photographer, another special investigator, a Medical Records Supervisor, and several Laboratory Assistants. These are not reflected in our budget request due to not being fully realized prior to budget submission.