



# DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

## OFFICE OF CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER

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### What We Do

The Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) is responsible for investigating deaths resulting from criminal violence, accident or suicide; that occur suddenly, when in apparent good health; when unattended by a physician; in custody; or occurring in any suspicious or unusual manner. The Office also investigates deaths where an application for cremation is made. The Office provides additional forensic services, including DNA testing, to support criminal investigations. The Office also manages all functions of the City mortuary, including the retrieval and processing of deceased bodies; assistance with autopsies; and body preparation for City burial.

### Our Services and Goals

#### **Service 1: Perform the processes necessary to certify deaths falling within the agency's jurisdiction.**

- Goal 1a: Respond promptly to scenes of reportable fatalities and conduct related investigations.
- Goal 1b: Perform autopsies and examinations necessary to issue timely death certificates.
- Goal 1c: Provide timely investigation for all cremation requests.

#### **Service 2: Provide mortuary services to the City.**

- Goal 2a: Recover and transport decedents to City mortuary facilities in a timely manner.

#### **Service 3: Respond to disasters and emergencies when fatalities are involved.**

- Goal 3a: Provide rapid response and safe fatality management services to the City.
- Goal 3b: Identify victims of disasters and return their remains to families in a timely manner.

#### **Service 4: Provide DNA services to the City for forensic purposes.**

- Goal 4a: Provide timely and accurate DNA laboratory services for criminal justice purposes.

### How We Performed: July–October

- In the first four months of the year, OCME has performed well in achieving its goals in light of the constraints imposed by economic pressures. The exceptions were in turnaround time for toxicology reports and some areas of DNA services, the latter attributable to attrition and lengthy recruitment and training periods for new hires.
- OCME's Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) and Case Management System (CMS), each developed over the long term, had first phase implementations and should enable OCME to achieve new levels of accuracy and efficiency.
- Toxicology revamped its testing protocols, which should result in fewer and faster administrative reviews, and reduce turnaround times in the long run.
- Forensic Biology, working with OCME Human Resources, OCME Legal, and the Law Department, initiated an effort to reduce attrition of newly trained entry level Criminalists at OCME.

**Service 1: Perform the processes necessary to certify deaths falling within the agency's jurisdiction.**

Goal 1a: Respond promptly to scenes of reportable fatalities and conduct related investigations.

Performance Statistics	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY12	FY13
★ Median time for scene arrivals by medicolegal investigators (MLIs) (hours)	1.6	1.7	1.8	*	↓	1.8	1.8
Deaths reported	26,105	26,503	25,941	*	*	8,537	8,573
Cases where Chief Medical Examiner takes jurisdiction	7,135	7,114	7,152	*	*	2,496	2,401

Goal 1b: Perform autopsies and examinations necessary to issue timely death certificates.

Performance Statistics	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY12	FY13
★ Median time to complete autopsy reports (days)	53.5	61.5	69.5	51.0	51.0	72.0	68.0
★ Median time to complete toxicology cases (days)	35.0	40.5	60.0	28.0	28.0	64.0	66.0
Median time to complete toxicology DUI (driving under the influence) cases (days)	13.0	16.0	15.0	10.0	10.0	13.5	18.0
Median time to complete toxicology sexual assault cases (days)	17.0	21.0	30.5	17.0	17.0	23.0	38.0

Goal 1c: Provide timely investigation for all cremation requests.

Performance Statistics	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY12	FY13
Median time to process cremation requests (hours)	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.4

**Service 2: Provide mortuary services to the City.**

Goal 2a: Recover and transport decedents to City mortuary facilities in a timely manner.

Performance Statistics	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY12	FY13
Number of decedents' remains transported and stored by OCME	9,620	9,714	9,558	*	*	3,267	3,212
Median time to remove decedents from scene (non-hospital) after investigation (hours)	0.7	0.9	0.9	*	*	0.9	0.9

**Service 3: Respond to disasters and emergencies when fatalities are involved.**

Goal 3a: Provide rapid response and safe fatality management services to the City.

Performance Statistics	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY12	FY13
Remains recovered following a disaster or mass fatality incident (cumulative)	21,813	21,818	21,818	*	*	21,818	21,817

Goal 3b: Identify victims of disasters and return their remains to families in a timely manner.

Performance Statistics	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY12	FY13
Remains identified following a disaster (cumulative)	12,770	12,810	13,024	*	*	12,811	13,270

★ Critical Indicator "NA" - means Not Available in this report ↓ ↑ shows desired direction

## Service 4: Provide DNA services to the City for forensic purposes.

Goal 4a: Provide timely and accurate DNA laboratory services for criminal justice purposes.

Performance Statistics	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY12	FY13
Median days to complete analysis of a DNA case	76.0	83.0	88.0	75.0	75.0	78.0	109.0
★ Median time to complete DNA homicide cases, from evidence submission to report (days)	112.0	114.0	111.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	156.0
★ Median time to complete DNA sexual assault cases, from evidence submission to report (days)	19.0	27.0	46.0	50.0	50.0	36.0	63.0
★ Median time to complete DNA property crime cases, from evidence submission to report (days)	58.0	65.0	68.0	70.0	70.0	57.0	86.0
DNA matches with profiles in database	1,264	1,629	1,791	*	*	598	533

★ Critical Indicator "NA" - means Not Available in this report ↕ ↗ shows desired direction

## Agency Customer Service

Performance Statistics	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY12	FY13
Customer Experience							
E-mails responded to in 14 days (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Letters responded to in 14 days (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## Agency Resources

Resource Statistics	Actual			September 2012 MMR	Updated		4-Month Actual	
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY13 <sup>1</sup>	FY14 <sup>1</sup>	FY12	FY13
Expenditures (\$000,000) <sup>2</sup>	\$65.6	\$62.6	\$43.9	\$62.2	\$73.3	\$57.6	\$22.9	\$21.8
Revenues (\$000)	\$2	\$39	\$92	\$503	\$503	\$503	\$36	\$29
Personnel	652	606	582	650	654	651	596	572
Overtime paid (\$000,000)	\$1.8	\$1.9	\$2.5	\$1.8	\$2.3	\$1.8	\$0.7	\$0.6

<sup>1</sup>January 2013 Financial Plan      \*NA" - Not Available in this report  
<sup>2</sup>Expenditures include all funds.      January Plan figures reflect modifications in Federal, State, and other non-City funding since the adoption of the 2013 budget.

## Noteworthy Changes, Additions or Deletions

- Dr. Charles S. Hirsch, after serving as Chief Medical Examiner since 1989, retired from that position in February 2013.
- The total of 21,817 for 'Remains recovered following a disaster or mass fatality incident (cumulative)' reflects a correction due to a minor computational error.

For additional performance statistics, please visit the website at: [www.nyc.gov/mmr](http://www.nyc.gov/mmr).

For more information on the agency, please visit: [www.nyc.gov/ocme](http://www.nyc.gov/ocme).

