



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**MELANIE HARTZOG**

DEPUTY MAYOR FOR HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

November 22, 2021

New York City Conflicts of Interest Board  
2 Lafayette Street, Suite 1010  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Conflicts of Interest Board Members,

In accordance with Conflicts of Interest Board Rule 1-07(d)(1), I write to inform you that I have approved the retention of Dr. Barbara A. Sampson as a consultant to the Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) following the end of her City service. Dr. Sampson will leave her position as Chief Medical Examiner of the City of New York on November 30, 2021.

Under this consulting agreement, which will be made directly between OCME and Dr. Sampson, she will temporarily continue to perform certain limited duties and responsibilities relating solely to cardiovascular pathology, all of which she has performed while employed by the OCME. As described below, this consultancy fully meets the Board's requirements for post-employment consulting for a former City agency, pursuant to Rule 1-07(d)(1). The consulting arrangement "is made for the purpose of continuing or completing work left unfinished by the former public servant at the time their City service terminated, or for training their replacement, or for filling a vacancy until a replacement can be hired." It will last "no longer than reasonably necessary," and Dr. Sampson "has technical, professional, or other subject-matter expertise or skills not otherwise available among the agency's employees." The compensation will be considerably lower than that earned by Dr. Sampson at the OCME, and this disclosure of the post-employment consulting arrangement to the Board is made within the required thirty days, available for posting on the COIB website.

Under the consulting agreement, Dr. Sampson will perform the following functions. She will:

1. Supervise the two OCME cardiovascular pathology fellows<sup>1</sup> in postmortem dissection of complicated hearts, review of microscopic slides, and preparation of reports; these reports are critical to the medical examiners' determination of cause and manner of death. She will also sign off on those reports.
2. Provide physician support to OCME's Molecular Genetics Laboratory, whose work is also critical to the medical examiners' determination of cause and manner of death in certain cardiac deaths; and
3. Oversee research projects in the field of cardiovascular pathology.

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<sup>1</sup> OCME offers highly sought-after accredited fellowships in forensic pathology to provide advanced specialized medical education to approximately five post-residency physicians per year, thus developing the next generations of medical examiners. Two of those medical fellows are selected for a subsequent, even more specialized year of fellowship in cardiac pathology and neuropathology, which focus on the forensic examination of hearts and brains respectively.

Dr. Sampson will perform these functions on a per diem basis for approximately 3-4 hours per week, including an onsite visit every two weeks with additional remote work to comprise such tasks as answering emails, signing reports, reviewing research, and consulting over the phone. Dr. Sampson's hourly rate will be \$100, not to exceed \$20,000 per year, a rate considerably below her salary while employed at the OCME.

The training of highly specialized cardiovascular pathologists is critical to the OCME. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in this country and the leading cause of sudden unexpected deaths that fall under OCME jurisdiction, and it is extremely important for a medical examiner's office to remain fully versed in this area of postmortem examination, particularly for as prestigious and advanced an office as the NYC OCME. Complex post-surgical deaths and child deaths with congenital heart disease also sometimes fall under OCME jurisdiction and require detailed analyses by a subject matter expert, beyond the usual expertise of a medical examiner. Additionally, the OCME's fellowship in forensic cardiovascular pathology, accredited by the ACGME (Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education), is the only one of its kind. It requires a faculty member with specific expertise in this area.

As there are only approximately 100 cardiovascular pathologists in the entire United States, Dr. Sampson is uniquely qualified to serve, and she requires no training. Likewise, due to the paucity of cardiovascular pathologists, Dr. Sampson's consultancy is expected to last for a year or two following her departure, until a fully qualified replacement can be found. The OCME has already begun its search for a suitable replacement.

Sincerely,



Melanie Hartzog  
Deputy Mayor for Health & Human Services