



Office of the Inspector General Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Inspector General Cunha Releases Hinton Drug Lab Report Finding Dookhan Acted Alone, March 2014

Massachusetts Inspector General Glenn A. Cunha today released the findings of his office's 15-month investigation of the Hinton Drug Lab, which was shut down in 2012 in the wake of criminal acts by forensic chemist Annie Dookhan.

The comprehensive review found that, other than Dookhan, no chemist intentionally falsified his or her test results, nor did Dookhan tamper with other chemists' test results; however, chronic managerial negligence, inadequate training and a lack of professional standards created the environment that allowed Dookhan to commit her crimes. These breakdowns also led to the failure to provide potentially exculpatory evidence to the parties in criminal cases. It also led to inaccurate courtroom testimony in some cases that did not involve Dookhan.

“After an exhaustive review, we did not find evidence that Dookhan tampered with any other chemist's drug samples or that she manipulated any records in the Lab's database. Dookhan acted alone and we found no evidence that any other chemist in the Lab shared her goal of intentionally falsifying test results,” said Cunha.

“That said, a lack of uniform protocols and procedures at the Lab led to deficient practices including drug testing results not being turned over to prosecutors and defendants. Our investigation found that whenever a sample had to be tested multiple times to confirm the primary chemist's identification of a drug sample, the lab only reported the final results to prosecutors, thereby failing to provide potentially exculpatory evidence,” said Cunha. “We have initiated retests of approximately 2,300 samples on which multiple tests were run.”

Inspector General Cunha issued a series of recommendations aimed at preventing any recurrence of the crisis. Among the IG's recommendations are:

- All state agencies, including forensic drug labs, must employ management practices that hold supervisors accountable for their employees.
- The Massachusetts State Police, which took over the Hinton Drug Lab in 2012 and has an accredited lab, should continue to handle the forensic drug testing that the Hinton Drug Lab conducted.
- Forensic drug chemists should receive extensive training in drug analysis, expert witness testimony, and ethics to ensure they provide unbiased results.
- Drug labs must produce the results of all analytical tests run on each sample when providing discovery information.

- All employees of a forensic drug lab with access to controlled substances should be subject to random drug testing and annual criminal records checks. The legislature should mandate that all forensic laboratories be accredited.