**COMMISSION ON MEDICOLEGAL INVESTIGATIONS**

**July 19, 2017**

**Present**:

*Commission Members or their representatives*:

Daniel Bennett, Secretary, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

James Connolly, Chair, Commission on Medicolegal Investigations

David M. Siegel, Vice Chair, Commission on Medicolegal Investigations

Jennifer Barrelle, JD, Department of Public Health

David Brezniak, Funeral Director

Dean Mazzone, Assistant Attorney General

David Capeless, District Attorney

Peter Leahy, MD, District Medical Examiner

Mindy J. Hull, MD, Forensic Pathologist

Michael O’Keefe, District Attorney

Superintendent Kevin Buckley, Boston Police Department, Designee for Commissioner Evans

*EOPSS*

Curtis Wood, Undersecretary

Jennifer Roedel, Senior Policy Advisor

Matt Moran, Assistant Secretary

*OCME Staff*

Henry Nields, MD, PhD, Chief Medical Examiner

Kristine Cavicchi, Director of Operations

Joseph Finley, Director of Finance

Jacqueline Faherty, General Counsel

Joseph Cahill, Director of Medicolegal Investigations

Deborah Mendoza-Lochrie, Chief of Staff

*Stakeholders*

Albert Elian, State Police Crime Laboratory

*Absent*:

Karen Antman, MD, Dean, Boston University School of Medicine

Brandon Flanagan, Public Representative

Sharon Hanson, Public Representative

Gerald Healy, MD

Randy Chapman, Attorney

Kimberley M. Springer, MD, Forensic Pathologist

Meeting commenced: 10:10AM

Agenda

1. Welcome, James Connolly, Chair

* Chairman Connolly opened the meeting by welcoming all in attendance.

2. OCME Update, Dr. Nields, Chief Medical Examiner

* 90 Day Turnaround Update
  + FY 2015, prior to the implementation of a new organizational approach that provided investigative and administrative support to medical examiners, 56% of death certificates and 25% of the autopsy reports were completed in 90 days.
  + Nearly one year after the implementation of the plan, 81% of the death certificates and 72% of the autopsy reports were completed in 90 days.
  + Most recent data: 78% of the death certificates and 60% of the autopsy reports were completed in 90 days. Dr. Nields explained that the OCME caseload increased by 403 cases from FY16 to FY17 and this has made it nearly impossible to attain the 90 day turnaround with the number of medical examiners on staff. It should be noted that overall completion figures are good; 91% of the death certificates and 82% of the autopsy reports have been completed since the implementation of the plan.
* New Medical Examiners
  + The two forensic pathology fellows who completed their training in June were hired as staff medical examiners
  + This academic year, the OCME has three forensic pathology fellows in training.
* Rapid DNA
  + The American Association of Blood Banks (AABB) will be conducting an accreditation inspection of the Rapid DNA Lab on August 14, 2017.
* FY 18 Budget
  + Governor Baker’s budget recommendation for the OCME was $9,920,323. Our actual appropriation is $9,673,380 which leaves the OCME with a shortfall of $246,943. Options to offset this shortfall are: to cancel the incentive for funeral directors to accept DTA burials for unclaimed or unidentified OCME cases; to not backfill a vacant medicolegal investigator position. There will be savings realized from Dr. Springer resigning as deputy chief medical examiner to work part-time. However, additional cuts will need to be identified to resolve the shortfall.
  + Raising the cremation fee was discussed as a possible option for increasing OCME’s revenue. It was decided that this will be pursued.

3. OCME New Webpage, Deborah Mendoza-Lochrie

* The state has redesigned the mass.gov platform in order to be constituent focused and not agency focused. All state agencies will use this platform to develop their web page content that will make it easy for constituents to find the information or service they are looking for with as few clicks of the mouse as possible.
  + OCME’s new web page content was then shown to Commission members.

4. Minutes from last meeting

* A motion was made to accept the minutes from the December 6, 2016 meeting. The motion was approved and seconded. All present voted to accept the meeting minutes into record.

5. Update on Sub-Committee, Chair Connolly

* There is no additional information on relocating the Boston office
* Working on access to BU Medical Library
* Attorney Chapman is not present to provide an update on peer review committee

6. Update on Search for New Chief Medical Examiner

* Dr. Nields excused himself from the meeting for this discussion.
* Chairman Connolly explained the search process for a new chief medical examiner.
  + In January Secretary Bennett formed a search committee. Committee members were Secretary Bennett, Undersecretary Curtis Wood, Assistant Secretary Matt Moran, District Attorney O’Keefe, Dr. Nields, Dr. Springer, Dr. Richard Goldstein from Boston Children’s Hospital, and MLC Chair James Connolly.
  + The chief medical examiner position was posted on the state website as well the websites of the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) and American Academy of Forensic Science (AAFS). The posting was also sent to medical examiners’ offices throughout the country.
  + Five applications were received through the states website and three additional applications were received through recruitment. During this time, five other jurisdictions in the country were also advertising for chief medical examiner.
  + Two very qualified applicants withdrew their applicants ultimately withdrew their applications.
  + At this time, a new search has been initiated to include contacting search firms to assist with the search.
  + Members of the commission then discussed some initiatives and incentives which may help to recruit qualified candidates for the position.

Meeting adjourned: 11:45AM