



**Department of Forensic Sciences  
Science Advisory Board Draft Meeting Minutes  
Friday, January 13, 2017**

The Department of Forensic Sciences Science Advisory Board meeting was conducted via WebEx and was brought to order at 9:35 a.m. by board chairman Irv Litofsky. Board members participating in the web-based conference, in addition to the chairman, included: Dr. Simone Gittelsohn, Dr. Bill Grosshandler, Dr. Jeanne A. Jordan, Dr. Maria N. Fidélia-Lambert, Mr. Peter Marone and Dr. Burton Wilcke. A quorum was established to conduct board business. Minutes from the October 14, 2016, meeting were presented, read and approved.

**Introduction of new board members**

Dr. Namandjé N. Bumpus, Dr. Jeanne Ann Jordan and Dr. Maria N. Fidélia-Lambert were announced as recent appointments to fill three SAB vacancies. Drs. Jordan and Fidélia-Lambert briefly spoke of their professional careers and affiliations. Although Dr. Bumpus was not available to participate in the WebEx meeting, the board expressed interest in knowing which board vacancy she would fulfill.

**Review of Forensic Biology Unit (FBU) Protocols**

The receipt of comments submitted by the board in response to board review of FBU protocols was acknowledged by Susan Welti, FBU Technical Lead. She encouraged all board members to continue reviewing the protocols and to forward suggestions to the laboratory by the end of the month. Within the next few days following the board meeting, Ms. Welti will issue a document that addresses protocol comments. Revisions are scheduled for incorporation during updates of the Global Filer 3500, when other technology is scheduled to go operational.

Dr. Wilcke suggested that procedurally board members should either respond to protocol reviews with comments or respond to indicate not having any suggestions or comments.

Firearms Examination Unit (FEU) protocols are next for SAB review.

**Quality Update**

The Public Health Laboratory is in compliance with DSAT and CLIA and the Forensic Science Laboratory is in compliance with ANAB, reports Deputy Director Brittany Graham. While there are no issues to report from the last quarter, two complaints were received during this period from the U.S. Attorney's Office. A December 7 complaint alleges a delay in the submission of a collection log by Crime Scene and a December 9, 2016, complaint asserts that the Central Evidence Unit was unresponsive to multiple attempts to reach a Central Evidence Unit employee. There is an active investigation in both matters.

Presently, there are two examiners under remediation, 1-Firearms examiner, 1-Latent Fingerprints examiner. Both examiners issued false exclusions in proficiency tests and have been removed from casework. In response to this action, DFS has notified stakeholders, a percentage review of past cases is in progress and the examiners are receiving remedial training in areas of deficiency. Additional assessment and proficiency testing is anticipated to assist employees in returning to case work.



Dr. Jenifer Smith issued an appeal to the board for guidance and assistance with proficiency tests and testing and the identification of proficiency test providers.

### **Public Health Laboratory Update**

The Public Health Laboratory received two-year recertification through November 9, 2018, following the laboratory's two-day CLIA audit September 27-28, 2016. The lab was recertified for 3 years, through December 26, 2019, after a two-day DSAT Tier 1 audit of the lab's bio-terrorism activities.

### **Virology**

Patients tested for Zika Virus by the PHL, from January 2016 through December 2016, total 841. This number represents District of Columbia residents, in addition to Maryland and Virginia residents seeking care in the District. Dr. Anthony Tran, PHL Director, reports that the laboratory's testing of over 2,000 Zika Virus samples, to date, resulted in the identification of 22 positives by the PHL, totaling 30 District-wide. These cases are primarily due to international travel and not believed to be locally transmitted. However, there is an investigation of two cases suspected to be sexually transmitted. In addition Zika Virus, the lab's mosquito surveillance also includes Chikungunya virus, Dengue Virus and West Nile Virus.

### **Forensic Chemistry Unit**

The Forensic Chemistry Unit (FCU) is working towards accreditation for forensic testing and is on schedule for ISO accreditation (17025) by the end of calendar year 2017. The unit validated methods for Cannabinoid and Opioid compounds, natural and synthetic, and anticipates the inclusion of other compounds (Stimulant, Hallucinogen, Psychoactive Drug, Cathinone) in the months ahead. More immediate will be an increase in FCU personnel with the addition of two Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) chemists. The DEA is scheduled to conclude its testing on behalf of the District by 2018.

The Public Health Laboratory will support local and federal stakeholders and partners with heightened readiness of biological and chemical terrorism teams, as well as the testing of food products, if necessary, during the 2017 presidential inauguration.

Science Advisory Board regulations have cleared the Office of the City Administrator and are currently receiving legal sufficiency review by the Office of the Attorney General. They will be published to allow for public comment, after which they are deemed approved. DFS General Counsel, Rashee Kumar reviewed the complaint process, included in the regulations, addressing apparent structural concerns raised by the Office of the City Administrator.

SAB Chairman Irv Litofsky announced that his appointment expires April 2017, and that another chairman must be named. The matter is to be included on the agenda for the April 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Dr. Jenifer Smith reminded the board of the department's internship program and asked board members to consider collaborative intern projects and other programmatic ventures. She notified the board that a formal request would be made to obtain a formal documented statement reflecting the board's perspective and recommendations in response to the PCAST report.

The meeting adjourned at 11: 25 a.m. An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.