



**Department of Forensic Sciences
Science Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, October 14, 2016**

The Department of Forensic Sciences Science Advisory Board meeting was brought to order at by board chairman Irv Litofsky at 9:09 a.m. Board members in attendance included Dr. Clifton Bishop, Dr. Simone Gittelson, Dr. Bill Grosshandler and Mr. Peter Marone. A quorum was established to conduct board business. The July 14, 2016, meeting minutes were presented, read and approved.

Introduction of new staff

The board was introduced to Ms. Rashee Kumar, who recently joined the DFS staff as General Counsel, and Dr. Anthony Tran, appointed Director of the Public Health Laboratory. Ms. Kumar reported that the Office of the City Administrator (OCA) returned the Science Advisory Board draft regulations, with minor revisions, following the departure of the former DFS General Counsel and prior to her arrival. The changes will be made and the draft document will be resubmitted to the OCA for review and approval followed by publication, public comment and final publishing.

Update on Laboratory Status

Three complaints were received over the past quarter. Of these, one is an internal anonymous complaint, sent to former Police Chief Cathy Lanier, alleging a cover-up involving a firearm found underneath a locker. Through investigation the weapon was linked to the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Crime Scene Investigation Division (CSID) to whom the firearm was returned. A second complaint involved the Office of the U.S. Attorney asserting receipt of incomplete discovery document submissions from DFS legal counsel. A reconciliation of procedures for document case file storage and retrieval, as well as accuracy in case-tracking, is expected to resolve this issue. A third complaint received by the Department of Health, Epidemiology, is related to incidents of improper handling of specimens, for which incorrect testing of submitted specimens was conducted and an unrelated incident involving improper storing and thawing of specimens later deemed unsuitable for testing upon receipt by the CDC. Deputy Director Brittany Graham reported that the complaints have been processed for Quality corrective actions.

Audits

Audit of the Forensic Science Laboratory Firearms Examination Unit (FEU), Latent Fingerprint Unit (LFU) and Forensic Biology Unit (FBU) were conducted August 22-23 by ANSI-ASQ. Four minor non-conformities, primarily considered policy-related, were found in FEU and LFU. These were corrected within the prescribed 30-days after which a September 26 letter was received from the ANAB confirming compliance and continued accreditation. The Forensic Biology Unit received no non-conformities.

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The Public Health Laboratory's (PHL) Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) audit September 27-28 yielded 8 to 10 minor non-conformities mainly comprised of quality checks that include placard postings, visual aids and SOP revision. The DFS Quality team is working through corrective action for these non-conformities, as well as others identified during a September 28th Division of Select Agents and Toxins (DSAT) audit. Dr. Anthony Tran attributes the high level of regulation and the depth of the laboratory's inspections to the lab's Tier 2 chemical terrorism and Tier 1 select agents and toxins qualifications.

Crime Scene Sciences (CSS)

Crime Scene Sciences Director Troy Kelly reported successful transition of MPD Crime Scene Investigations Division (CSID) to the Crime Scene Sciences Unit, incorporating the hiring of retired CSID staff. Recent CSS recruitment has increased staff from 56 to 78 and the division is projected to reach full-force by mid-year 2017. Currently, CSSU is handling approximately 98% of the District's homicides.

CSS led the Department of Forensic Sciences' participation in a landmark week-long mass fatality exercise pioneered by the D.C. Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL)

Following the resumption of DNA casework during the last fiscal year, FSL Director Karen Wiggins reports significant gains throughout the division's three labs. During this period recruitments included the hiring of a Forensic Biology Unit (FBU) technical leader, a Forensic Biology Unit manager and a Firearms Enforcement Unit manager. The purchase of case management systems and having access to the most updated industry technologies (AFIS, CODIS, NIBIN) have helped make possible an increase in productivity compared to a year ago.

Recent outreach efforts by FSL concentrated on stakeholder engagement that included the division's training of more than 300 MPD detectives, meeting with the Office of the Attorney General, the Public Defender Service, the Office of the United States Attorney and the ATF.

While the PCAST Report and information presented in the board's viewing of a fingerprint webinar were discussed at length, the board and DFS leadership agreed that Forensic Biology Procedures would be included in the next board meeting agenda.

SAB member Peter Marone inquired about whether consideration had been given to appointing to the board a candidate with technical DNA expertise or enlisting a volunteer of similar qualification. There was no information available to determine if a recommendation had been made.

Potential meeting dates were discussed before the meeting adjourned at 1:13 p.m.

An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.