



**Department of Forensic Sciences
Science Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, October 20, 2017 – WebEx Meeting**

The Department of Forensic Sciences Science Advisory Board WebEx meeting was brought to order at 10:10 a.m. by board chairman Peter Marone. Board members participating in the WebEx meeting included Dr. Namandjé N. Bumpus, Dr. Marie N. Fidélia-Lambert, Dr. Simone Gittelson, Dr. William Grosshandler, Mr. John Paul Jones II, Dr. Jeanne A. Jordan, Ms. Danielle O’Neill and Dr. Burton Wilcke. A quorum was established to conduct board business. Minutes from the July 21, 2017, meeting were presented and read.

Motion to Approve Minutes: Board Member Jordan **Seconded:** Board Member O’Neill
Motion to Approve Minutes Passed

Paul Reedy, DFS Program Manager, announced recent board appointments (Danielle O’Neill, John Paul Jones), pending board appointments (Robert Thompson, Michael Pentella) and briefly highlighted the background experience and affiliations of new members.

The board’s proposed rulemaking was published in the D.C. Register October 6, 2017, and will remain open for 30 days allowing for public comment until November 4, 2017. Approval by the Council of the District of Columbia is anticipated shortly after the comment period expires. To date, Rashee Raj, DFS General Counsel, has received comments from the Office of D.C. City Councilmember Charles Allen.

There were no Allegations or Issues during the last quarter, subsequent to the SAB meeting convened July 21, 2017, according to Deputy Director Brittany Graham. She reported that an August 15th and 16th QAS quality assurance audit of the Forensic Biology Unit by the ANAB resulted in no findings of non-conformity for the second consecutive year. Similarly, there were no findings of non-conformity from an ANAB external desk audit (surveillance review) of Forensic Science Laboratory units (Firearms Examination Unit, Forensic Biology Unit, Latent Fingerprint Unit).

DFS Director Jenifer Smith revisited the three casework errors occurring in the Forensic Science Laboratory’s Firearms Examination Unit (FEU), recounting the lab’s response to the incident which included corrective action, removal of examiner from casework, independent case review, reworking of cases, proficiency testing and stakeholder notification and updates. Director Smith further explained that this event is primarily attributed to failure to follow protocol and that there is no reason to believe SOP revision is necessary.

Board member Wilcke asked if the laboratory’s SOP manuals address deviation from policy or practice. Director Smith and Deputy Director Graham confirmed that quality procedures for non-conformance are included in manuals, in addition to a policy concerning how deviations should occur, often in testing. While there is an established 100% verification policy, Chairman Marone and Board member O’Neill recommends adding additional verification language to laboratory forms to ensure reviewers’ firm commitment to adhere to policy.

Currently, FEU is not fully staffed. Recruitment for a Technical Leader and a Supervisor is in progress. At the request of Chairman Marone, DFS will forward FEU Laboratory Operating Manuals (LOMs) and DFS Department Operating Manuals (DOMs) for discussion during the January 2018 board meeting.

continued→



Page Two
Science Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2017

Dr. Anthony Tran, Public Health Laboratory (PHL) Director, announced recent laboratory hires, Dr. Pushker Raj, Virology/Immunology Unit Manager, hired September 5 and Matthew McCarroll, who joined the division October 2, filling the division's new Laboratory Operations Analyst position. At present, PHL is continuing ZIKA molecular testing (nucleic acid testing) for District residents. To date, the laboratory has tested 835 (MAC-ELISA) samples from 806 patients. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention continues ZIKA serology testing and recommends testing of symptomatic pregnant females only. Of the 835 serology samples tested, there were 66 non-negative results, indicating patient positive, equivocal or inconclusive for serological evidence of ZIKA. Only 5 of the 66, or 7.6%, of non-negative results provided a definitive ZIKA finding.

The PHL's expected mid-September target to return ZIKA testing on-line has been postponed to allow for resubmission of paperwork and quality control guidelines and protocol review by CLIA (The Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments). The additional time has enabled acquisition and installation of fully automated platforms for ZIKA testing and staff training.

The laboratory has run 530 mosquito pools during the current mosquito testing season. A total of 1282 pools were run last year.

Dr. Luke Short, Manager, Chemistry Section, presented an overview of the Forensic Chemistry Unit (FCU), presently at 10% capacity, designed for in-house testing of various controlled and dangerous substances. He reports recent interactions with the legal community have allowed the FCU an opportunity to learn about and influence the development of legislation of controlled and dangerous substances regulation and prosecutions. In addition, the unit has engaged collaborative work with Office of the Medical Examiner (death investigations) for testing of syringes, testing of Contraband confiscated by the D.C. Department of Corrections (DOC) and provided general instruction for DOC staff in the proper handling of and protection from synthetic drugs.

Dr. Short announced January 2018, as the projected target for FCU accreditation to test controlled and dangerous substances, currently performed by DEA, confiscated by the Metropolitan Police Department in the District of Columbia. The unit has completed most of the technical and administrative documentation, most of which has been approved, submitted for approval or forwarded to DEA for review. Distribution of FCU documents to the SAB is planned.

Director Smith reminded the board of the importance for the board to issue a technical document specifically addressing how the DFS lab is conducting analyses in relation to salient issues included in the PCAST report. She further agreed to coordinate a conference call with Board member Jones to discuss DNA reviews, Mixtures and recent NIST study. Chairman Marone recommended that the board address DFS proficiency testing and proficiency providers prior to issuing the PCAST document.

In acknowledgement of his final SAB meeting, Dr. Burton Wilcke praised the board for their commitment to the board's work and expressed his appreciation for having had the opportunity to serve.



The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m. An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.