



**Department of Forensic Sciences
Science Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, April 28, 2017**

The Department of Forensic Sciences Science Advisory Board meeting was brought to order at 9:15 a.m. by board chairman Irv Litofsky. Board members in attendance, in addition to the board chairman, included Dr. Clifton Bishop, Dr. Namandjé N. Bumpus, Dr. Marie N. Fidélia-Lambert, Dr. Simone Gittelsohn, Dr. William Grosshandler, Dr. Jeanne A. Jordan, Mr. Peter Marone and Dr. Burton Wilcke. A quorum was established to conduct board business. Minutes from the meeting were presented, read and approved.

Status of Science Advisory Board Regulations

The Mayor's Order delegating rulemaking authority to DFS is forthcoming to advance the board rules previously written. The rules will be resubmitted by DFS General Counsel Rashee Raj to the Office of the Attorney General for clearance, followed by the 30-day publication timeline for public comment and distribution to the board.

Forensic Science Laboratory Update

Proficiency test errors occurring in the Firearms Examination Unit (FEU) in recent months and its' impact were reviewed by Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) Director, Karen Wiggins. Quality corrective action steps taken in response to the test errors included examiner removal from casework, case review, case verification and stakeholder notification.

FEU Lead Examiner Deion Christophe discussed responses submitted by the board after review of FEU protocols and policies. Examiner Christophe identified the fine points that led to the lab's decisions to either incorporate or exclude the board's recommendations in FEU reference manuals.

FSL examiners received PCAST training in February 2017, and are scheduled for mock trial court testimony training in June 2017.

Public Health Laboratory

Zika MAC-Elisa errors testing problems and retesting and calculation problems and recalculation were at the center of the laboratory's recent challenges. Presently, PHL is continuing molecular testing, or CDC Trioplex, while serologies are sent to CDC for testing. The PHL is expected to transition during summer 2017, to an automated system for molecular testing that specifically detects for Zika.

The Public Health Laboratory has moved aggressively in filling the division's vacant positions.

Quality Update

The Forensic Science Laboratory will undergo an ANAB quality inspection via office review/desk audit. The 'surveillance visit' requires DFS submission by October 31, 2017, laboratory documentation for review. Prior to the quality inspection, select DFS personnel will participate in an internal audit. An on-site audit of the Forensic Biology Unit (FBU) will be conducted, under quality assurance standards, August 15 and 16, 2017.

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Crime Scene Sciences (CSS) SOPs have received major revisions. The SAB will be requested to review the SOPs after they are approved. A gap analysis is planned for August/September to further examine the division's accreditation status and to determine next steps to achieve ISO 17-020 standard accreditation.

A review of allegations and issues reveals that during the last quarter 3 CSS complaints were received from the Metropolitan Police Department: 1) Manner in which CSS assumes responsibility for responding to scenes-***Resolved***; 2) Two events involving safe unloading and safe rendering of a firearm by Crime Scene Scientists. ***Response: Policy has been changed, CSS vehicles outfitted with clearing barrel stations and firearm safety retraining of staff conducted.***

A complaint was received concerning risks and hazards associated with the handling of packaging containing Zika Virus samples received by Central Evidence Unit staff. ***Response: The Office of Risk Management conducted a walk-through. Management ensured staff's awareness of location for personal protective equipment (PPE), provided retraining for proper use of PPE and engaged staff in dialogue to dispel fears.***

Deputy Director Brittany Graham led a discussion on various aspects of proficiency testing. She invited the board to submit ideas and recommendations in support of improving the quality of the department's proficiency testing. Board member Peter Marone suggested and Deputy Graham agreed that the department distribute to the board a list of concepts already designed by DFS to improve proficiency testing.

Motion: Board member Peter Marone nominated as Science Advisory Board Chairman.

Motion Seconded.

Board Chairman Marone recommended that DFS consider appointment of additional forensic science professionals to fill Science Advisory Board vacancies to ensure board diversity.

The meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.

Ethics training for SAB members commenced at 2 p.m.

An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.