



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 22-1274A, Version: 1

Subject:

Agreement with the District Six Medical Examiner for professional services related to the Medical Examiner's Office and Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Agreement with the District Six Medical Examiner for professional services related to the Medical Examiner's Office and Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory.

- This Agreement provides operational support to the Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory and Medical Examiner's Office in accordance with Chapter 406, Florida Statutes.
- The Medical Examiner's Office provides both forensic medicine services (i.e.: investigation of sudden, unexpected, or suspicious death, autopsies, cremation approvals), and forensic laboratory services (i.e.: chemical, organic, and drug analyses) for Pinellas County on a contractual basis.
- The Medical Examiner's Office reports 14,167 deaths in Pinellas County in 2021 with 1,166 cases resulting in autopsies, up 10% from Calendar Year (CY) 2020 to CY21. The Office has seen unprecedented workload increases due to synthetic opioids with 618 drug-related accidental deaths in CY21, of which 66% were due to a combination of prescription and illicit drugs. Additionally, from CY20 to CY21, DUI Toxicology increased by 37%, Post-mortem Toxicology increased by 7%, and DNA analyses increased by 19%.
- This Agreement provides General Fund support in the amount of \$7,264,503.00 for FY23 Professional Services which includes core Medical Examiner staff and operational costs. This is an increase of \$486,143.00 or 7.2% over the FY22 Professional Services Agreement largely due to increases in salary expenses. This increase is partially offset within the total budget by per service fees charged to Pasco County as well as federal grants.

Strategic Plan:

Ensure Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

2.1 Provide planning, coordination, prevention, and protective services to ensure a safe and secure community

2.2 Be a facilitator, convener, and purchaser of services for those in need

Summary:

This Agreement provides Professional Services funding for Medical Examiner operations and Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory services in accordance with Chapter 406, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 11G, Florida Administrative Code. The Medical Examiner will furnish all services and personnel necessary for Medical Examiner operations within Pinellas County.

Background Information:

The Medical Examiner's Office provides both forensic medicine services (investigation of sudden, unexpected, or suspicious death) and forensic laboratory services (chemical, organic, and drug analyses) to Pinellas County. Medical Examiner operations comprise roughly 60% of the agreement budget and Forensic Laboratory operations including Chemistry/Fire/Debris Section, the DUI Section, and the DNA Section at roughly 40% of the budget. Under Section 406.06(3) and 406.08(1), Florida Statutes, the Board of County Commissioners is responsible for the payment of the Medical Examiner fees, salaries, and expenses.

The Medical Examiner's Office reports 14,167 deaths in Pinellas County in 2021 with 1,166 cases resulting in autopsies, up 10% from CY20 to CY21. The Office has seen unprecedented workload increases due to synthetic opioids with 618 drug-related accidental deaths in CY21, of which 66% were due to a combination of prescription and illicit drugs. Additionally, from CY20 to CY21, DUI Toxicology increased by 37%, Post-mortem Toxicology increased by 7%, and DNA analyses increased by 19%.

The Professional Services Agreement includes a fee schedule charged for each service performed by the Medical Examiner for Pasco County or other outside agencies to be reimbursed to the County as revenue offsetting agreement costs. The fee schedule is reviewed for adjustments annually.

Fiscal Impact:

This Agreement provides General Fund support in the amount of \$7,264,503.00 for FY23 Professional Services which includes core Medical Examiner staff and operational costs. This is an increase of \$486,143.00 or 7.2% over the FY22 Professional Services Agreement largely due to increases in salary expenses.

Staff Member Responsible:

Karen Yatchum, Director, Human Services

Partners:

District Six Medical Examiner

Attachments:

Agreement