



Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory

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Impact of New Sexual Assault Kit Analysis Legislation

Pinellas County

In Pinellas County, sexual assault kits (SAK) are typically collected by the Suncoast Crisis Center in conjunction with a criminal complaint or at the initiative of the victim. When a criminal investigation ensues, and at the victim's direction, those kits are then turned over to the corresponding law enforcement agency. The agency will then submit that evidence to the Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory based upon the needs of the investigation.

Current legislation (HB 179 (C2)/SB 0636 (C1) would result in changes to this process that will have a direct impact on the number of SAK received and analyzed by the laboratory. In order to accommodate the additional evidence and analysis and maintain reasonable turnaround times, the laboratory will need to add additional staff and fund additional supplies.

Based on the verbiage of the new law, input for the law enforcement community, and historic SAK kit collection statistics, PCFL anticipates an annual increase of 60-80 sexual assault kits per year with the passage of the new legislation. This represents the annual work load of one experienced analyst. As a result, the Pinellas County Forensic Lab (at the District Six Medical Examiner's Office) is requesting immediate funding to add additional staff, casework supplies, and office space.

In addition to the DNA analyst, the laboratory will require an additional evidence technician/administrative assistant absorb the additional ancillary responsibilities.

The average training time for a new experience DNA analyst is 6-9 months. The effective date of the new law is currently targeting July 1, 2016. It is imperative that the laboratory adds additional staff, additional workspace for staff, and begins training as soon as possible in order to ensure that unacceptable backlogs are not created within this fiscal year.

The anticipated fiscal impact to the medical examiner's budget of the new laws is as follows:

Fiscal Year 2015-2016	
½ year salary – experience analyst	\$30,000
½ year benefits	\$9,000
Equipment/laboratory supplies	\$20,000
Remodeling/Workspaces	\$25,000
TOTAL FY 16	\$84,000



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Fiscal Year 2016-2017	
Salary: Experienced analyst	\$60,000
Salary: Evidence tech/admin	\$30,000
Equipment/laboratory supplies	\$40,000
Software licenses	\$16,000
TOTAL FY 17	\$136,000

Given the speed in which the legislators are advancing these bills in committee, passage of the new law appears imminent. It is important that we achieve and remain at staffing and budgetary levels to continue to provide timely forensic services to the citizens of Pinellas County.

Respectfully,

Reta Newman

Director

Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory

District Six Medical Examiner's Office