



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 16-1302A, Version: 1

Subject:

Agreement for Medical Examiner and Forensic Laboratory Services.

Recommended Action:

Approve and execute the professional services agreement (Agreement) between the County and the District Six Medical Examiner (Medical Examiner), John. R. Thogmartin, M.D., P.A. (Dr. Thogmartin) for the 2017 fiscal year (FY2017).

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:

The Agreement is for Medical Examiner and Forensic Laboratory services in accordance with Chapter 406, Florida Statutes and Chapter 11G, Florida Administrative Code. In addition, Dr. Thogmartin agrees to furnish all necessary laboratory tests in accordance with Chapter 943, Florida Statutes, and provide for the analysis of evidence seized by law enforcement agencies in the County pursuant to their authority under Florida law.

Background Information:

Forensic laboratory services are an integral part of the criminal justice system. Under Section 406.06 (3) and 406.08(1), Florida Statutes, the Board is responsible for the payment of the Medical Examiner's fees, salaries, and expenses.

According to the Medical Examiner's 2015 Annual Report, the Medical Examiner accepted 1,379 Pinellas County death cases for examination. Toxicology screening showed that 179 of the Pinellas cases had substance-related deaths, down from a peak of 280 in 2010, but slightly higher than the 166 cases in 2014.

In 2016, the Florida Legislature passed Section 943.326, Florida Statutes to address the backlog of sexual assault kits (SAKs) throughout Florida. The law requires that SAKs must be submitted for testing within thirty (30) days and processed within one hundred and twenty (120) days. The Forensic Laboratory foresees an increase of 60-80 sexual assault kits per year, requiring an increase in staff, supplies, equipment, and workspace adjustments. The new law went into effect July 1, 2016.

Fiscal Impact:

The Agreement amount for FY 17 is \$5,199,960, as included in the professional services line item of the FY 17 budget.

During the term of the Agreement, the County will distribute \$199,998.46 paid bi-weekly over 26 billing periods, for services performed. The first payment for the term of the ME Agreement will be a

single payment of \$599,995.38, comprised of the payments for the first three (3) billing periods.

The FY2017 agreement includes an increase of \$176,000.00 requested to address the workload impact from the statutory changes to SAKs.

As part of the statewide laboratory system, the Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory, operated by the Medical Examiner, receives an allocation of fines collected pursuant to Section 938.003 and 938.07, Florida Statutes based on population served. The Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory estimates funding from this source for FY2016 to be \$265,000, pending actual collection totals.

Staff Member Responsible:

Lourdes Benedict, Director, Human Services

Partners:

Medical Examiner for the Sixth Judicial Circuit
Pinellas County Law Enforcement Agencies

Attachments:

Medical Examiner Agreement FY17
Medical Examiner 2015 Annual Report
Schedule A List of Fees for Services
Schedule B Professional Liability Insurance