



2021 Budget Presentation

DANE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

Mission

- ▶ To complete inquests of the dead as authorized by Chapter 979 of the Wisconsin State Statutes, and protect public safety.

Action items

- ▶ Budget cuts:
 - ▶ We have performed minor adjustments to budget lines to meet the County Executive's direction for budget reductions:
 - ▶ We have reduced our morgue supplies budget by \$3,100.00.
 - ▶ Related to the establishment of a medical examiner's office in Brown County opening in 2021 at some point, reducing the burden on morgue supplies in Dane.
 - ▶ Currently, all Brown County autopsies are being performed in Dane.
 - ▶ We have reduced our travel expenses to our intergovernmental agreement (IGA) counties by \$10,000.00, to more accurately reflect our current expenditures.

Action Items

- ▶ Increased Revenue:
 - ▶ We are estimating an increase in paid cremation permits in 2021.
 - ▶ 53 additional paid permits providing an estimated revenue of \$16,000.00.
 - ▶ We are requesting that the County Board approve the minimal allowable increase to Cremation Permits of \$6.00. This increase is statutorily allowed and corresponds to the increase in CPI.
 - ▶ Estimated revenue of \$16,200.

What has been our department's greatest challenge in meeting our mission during the pandemic?

- ▶ Increase in case volume

- ▶ Major cases:

First six months	2018	2019	2020
Homicide	8	5	16
Suicide	52	54	66
Overdose	72	74	94

- ▶ Decrease in pathologist staff (currently two working pathologists out of four available positions filled).
 - ▶ Nationwide shortage of pathologists
 - ▶ Workload significantly impairs retention

What has been your greatest accomplishment?

- ▶ Maintaining effective service with staff shortages
- ▶ Establishing and prioritizing protocols for staff safety during the pandemic
 - ▶ Work from home
 - ▶ Expanded use of personal protective measures at scenes
 - ▶ Preliminary COVID testing of decedents prior to autopsy for optimal use of facility resources for safe examination
 - ▶ Obtaining a computerized tomography machine (CAT scan) for more extensive and noninvasive examination of decedents while reducing staff exposure to pathogens

What unmet needs do you have?

- ▶ As always, a shortage of pathologists
 - ▶ Consistent stress placed on remaining pathologist staff
 - ▶ Increases in report turnaround times for families and partners
 - ▶ Limits our ability to expand and provide services to outside counties



In light of budget guidelines, how has your department made required cuts while bearing in mind the county's commitment to racial equity?

- ▶ The cuts we have made do not diminish the county and the department's commitment to racial equity.
- ▶ As always, the department places a high priority in racial equity in hiring, and continues to seek out candidates that both meet job requirements and fulfill this priority.
 - ▶ Through aggressive recruiting of ideal candidates, currently we are proud to say that currently half of our senior full time investigator staff is made up of diversity candidates.
 - ▶ We continue to place a priority on diversity hiring through nationwide job postings, interviewing by teleconferencing, and networking.