



## OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL INVESTIGATOR

### NEW MEXICO BOARD OF MEDICAL INVESTIGATORS MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING- March 14, 2022

NM Office of the Medical Investigator  
The University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center  
\*\*VIRTUAL MEETING\*\*

#### **BOARD PRESENT:**

<b>Michael Richards</b> <i>Acting Chair</i>	Interim Dean, UNM School of Medicine
<b>Tim Johnson</b> <i>Board Secretary</i>	Chief, New Mexico State Police
<b>Lynn Trujillo</b> <i>Board Member</i>	Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Dept. of Indian Affairs

#### **BOARD ABSENT:**

<b>David Scrase</b> <i>Board Chair</i>	Acting Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Dept. of Health
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#### **ATTENDEES:**

Natalie Adolphi, PhD	Director of the Center for Forensic Imaging, OMI
Albert Arocha	Supervisor of Technical Services, OMI
La Vonda Bowens Woodard	Interim Director of Operations, OMI
Anthony Cervantes	Unit Administrator 1, OMI
Lauren Decker, MD	Medical Investigator, OMI
Monica Eshner	HR Administrator 2, OMI
Felicia Garcia	Fiscal Service Tech, OMI
Heather Jarrell, MD	Chief Medical Investigator, OMI
Thu Luu	Accountant 3, OMI
Robert Noblin	Owner/Licensed Funeral Director
Lori Proe, DO	Medical Investigator, OMI
Alexandra Sanchez	Public Information Officer, UNM HSC
Scot Sauder	Deputy University Counsel, UNM HSC
Shannon Horst	Member of the Public

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM**  
Dr. Richards called the meeting to order at 1:12 PM and confirmed a quorum.
2. **MOTION TO APPOINT ACTING CHAIR**  
Dr. Richards called for a motion to appoint himself as the acting chair for this meeting. Chief Johnson **MOVED**; Sec. Trujillo **SECONDED**. All were in favor. Motion **CARRIED**.
3. **MOTION TO REORDER AGENDA ITEMS**

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Acting Chairman Richards proposed to reorder the agenda to information items first and reserve action items until Sec. Scrase joins the meeting. Dr. Richards called for a motion to reorder agenda items in the following order:

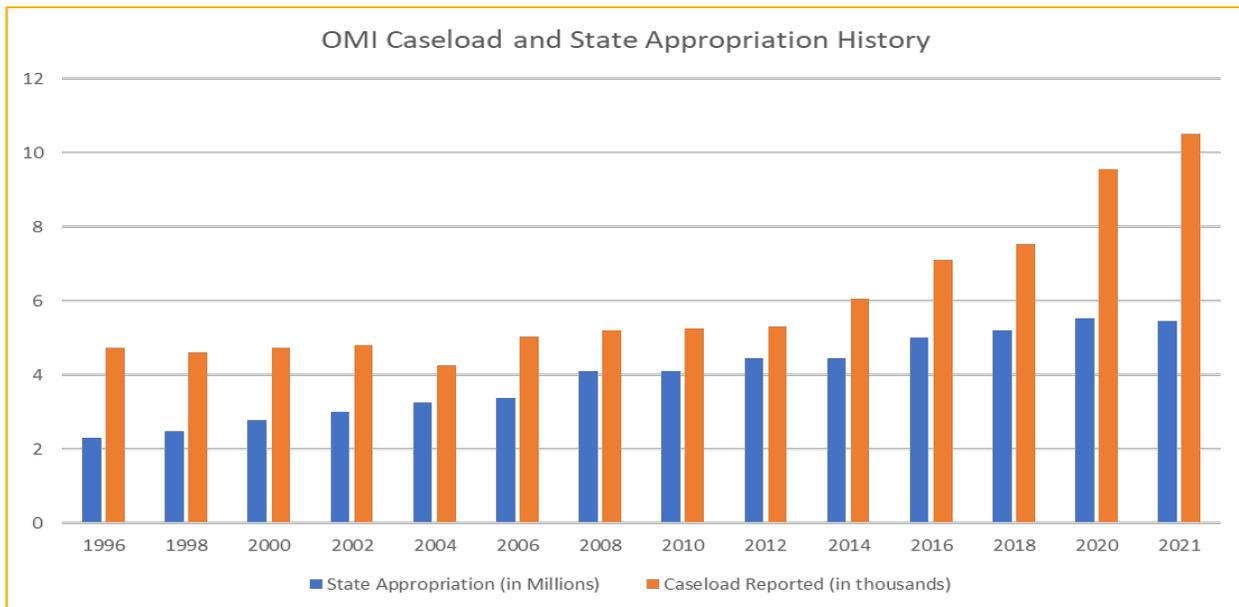
1. Report from the Chief Medical Investigator: Dr. Heather Jarrell
2. Follow up regarding DMORT mission.
3. Budget – Action Item

Chief Johnson **MOVED** to reorder the agenda to informational items first. Sec. Trujillo **SECONDED**. All were in favor. Motion **CARRIED**.

#### 4. **REPORT FROM THE CHIEF MEDICAL INVESTIGATOR**

Dr. Jarrell shared a graph illustrating an Overview of OMI 2021.

- Hired 5 forensic pathologists.
  - Last hire was in Feb 2022
  - “Fully staffed” in August 2022
  - 11<sup>th</sup> FP is posted.
- Performed record number of examinations.
  - 10,508 death reports
  - 2,106 autopsies
  - 2,477 external examinations
- Research: \$2.59 M
- Teaching: Held International webinar on postmortem CT (PMCT)



#### 5. **DMORT MISSION AND FUTURE UNCLAIMED/INDIGENT DECEDENTS**

##### **DMORT Mission:**

Dr. Jarrell stated that Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT) was present at OMI for two weeks. There was a total of twenty-two DMORT staff, ten at OMI and ten at Bernalillo County. Due to their efforts, there was a 15% reduction in decedent storage at OMI.

- Referred 172 decedents to Bernalillo County (BernCo)
- Non-BernCo: 94
- 104 releases (59 BernCo, 45 other)
- Pending paperwork to counties: 32

**Indigent/Unclaimed Process Moving Forward:**

Dr. Jarrell noted that some of the items listed were recommendations by DMORT.

OMI	COUNTIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated group of 3 LNOK searchers</li> <li>• Outsource LNOK searches temporarily if needed</li> <li>• Unclaimed decedents posted to OMI website</li> <li>• Institution of storage fees to counties/funeral homes beginning June 1?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility of working group (process analysis and proposal of state statute changes)</li> <li>• Two refrigerated trucks at OMI are empty and available for county use</li> </ul>

Dr. Jarrell reminded the board that in a previous meeting there was discussion regarding information and implementation of the storage fee to counties/funeral homes. Dr. Jarrell reported that a meeting was held with the New Mexico Counties. The group discussed OMI's role in conducting due diligence for LNOK searches versus the NM Counties role. In the last meeting Dr. Jarrell was asked by Sec. Scrase to provide information regarding when the storage fee was established by the OMI board. Dr. Jarrell reported that an old fee schedule from 1991 did not reflect the storage fee. No information could be found regarding why OMI established the fee.

6. **BUDGET**

Dr. Jarrell opened the budget presentation with Powerpoint slides illustrating Income Statements

**FY22 Income Statement Projection 7/1/23 – 6/30/22**

Revenue	
<b>Operating Revenue</b>	
University Hospital Revenue	\$992,983
Sandoval Regional MC Revenue	\$44,480
Other Sales and Services	\$5,305,107
<b>NYU RECOVER Cohort Autopsy Study</b>	\$64,736
<b>Non-operating Revenue</b>	
State Appropriation	\$5,744,200
<b>Intra University Activities</b>	
Transfer & Allocation	\$248,658
FEMA Covid-Related Reimbursement	\$541,299
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$12,941,463</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Salary & Fringe	\$8,270,350
Body Transportation	\$1,812,398
Utilities & Plant Maintenance (SLD, Security, VertiQ Upgrade, Kon	\$763,754
Equipment Warranties (Phillips, Siemens, Stryker, C-Scan Technol	\$133,621
Services (Locums, Janitorial, Waste Destruction, Malpractice, Tricore,	\$943,185
Patient Care Expenses (PPEs, Body Bags, Formalin, Scalpel Blade	\$347,138
NMS: Non-Pending Toxicology	\$63,815
Other Expenses (Appr's Overhead, bad debt, FDMIs mileage reimb,	\$1,087,440
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$13,421,701</b>
<b>FY22 Projected Net</b>	<b>(\$480,238)</b>
<b>FY21 Reserves</b>	<b>\$237,712</b>
<b>FY22 Overall Projected Net</b>	<b>(\$242,526)</b>

Cremation Permit: \$4M

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**FY23 Income Statement Projection 7/1/22 – 6/30/23**

Revenue	
<b>Operating Revenue</b>	
University Hospital Revenue	\$992,983
Sandoval Regional MC Revenue	\$44,480
Other Sales and Services	\$5,591,743
<b>NYU RECOVER Cohort Autopsy Study</b>	\$129,472
<b>Non-operating Revenue</b>	
State Appropriation	\$6,544,200
State Appropriation: <u>Non-Recurring</u>	\$500,000
<b>Intra University Activities</b>	
Transfer & Allocation	(\$56,605)
FEMA Covid-Related Reimbursement	\$151,900
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$13,898,173</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Salary & Fringe	\$8,985,116
Body Transportation	\$2,363,328
Utilities & Plant Maintenance (SLD, Security, Kone Elevator, Pest	\$740,210
Equipment Warranties (Phillips, Siemens, Stryker, C-Scan Technol	\$197,338
Services (Janitorial, Waste Destruction, Malpractice, Tricore, Invitae, S	\$384,215
Patient Care Expenses (PPEs, Body Bags, Formalin, Scalpel Blade	\$357,552
NMS	\$338,000
Other Expenses (Appr's Overhead, bad debt, FDMIs mileage reimb,	\$1,177,223
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$14,542,982</b>
<b>FY23 Projected Net</b>	<b>(\$644,809)</b>
<b>FY22 Reserves</b>	<b>(\$242,526)</b>
<b>FY23 Overall Projected Net</b>	<b>(\$887,335)</b>

Grief Services:  
\$202,600

Dr. Jarrell noted pending grant applications.

Grant Type	Funding Amount
CDC Grant (Cooperative Agreement for Emergency Response: Public Health Crisis Response)	\$500K (FY22: \$106K) (FY23: \$291K) (F&A 26%, \$103K)
Coronavirus Response CDC (Public Health Crisis Response Cooperative Agreement)	\$1.2 M (FY22, FY23: \$177K salary savings)
Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding (Department of Public Safety)	\$351K (FY22, FY23: \$197K salary savings)

Total Savings for FY23 if funded:  
\$478,000  
  
\$338K for Toxicology  
  
Adjusted FY23 Projected Net PENDING FUNDING:  
(\$71,335)

Dr. Jarrell noted to Dr. Richards that the next slide is the FY24 legislative request (action item). Dr. Richards recommended that Dr. Jarrell present the information to the board. When it's time for board action, the board will have to decide if they want to act or table the agenda item.

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Dr. Jarrell opened the agenda item with a slide listing FY24 Legislative Requests.

Need	Funding Needed
12 <sup>th</sup> Forensic Pathologist (to fall under examination quantity limits set by NAME)	\$398,158
4 Central Office Investigators (to meet the recommendations of investigators needed per 1 million people), <i>Scientific Working Group for Medicolegal Death Investigation</i>	\$267,028
2 Investigators for FDMI section, located at the OMI	\$133,514
Reinstatement of Non-Recurring FY23 Approp.	\$500,000
Transportation Cost Increase	\$1,000,000
FDMI Salary Adjustment	<b>\$616,700</b>
Medical Investigator Assistant (LNOK searchers)* (Grant funded)	\$150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,065,400</b>

Dr. Jarrell wrapped up the FY24 legislative request and presented a FY23 Capital Outlay Request.

FY23 Capital Outlay Request:

1. Autopsy tables x 16 (\$408,480)
2. Vehicles x 2 (\$70,000)
3. -80 Freezers x 2 (\$81,400)
4. Washers and Dryers (\$32,000)

A slide was presented illustrating data on OMI cremation permits. The OMI would need an additional \$1M funding to decrease cremation permits revenue by 25%

	% Revenue from Cremation Permits	Cremation Permit Revenue
FY20	26%	\$2,970,910
FY21	32%	\$3,703,507
FY22	31%	\$4,094,805
FY23	31%	\$4,381,441

**7. TABLE BUDGET ACTION ITEM**

Acting Chairman Richards reminded the board that the FY24 Legislative Request and Plan is listed on the agenda as an action item. In the absence of the chair and vice chair, Dr. Richards asked the board to consider a table action on this item. There is a pending board meeting that is scheduled before this will be advanced to the University as the board's recommendation for legislative priorities. Chief Johnson and Sec. Trujillo expressed their concerns and support to table the action to next board meeting.

Acting Chairman Richards called for a motion to table the action item. Chief Johnson **MOVED**; Sec. Trujillo **SECONDED**. All were in favor. Motion **CARRIED**.

**8. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Shannon Horst stated that she had an uncle who passed away in mid-January and is still waiting on a final death certificate. Ms. Horst recognized how busy the office is, however, she cannot gain access to funding so that she can take legal steps needed to care for her aunt. Although a pending death certificate was issued, no one will accept it. Ms. Horst expressed that on five separate occasions she has called the OMI and has received different information each time. She

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has worked with two investigators that cannot give accurate information. Ms. Horst recommended an ombuds person who can deal with members of the public to help track a case from death, investigation, autopsy, and final release of the body.

Dr. Jarrell asked Ms. Horst to give her contact information to board administrator, Anthony Cervantes so that OMI can follow-up.

9. **VOTE TO CLOSE THE MEETING AND PROCEED IN CLOSED SESSION**

Acting Chairman **MOVED** to proceed in executive session. Chief Johnson **SECONDED**. Sec. Trujillo **MOVED**. The general meeting was closed by rollcall of all present members. All were in favor. Motion **CARRIED**. The meeting moved to executive session at 1:58 PM.

For the purpose of closed session, board administrator, Anthony Cervantes confirmed attendees with Acting Chairman Richards and Counsel Sauder:

Heather Jarrell, MD  
Nancy Joste, MD  
Scot Sauder  
Michael Richards, MD  
Tim Johnson  
Lynn Trujillo

10. **OPEN GENERAL MEETING**

The general meeting was re-opened at 2:13 PM. Acting Chairman Richards certified that only the matters described in the executive session agenda were discussed during closed session. Dr. Richards stated that the closed session was informational only.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

Dr. Richard called for a vote to adjourn. Chief Johnson **MOVED**. Sec. Trujillo **SECONDED**. All were in favor. Motion **CARRIED**.

The meeting **ADJOURNED** at 2:14 PM