
Issue Brief – Medical Examiner

NUMBER HHS-05-01

SUMMARY

For many years, the budget of the Office of the Medical Examiner (OME) has been insufficient to cover all of the office's expenses. By supplementing some funding from other programs within the line item, the Department has been able to avoid a deficit. However, this has caused pressure on other programs as well as the OME. The Department has requested a base budget increase of \$100,000 for FY 2006.

By reducing the funding for postage and mailing in the Division of Health Care Financing, the Analyst has been able to include an additional \$50,000 in his base recommendation for FY 2006 for the Medical Examiner. If the Legislature adopts the Analyst's recommendation for the base, and still wishes to fund the full request of \$100,000, only the difference of \$50,000 needs to be addressed.

ANALYSIS

The Office of the Medical Examiner is open 24 hours a day/7 days a week. It must respond to all sudden or unexpected deaths in the State. Because of the vast geographic area of the State, investigators and physicians are employed on a contract basis in more remote areas of the state as the need arises. Some of the staff is on call and will report to the office if called. As the population of the state has increased over the past decade, additional contracted staff has been needed to respond to the increasing number of cases handled by the Medical Examiner. No additional funding for this has been provided.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The Analyst recommends that the Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee approve the FY 2006 base recommendation which increases the budget for the Medical Examiner's Office by \$50,000.