

## Issue Brief – Medical Examiner

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

NUMBER DOH IB 07-03

### SUMMARY

The Office of the Medical Examiner (OME) is responsible for the investigation and certification of sudden and unexpected deaths that occur within the borders of the State. The specific circumstances surrounding any given death which place it under the jurisdiction of the OME are specified in UCA 26-4-7.

### OBJECTIVE

The objective of this building block request is to address the chronic operating shortfall within the Office of the Medical Examiner.

### DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The Office of the Medical Examiner is involved to a varying degree in approximately 25 percent of the deaths in Utah each year. The Office collects data on every case under its jurisdiction that can be used to understand the health hazards that cause and contribute to mortality in the State. The OME provides information and expertise to health care providers, EMT's law enforcement officials, the courts and attorneys concerning issues relating to death and injury within Utah.

#### *Contributing Factors*

The operating shortfall is primarily the result of three items:

- **Body Transportation Costs** – Contractual service fees have increased 56 percent over the last five years.
- **Medical Supply Costs** – Medical supply costs for the office have increased over \$20,000 since 2002.
- **Overtime Costs** – The OME caseload has steadily increased an average of 5 percent a year since 2000. (See Budget Brief 07-02) This growth rate is estimated to continue due to Utah's demographics.

#### *Financial History*

The table below details the funding and expenditures history for the Office from FY 2000 through the current fiscal year. The positive "Lapsing Balance" reflects the shifting of funds from other programs within the Executive Director's Office line item to address the annual funding needs within the OME. This means that for FY 2005, \$117,000 of funding taken from elsewhere in the line item was needed to close the year with enough revenue to equal the actual expenditures on the bottom half of the schedule.

<b>Office of the Medical Examiner Financial History</b>							
Financing	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006 Approp
General Fund	\$1,332,000	\$1,322,100	\$1,619,700	\$1,778,200	\$1,770,400	\$1,825,500	\$1,940,600
General Fund, One-time	3,500	99,800	167,800		4,300	9,600	
Dedicated Credits Rev.	73,120	72,384	66,470	88,936	85,759	77,100	89,200
Lapsing Balance	103,652	70,981	(20,012)	53,220	97,478	117,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,512,272</b>	<b>\$1,565,265</b>	<b>\$1,833,958</b>	<b>\$1,920,356</b>	<b>\$1,957,937</b>	<b>\$2,029,200</b>	<b>\$2,029,800</b>
Expenditures	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006 Approp
Personal Services	\$1,083,428	\$1,112,600	\$1,317,622	\$1,371,481	\$1,399,989	\$1,462,800	\$1,369,300
In-State Travel	2,768	3,093	5,414	3,292	3,021	2,900	3,500
Out of State Travel	3,797	5,789	1,626		1,211		1,300
Current Expense	414,216	435,406	476,358	537,618	543,184	548,700	645,500
DP Current Expense	8,063	8,377	31,966	7,965	10,532	13,800	10,200
Other Charges/Pass Thru			972			1,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,512,272</b>	<b>\$1,565,265</b>	<b>\$1,833,958</b>	<b>\$1,920,356</b>	<b>\$1,957,937</b>	<b>\$2,029,200</b>	<b>\$2,029,800</b>

**LEGISLATIVE ACTION*****Recommendation***

The Analyst recommends that the Subcommittee approve ongoing funding of \$110,000 General Fund to address the increased workload growth.

***Supplemental Appropriation Recommendation***

In conjunction with the FY 2007 appropriation recommendation made above, the Analyst recommends that the Subcommittee approve a Supplemental Appropriation of \$70,000 one-time General Fund for FY 2006. This will enable the Office of the Medical Examiner to continue current operations without requiring a shift of funds from other programs within the Department.