



# Work and Performance Plan FY2019 (MED)

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## DEPARTMENT KEY INITIATIVES

### Key Initiative #1 -- Plan and Prepare for Possible Mass Fatality Event (MFE)

**Link to Strategic Business Plan:**

Yes

**Description:**

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg area is a major metropolitan area with an international airport, major sports venues, two nearby nuclear power stations, and hosts major events on a regular basis that have inherent risks for possible mass disaster or fatalities. The possibility exists for several different scenarios in which multiple persons could be severely injured and/or killed as a result. While not every scenario can be imagined, the main potential MFEs could include pandemic outbreak, natural disasters, mass transit accident, mass public shootings, public protests/riots, and terrorist attacks. As a regional Forensic Pathology center, the office is obligated to participate in mutual aid for MFEs within the regional counties that we serve (Anson, Cabarrus, Union, Cleveland, Gaston) and could be tasked to assist in other areas of the State with a large scale MFE.

**Rationale:**

The ME Office needs to be prepared for potential MFEs and to coordinate with local, regional, State, and Federal resources in order to address scene response, victim identification, data collection, examinations, evidence collection, and public safety while providing timely feedback to manage expectations from the public and the effected families. In conjunction with local, regional, State, and Federal resources, the ME Office will plan for potential mass fatality events and will undergo training, develop strategies, and obtain the resources necessary to respond to a mass fatality incident in Mecklenburg County and the surrounding region. Plan will include an understanding and inventory of local resources with a local response plan and implementation of Federal response for an MFE that overwhelms the local/State response capability.

**Completion Date:**

This is an ongoing project with continued learning and strategy development.

**Updates/Project Milestones:**

Entire staff undergoing Mass Fatality Incident Response training through the State of NC- started in 2017, to be completed in FY19 as classes and schedules allow

Staff will participate in on-line mass fatality training programs and other available continuing education seminars/meetings involving mass fatality throughout the year

Update collaborative working arrangements with the Metrolina Health Preparedness Coalition (MHPC)- Q1 and Q2 of FY19

Training on the Victim Identification Program (VIP) used by DMORT (Federal Mass Disaster Response/Mortuary)- Program purchased and installed by IT in FY18, Training scheduled for Q2 FY19

Full Scale Mass Fatality Morgue Exercise- Planning during Q2 FY19 with actual exercise to occur by end of FY19

Update the Morgue Mass Fatality Event Plan- by end of FY19

Work with County IT on development of real time digital body tracking system based on current whiteboard system- will reevaluate what is needed after VIP training in Q2, update needs by end of FY19

Continue meeting with local resources through monthly meetings to gauge collaborative efforts in mass fatality response

Continue working with Mecklenburg County Emergency Management Services and MHPC on development/finalization of Family Assistance Center (FAC) setup during MFE- by end of FY19

**Outcomes/Measures:**



## Key Initiative #2 -- Train Full-Time Investigators to Receive Certification from the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI)

**Link to Strategic Business Plan:**

Yes

**Description:**

Continued training of all current full-time investigators to obtain the ABMDI certification. Begin process for all newly hired investigators (4 new investigators hired between June and August 2017)

**Rationale:**

To provide for the best forensic services for Mecklenburg County and the surrounding region, including scene investigation within Mecklenburg County for homicides and suspicious deaths. Allows for collaborative but independent investigation along with the local law enforcement agencies. Allows for prompt, professional response to families, law enforcement, funeral services, and other community partners.

**Completion Date:**

Process begins June 2018 with application submission. 18-month long process, to be completed before November 2019.

**Updates/Project Milestones:**

Current full time investigators

- Apply for ABMDI certification training- July 2018
  - Completion of 25% of checklist- October 2018
  - Completion of 50% of checklist- January 2019
  - Completion of 75% of checklist- March 2019
  - Completion of 100% of checklist- August 2019
- Take and pass examination- between September and November 2019

**Outcomes/Measures:**



## Key Initiative #3 -- Complete Morgue Cooler Expansion

**Link to Strategic Business Plan:**

Yes

**Description:**

Work on completion of the morgue cooler expansion. Look at options to increase current body storage capacity in the immediate future and for long term (at least 10-15 years) by 1) changing out the racking systems and tables for different system for more immediate increase in capacity and 2) constructing cooler addition with new racking/table system utilizing approved CIP funds for more long term capacity increase.

**Rationale:**

Based on population served as the ME Office and the County morgue, we are at full capacity almost daily with the significant increase in number of overdose deaths, the increase in homicides and other ME cases. The current racks and tables will accommodate 39 to 44 bodies. Based on College of American Pathologists recommendations, there should be space for one body in the morgue facility per every 15,000-population served. 2015 census data results indicate the need for 68 storage spaces for Mecklenburg County, plus additional spaces for the regional counties that we serve. While each county is required to have a county morgue/space for ME case examination, the regional counties send their autopsy cases to the Mecklenburg County ME Office and thus we require additional storage space (estimated at 20 spaces) to accommodate those cases as well. A larger cooler space would also allow for revenue generation through charging outside entities for body storage fees.

**Completion Date:**

New racking system and tables to increase capacity to approximately 70 bodies- planned and ordered during FY18; Expected to be delivered and installed by mid-August 2018  
Physical expansion of cooler space is an on-going process through the CIP funding and is anticipated to start construction in FY20.

**Updates/Project Milestones:**

August 2018- Install new racking system in current cooler  
Mid FY20- Begin construction on cooler addition

**Outcomes/Measures:**



## Key Initiative #4 -- Ensure Compliance with National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) Accreditation Standards

**Link to Strategic Business Plan:**

Yes

**Description:**

Follow the standards for operation of a Forensic Pathology Office as established by NAME. Pursue full accreditation for the office in the future once compliance with the standards has been met and maintained.

**Rationale:**

NAME is the only organization that oversees the operation of Forensic Pathology services/facilities and issues guidelines for best practices. Following the standards helps to ensure that the office is operating under best practices. Accreditation indicates that the office is functioning in a manner that meets accepted best practice requirements. The Office will ensure compliance with the standards for Office and Morgue Facilities, Security, Safety, Quality Assurance, Mass Disaster Planning, Investigations, Morgue Operations, Body Handling, Examinations/Autopsy, Radiology, Histology, Toxicology, Evidence Collection, Generation of Reports, Photography, Death Certification, Professional Staffing Workload, Training/Continuing Education, and appropriate use of Consultation Services (as outlined in detail on the NAME website listed above).

All NAME standards can be found at [www.thename.org](http://www.thename.org) under "Inspection/Accreditation", and then choose "NAME Accreditation Checklist 2014-2019".

**Completion Date:**

Ongoing project. Follow the standards as published by NAME for facility, staff, and service requirements as outlined above.

Plan to update all policies and procedures over the next 12 months and identify areas of deficiency to address and correct during FY19 and FY20 if necessary to achieve NAME accreditation as per the FY20-22 SBP.

**Updates/Project Milestones:**

Complete the review/updating of policies and procedures and follow standards- throughout FY19

Apply for NAME accreditation- Follow FY20-22 SBP

Undergo and pass inspection/receive the accreditation- Follow the 20-22 SBP

**Outcomes/Measures:**



## Key Initiative #5 -- Enhance Training and Collaborations with Community Partners

### Link to Strategic Business Plan:

Yes

### Description:

Continue building collaborative working partnerships with other agencies involved in death investigation to provide highest level of service to the community. Provide training about the ME system and how the agencies can better work together for efficiency and clarity of information, including in emergency and mass fatality events. Continue serving the local community through education of individuals involved in related health career training programs (Wingate University Physician Assistant program) and expanding educational opportunities to accommodate requests from other local programs and citizens in the medical, nursing, and Forensics/medical community. This would involve shadowing opportunities to see the operation of the office, the ME system and jurisdiction process, and viewing of an appropriate autopsy. Offering educational lectures at local high school (Forensics or Biomedical classes) and higher education level settings by the Pathologists and/or Investigators would also be included.

### Rationale:

Death investigations and handling of the remains involves several agencies including law enforcement, families, MEDIC, physicians, MEs in regional counties, hospitals, and funeral homes. New personnel are continuously entering the investigation of deaths and need training and education about the ME system, autopsies and other services we offer, and the limitations of the system. The Mecklenburg County ME Office also currently serves to educate PA students from Wingate University through the attendance and viewing of an autopsy with instruction in anatomy, pathology, trauma, toxicology, and cause of death. In the last several years, the office has received increasing inquiries from both individuals enrolled in or entering into a health professions field and local higher education programs that are interested in Forensics, the ME system, and attendance at an autopsy for educational benefit. The Mecklenburg County ME Office is a valuable community resource, that while not designed to accommodate large classes or a large volume of rotating persons, is able to offer and tailor a unique educational experience (on a limited scale) to address these requests from the community.

### Completion Date:

Ongoing process, started in FY17, continues into FY19. Continue training of Wingate PA students in fall of 2018 and spring of 2019. Structure a more formal educational experience for individuals or small groups of 2 to 4 individuals with the opportunity to shadow a Pathologist and/or Investigators and attend an autopsy, ranging from one day up to one week; complete by mid FY19. Set up a standardized presentation to be given by either Pathologists or Investigators to local high school Forensics/Biomedical or similar classes who request such an educational experience in the classroom without actually coming to the ME Office and viewing an autopsy.

### Updates/Project Milestones:

Continue to schedule training for various agencies throughout the year. Respond to requests for educational experiences in the ME Office throughout the year.  
Coordinate with the State ME office for training of local/regional MEs and for emergency/mass fatality events.

### Outcomes/Measures: