

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Sedgwick County Regional Forensic Science Center
1109 North Minneapolis Street, Wichita, Kansas 67214

May 16, 2024

Board Members Present

- Dr. Shelly Steadman, Director, Regional Forensic Science Center
- Aaron Breitenbach, District Attorney's Office
- Chris Dugan, Fire Marshal, Wichita Fire Department
- Jeffrey Easter, Sedgwick County Sheriff
- Dr. David Guo, Interim Director, WSU Hugo Wall School of Public Affairs
- Russell Leeds, Assistant County Manager
- Jennifer Magana, City Attorney, City of Wichita
- Dr. Ron Varner, Coroner, 13th Judicial District

Board Members Absent

- Darrell Atterberry, Chief of Police, Bel Aire
- Brad Crisp, Deputy Chief, Sedgwick County Fire District #1
- Dr. Timothy Gorrill, Sedgwick County Coroner
- Kevin Lanterman, Chief, Sedgwick County EMS
- Dr. Garold Minns, Dean, KU School of Medicine-Wichita
- Joe Sullivan, Chief, Wichita Police Department

Attendees Present

- Katie Asbury, Forensic Administrator, Regional Forensic Science Center

AGENDA

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 AM.

II. Introductions and Roll Call

III. File Minutes from the November 16, 2023 Meeting

IV. RFSC Performance Metrics and Center Updates - OD2A

Dr. Shelly Steadman

Performance Metrics and Trends

- Medical Investigations
 - 1,398 reported deaths Jan 1-April 30, 2024
 - 313 death scenes Jan 1-April 30, 2024 - about 1 fewer scenes per week
 - For 2023 cases, 12 are still pending Toxicology results. Of those 12, about 6 were still in testing.
- Pathology
 - Approximately 12% of work is out-of-county for 2024 cases
 - Suicides have trended downward
 - In 2023, overdose cases accounted for ~23% of the caseload
 - 63% of overdose cases are related to fentanyl
- Toxicology
 - Backlog
 - Toxicology backlog is at 109 at end of April
 - The 2 new LCMS instruments are much more sensitive to the environment, the air quality control isn't ideal in the current building
 - Number of toxicology cases has not increased
 - HPT/DUI backlog cases are slightly higher due to instrumentation repairs and the 2 scientists in Fire Debris training
 - Number of submissions has remained stable
- Drug Identification
 - Backlog is directly related to staffing challenges and training
 - Number of cases submitted has decreased (WPD is using state lab as a secondary resource)
 - Drug ID fentanyl positive exhibits are up 684% from 2021
- Fire Debris
 - Currently not taking cases due to staff in training, one scientist from Toxicology and one from Drug ID
- Firearms
 - Firearms Examiner is now fully trained and accepting all types of firearms analysis
 - JOCO and KBI completing technical reviews and verifications
 - Firearms backlog (8) is a function of waiting for reviews to be completed
 - 55 firearms cases submitted Jan 1-April 30, 2024
- Biology/DNA
 - Biology/DNA backlog has decreased significantly
 - Turnaround time on rape kits is now approximately 4 months
 - Working on validation projects
 - Biology/DNA case submissions have remained stable – 114 received between Jan 1-April 30, 2024

Quarterly Summary

- Both LC-MS/MS instrument validations underway and continuing to outsource with various grants in Tox
- Land acquisition for DNA addition is on hold -- space study is underway

- RFSC has one vacancy (Reception/Front Desk position), pathology staffing is stable and case volume is no longer increasing
- Dr. Schainost appointed to the Kansas State Child Death Review Board
- Several staff members recently attended the State Coroner Conference

OD2A Grant

- Robert Hansen and Shelly attended the CDC Conference in Atlanta, required for OD2A: Local grant award participation
- RFSC is required to test 500 items from death scenes (items that will not be used in a criminal investigation)
- Medical Investigations have collected drugs and/or paraphernalia at 40 scenes since starting the project December 2023
- Criminalistics Supervisor is overseeing the training of our new chemist in Drug ID, the purchase of a new GC-MS, and the validation of the GC-MS
- Criminalistics Supervisor has tested 128 items
 - Of the 128 items, 29 items tested positive for fentanyl
- Results are posted on the RFSC website and shared with our partners at the Health Department
- Our progress in collection and testing is advanced compared to others encountered at the CDC conference

2023 Grants Submitted

- Coverdell Formula (\$99,900) - award pending
- Coverdell Formula solicitation - negotiation underway
- CEBR (\$302,018) - BOCC approval pending
- JAG (\$42,824) - awarded and spending underway
- KDHE OD2A (\$60,000) - program underway
- OD2A Local (\$250,000) - program underway

Anticipated 2024 Grants

- OD2A Local (\$250,000) - Year 2 budget in progress

2025 Budget

- No decision package presented this year
- Need to start considering funding for LIMS - will fund with Coverdell one more year

CIP Requests

- DNA Addition - land acquisition vs. other options

Questions and Discussion

- Mr. Breitenbach asked if there was a prohibition on using the tested items for a criminal investigation in the future? For example, to charge a separate individual with distribution.
- Dr. Steadman responded that the program should not interfere with prosecuting

those cases and that SOPs were established for documenting items collected through the Investigator's submission to a depository. Thereafter, digital chain of custody is initiated and all standard laboratory procedures are in place as would be for any criminal matter.

V. Agency Reports

There were no agency reports presented.

VI. Other Business

Dr. Steadman asked if there was interest in holding an in-person meeting or continuing with the Zoom format. There seemed to be support for continuing the Zoom format. There was no other business discussed.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 AM.

Next Meeting: November 21, 2024 at 9:00 AM
1109 N. Minneapolis Street, Wichita Kansas, 67214 or via Zoom (TBD)
Next Quarterly Update: August 2024