

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

Annual Activity Report 2009-10

Message from the Chief Medical Examiner

I hereby present the 2009-10 Activity Report of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. This report was prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. My signature below is indicative of my accountability for the results reported.

As a Category 3 Government Entity, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is required to report at an activity level. This information presented in this report outlines the activities of the Office from April 1, 2009 until March 31, 2010.



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Chief Medical Examiner
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Overview

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is located in the Health Sciences Centre, Prince Philip Parkway, St. John's. Independence of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is heightened and enhanced through the employment of the Chief Medical Examiner as a Full Professor in Memorial University of Newfoundland's Faculty of Medicine.

Administrative support is provided by an Administrative Officer with additional clerical support provided for a portion of the year. Files related to the investigations conducted by the office are presently stored at the L.A. Miller Centre, a facility of Eastern Health.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner receives reports of approximately 650 sudden and unexpected deaths per year. For fiscal year 2009-10 the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador budgeted \$740,800 for expenditures associated with the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

Mandate

The mandate of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is contained in the *Fatalities Investigations Act*, Chapter F-6.1, SNL 1995. The Chief Medical Examiner is responsible for operation of the *Act* in relation to the reporting, investigating and recording of deaths, the appointment of physicians as medical examiners and supervision of the performance of their duties required by the *Act*, the appointment of medical examiner's investigators and the education of persons required to perform functions in accordance with the *Act*.

Vision

An environment where the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner responds to those deaths that are appropriately reported in accordance with the *Fatalities Investigations Act*.

Report on Activities

Issue 1: Compliance with Fatalities Investigations Act

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, on average, responds to approximately 650 reportable deaths annually, as defined by the *Fatalities Investigations Act*. The response to a particular death is dependent upon the circumstances of the deceased's health, level of health care at the time of death and the suspected cause of death. Some cases may involve a review of information submitted by a medical examiner, a post-mortem examination or even the assistance of a Forensic Anthropologist. This past year the number of reportable deaths was average for the Province.

Objective 1: During the time frame 2008-11, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will have responded to deaths that are reported in accordance with the *Fatalities Investigations Act*.

Measure: Response to reported deaths

Indicators	Results
Conduct file reviews of medical examiner's reports	Approximately 650 file reviews of medical examiner's reports were conducted.
Order and/or conduct post mortem examinations as appropriate	Approximately 265 post mortem examinations were ordered and/or conducted.
Order and/or conduct autopsies as appropriate	Approximately 385 autopsies were ordered and/or conducted.
Record and report on cause of death	Recorded and reported on cause of death for approximately 650 files.

As stated in the 2008-11 Activity Plan of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will report on this objective and indicators again in 2010-11.

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

Since the Medical Examiner depends on other elements of the health system, workload and other issues within health have the potential to negatively impact the operations of the medical examiner system. A stand-alone operation, while ideal, is not practical with the current workload in the province. It is anticipated, however, that, as the economic climate in Newfoundland and Labrador improves, workload may increase, at which time such an operation may become more practical.

Financial Statements

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are un-audited and based on public information provided in the Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the Year Ended 31 March 2010 (unaudited). The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is not required to provide a separate audited financial statement.

2.3.03. OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER

	Actual \$	Estimates	
		Amended \$	Original \$
01. Salaries.....	352,234	404,700	380,700
02. Employee Benefits.....	4,398	5,100	4,700
03. Transportation and Communications.....	3,000	14,100	14,200
04. Supplies.....	2,079	3,800	3,800
05. Professional Services.....	127,652	130,000	130,000
06. Purchased Services.....	129,531	134,100	204,600
07. Property, Furnishings and Equipment.....	1,669	2,800	2,800
Total: Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.....	620,563	694,600	740,800