



*American Academy of Forensic Sciences
American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors
International Association for Identification
International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners
National Association of Medical Examiners
Society of Forensic Toxicologists/ American Board of Forensic Toxicology*

February 2, 2024

The Honorable Lisa O. Monaco
Deputy Attorney General of the United States
US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear DAG Monaco,

The Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations is a collaborative of the leading forensic science organizations in the United States representing over 21,000 forensic science practitioners including virtually all forensic science laboratory, medical examiner office, and coroner office leaders. We are writing to respectfully request a meeting with you and the appropriate staff in your organization.

As you know, the casework for crime labs, toxicologists, medical examiners, and coroners has increased exponentially over the last several years. This casework is exacerbated by the fentanyl crisis, the increase in gun violence, and the proliferation of violent crime in the United States. According to the CDC, rates of overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids increased over 22% from 2020 to 2021. The rate of overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids in 2021 was nearly 22 times the rate in 2013. According to data by Gun Violence Archive, gun violence increased 69% from 2014 to 2021. The average annual growth in forensic science backlog in the United States from 2013 to 2020 was 190.3% in blood alcohol, 628.6% in Crime Scene Investigation, 88.5% in fingerprints, 110.3% in toxicology, and 50% in firearms. States recently surveyed by our organization provided data to support increased firearms case submissions between 18% and 154% in the last few years.

This dramatic increase has created a strain on our forensic science community. The Department of Justice is an invaluable partner to the state, county, and local forensic service providers both from a budget and policy perspective. We have recently met with the leadership of our member organizations and compiled a document of our current needs and concerns that we would like to share with your office. Specifically, we would like to discuss the following:

1. FUNDING:

1. Assisting the ability of small forensic science service providers to apply for grants and comply with reporting requirements.
2. Funding for practitioner certification and training, and accreditation for laboratories, medical examiner, and coroners.
3. Building the capacity of forensic science service providers (laboratory instrumentation, IT equipment, IT infrastructure, IT databases and data sharing networks, advanced imaging technologies).
4. Implementing national scientific standards and best practices developed through standards development organizations (SDOs).
5. Assisting with continuing innovative programs such as ASCLD's Accreditation Initiative.

2. RESEARCH:

1. Adding valuable areas of research such as pharmacology of emerging drugs to the NIJ forensic research agenda.

3. OPERATION:

1. Implementing a regular Forensic Needs Assessment Report and timelier BJA Census Report.
2. Continuing to address problems with interoperability-among identification systems such as the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS).
3. Improving education and workforce development training programs in support of practitioners entering the forensic science field.

We look forward to hearing from you about scheduling a meeting or meetings to discuss these important topics.

Matthew Gamette-CFSO Chair
On behalf of the CFSO Board of Directors
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