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Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc.
Board of Directors Virtual Meeting

August 14, 2020

Position 1 - Dr. Stacey Mitchell, Board Chair
Position 2 - Anna Vasquez
Position 3 - Philip Hilder
Position 4 - Francisco Medina
Position 5 - Janet Blancett
Position 6 - Ellen Cohen
Position 7 - Lois J. Moore
Position 8 - Mary Lentschke, Vice Chair
Position 9 - Vicki Huff
Ex-Officio - Tracy Calabrese
NOTICE OF SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING
PUBLIC ACCESS WILL BE VIA TELECONFERENCE ONLY
August 14, 2020

In accordance with Texas Governor Greg Abbott’s temporary suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, issued March 16, 2020, notice is hereby given that beginning at 8 a.m. on the date set out above, the Board of Directors (the "Board") of the Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc. (the "Corporation," or “HFSC”) will meet via videoconference (Microsoft Teams.) HFSC is conducting this virtual meeting to advance the public health goal of limiting face-to-face interactions and to slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19.)

Gov. Abbott’s temporary suspension of certain open meetings laws was issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with section 418.016 of the Texas Government Code. Gov. Abbott specifically suspended certain provisions of the law, which required government officials and members of the public to be physically present at a specified meeting location. The relevant suspensions are in effect until terminated by the Office of the Governor or until the Governor's disaster declaration is lifted or expires. Accordingly, this meeting will not take place in a specified physical location for the public to attend in person, however, the virtual meeting will be available to the public and allow for two-way communication between the Board and members of the public.

As required and in accordance with the Governor’s temporary suspension, notice of this meeting, the agenda and the agenda packet are posted online at: https://houstonforensicscience.org/meeting-archives.php

The items listed in the agenda may be taken out of order at the discretion of the Chair. After the conclusion of the meeting, a recording thereof will be posted to www.houstonforensicscience.org.

Attending the virtual meeting

The public is not required to create an account to attend the meeting online and the videoconference can be accessed, free of charge.

To attend the videoconference meeting via computer, please use the following link: https://teams.microsoft.com/dl/launcher/launcher.html?url=%2f%23%2f19%3ameeting_MWUzZWE5ZjAtODcwZS00MDdkLWJkYiMtYiU0NW1OWIyNTEw%40thread.v2%2f0%3fcontext%3d%257b%2522%257b%257d%257b%257d&anon=true&type=meetup-join&deeplinkId=49dc61be-0032-40a8-a6dc-
In addition to the required free videoconference link, members of the public may call into the meeting by dialing the following teleconference number and entering the subsequent conference ID number: 281-886-3266, Conference ID: 948 017 269#

**Callers must mute themselves upon dialing into the meeting to limit interruptions.**

To attend the meeting using a mobile device and through the free videoconference link, the Microsoft Teams mobile application ("app") must be downloaded (free of charge) to the device. After downloading the app, proceed to the link above and you will be directed to the videoconference, through the app. However, members of the public must be muted to minimize disruption of the meeting.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT**

The public is permitted to speak during the public comment agenda item and as permitted by the Chair. However, requests to speak during the public comment period must be submitted via email to the HFSC Secretary of the Board at: info@houstonforensicscience.org no later than 9 a.m. Thursday August 13, 2020.

The request must include the speaker's name, contact number, address and topic of the comment. Speakers should limit their comments to three minutes. The Board Chair may limit both the number of speakers and the time allotted for each speaker. The Chair will call on each speaker by name, during the designated public comment period.

If you have questions regarding attending this virtual meeting please contact Jordan Benton, secretary of the Board of Directors, at 832-993-1924.

**AGENDA**

1. Call to order.

2. Roll call; confirmation of presence of quorum.

3. Public comment.

4. Reading of draft minutes from July 10, 2020 board meeting. Consideration of proposed corrections, if any. Approval of minutes.

5. Report from Dr. Stacey Mitchell, board chair, including a monthly update of activities and other announcements.

Reports and presentations by corporate officers, and possible related action items
6. Report from Dr. Peter Stout, president and CEO, including technical updates, outreach efforts, staffing changes and other corporate business items, including steps taken to operate safely and effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic.
   a. Presentation from Dr. Stout regarding a proposal to consolidate Harris County and City of Houston property and evidence management, including an overview of the state of forensics nationally

7. Monthly operations report from Dr. Amy Castillo, vice president and COO, including a review of the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on laboratory operations and an update on backlogs in the forensic biology/DNA and latent print sections.

Reports and presentations by staff

8. Presentation from Mr. Timothy Schmahl, manager of latent prints, and Ms. Aimee Grimaldi, project engineer, on the latent print backlog.
   a. Mr. Schmahl will provide a brief overview of the latent print backlog and the challenges presented by having more evidence items in each case.
   b. Ms. Grimaldi will provide an overview of a planned lean six sigma project, the project’s risks, timeline, team selection process and goals.

9. Report from Mr. Jerry Pena, director of CSU and digital multimedia evidence, regarding a significant spike in homicides in July and a planned renovation at the vehicle examination building.

10. Report from Ms. Erika Ziemak, quality director, regarding quality assurance, a review of the blind quality control program, testimony monitoring, a stakeholder survey and proficiency tests.

11. Adjournment.

Certification of Electronic Posting of Notice of the Board of Directors (“the Board) of the Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc. (the “Corporation)

I, Jordan Benton, coordinator of board relations and executive administration, do hereby certify that a notice of this meeting was posted online at https://houstonforensicscience.org/meeting-archives.php on Tuesday, the 11th day of August, 2020, as required by Section 551.043 et seq., Texas Government Code and in accordance with Governor Abbott’s March 16, 2020 temporary suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Given under my hand this the 11th day of August 2020.

__________________________
Jordan Benton
Open Meeting Laws Subject to Temporary Suspension

Effective March 16, 2020, and subject to the following conditions, the following statutory provisions are temporarily suspended to the extent necessary to allow telephonic or videoconference meetings and to avoid congregate settings in physical locations:

• those that require a quorum or a presiding officer to be physically present at the specified location of the meeting; provided, however, that a quorum still must participate in the telephonic or videoconference meeting ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.122(b)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.127(a-3), (b)–(c), (e), (h)–(i)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.130(c)–(d), (i)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 322.003(d), (e)(2)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 845.007(f)(2)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 855.007(f)(2)
  ○ TEX. CIV. PRAC. & REM. CODE § 74.102(f)
  ○ TEX. INS. CODE § 2151.057(d)(1)
  ○ TEX. LOCAL GOV’T CODE § 379B.0085(a)

• those that require physical posting of a notice; provided, however, that the online notice must include a toll-free dial-in number or a free-of-charge videoconference link, along with an electronic copy of any agenda packet ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.043(b)(2)–(3)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE §§ 551.049–551.051

• those that require the telephonic or videoconference meeting to be audible to members of the public who are physically present at the specified location of the meeting; provided, however, that the dial-in number or videoconference link provided in the notice must make the meeting audible to members of the public and allow for their two-way communication; and further provided that a recording of the meeting must be made available to the public ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.121(f)(1)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.122(d)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.125(e)–(f)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.126(d)(1)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.127(f), (j)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.130(c)–(f)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.131(e)(1)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 322.003(c)(3)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 436.054(e)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 845.007(f)(3)
  ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 855.007(f)(3)
  ○ TEX. AGRIC. CODE § 41.061(e)–(d)
  ○ TEX. AGRIC. CODE § 41.1565(c)–(d)
  ○ TEX. AGRIC. CODE § 41.205(d)–(e)
  ○ TEX. AGRIC. CODE § 62.0021(c)–(d)
- Those that may be interpreted to require face-to-face interaction between members of the public and public officials; provided, however, that governmental bodies must offer alternative methods of communicating with their public officials.

These suspensions are in effect until terminated by the Office of the Governor, or until the March 13, 2020 disaster declaration is lifted or expires.
The undersigned, being the duly appointed secretary of the Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc., (“HFSC” and/or the “Corporation”) hereby certifies the following are true and correct minutes of the July 10, 2020 virtual meeting of the Board of Directors (the “board”) of the Corporation.

A. In a manner permitted by the Corporation’s Bylaws, the meeting was called by providing all directors with notice of the date, time, (instructions for Microsoft Teams access and call-in options) and purposes of the meeting more than three days before the date of the meeting.

B. In accordance with Chapter 551, Texas Government Code and Governor Greg Abbott’s March 16, 2020 temporary suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, notice of this meeting was duly posted online to www.houstonforensicscience.org on July 7, 2020 along with a free-of-charge videoconference link, dial-in phone number and an electronic copy of the agenda packet, as required.

C. The virtual meeting on Microsoft Teams was called to order by Board Chairwoman Stacey Mitchell at approximately 8 a.m. on Friday July 10, 2020. She reminded directors to be mindful of audio delays, to unmute before speaking and to use the “raise hand” function in Microsoft Teams before speaking.

D. Board Secretary Jordan Benton called the roll. The following directors were present: Stacey Mitchell (the chairwoman’s photo was visible in her icon during the meeting,) Philip Hilder (“PH,”) Anna Vasquez (“AV,”) Francisco Medina (“FM,”) Janet Blancett (“J,”) Lois Moore (“LM,”) Vicki Huff (“VH,”) Mary Lentschke (“ML,”) and Tracy Calabrese (“TC”)

Chairwoman Mitchell declared a quorum.

Ellen Cohen (“EC”) was not present at roll call or for the executive session. Director Cohen joined the meeting at 9 a.m. when the board reconvened into open session.

E. Chairwoman Mitchell announced that HFSC’s second virtual board meeting was being held in compliance with Governor Greg Abbott’s temporary suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She reminded members to mute their microphones during the meeting and to unmute when speaking.

F. At approximately 8:02 a.m. the board went into executive session in accordance with Sections 551.071(a) and 551.074(a,) consultation with attorney regarding pending or contemplated litigation, and personnel matters to deliberate the president and CEO’s annual performance evaluation. Chairwoman asked Dr. Peter Stout, president and CEO, and Ms. Akilah Mance, HFSC’s general counsel, to remain in executive session with the board. She asked Secretary
Benton to stop recording the meeting.

G. The meeting reconvened at approximately 9 a.m. Secretary Benton began recording the meeting. The Chairwoman announced Director Cohen had joined the open session at 9 a.m. and declared a quorum was present. Ex-Officio Calabrese rejoined the open session at approximately 9:02 a.m.

H. The chairwoman asked the board if there were any voting items to address from the executive session. Director Hilder made a motion to give Dr. Stout a three percent merit increase. Director Blancett seconded the motion. Secretary Benton called the roll. The following directors were in favor: Stacey Mitchell, Philip Hilder, Anna Vasquez, Francisco Medina, Janet Blancett, Lois Moore, Vicki Huff, Mary Lentschke and Ellen Cohen. With none opposed, the motion passed unanimously.

I. Chairwoman Mitchell reminded the board that Dr. Stout is supposed to present in July, as part of his annual evaluation, annual priorities and performance objectives for the new fiscal year. She said Dr. Stout had requested to present those in September this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Director Moore made a motion to approve the request. Director Huff seconded the motion. Secretary Benton called the roll. The following directors were in favor: Stacey Mitchell, Philip Hilder, Anna Vasquez, Francisco Medina, Janet Blancett, Lois Moore, Vicki Huff, Mary Lentschke and Ellen Cohen. With none opposed, the motion passed unanimously.

J. Chairwoman Mitchell said the board agenda included an email address and phone number for the public to use to address the board. The Chairwoman asked Secretary Benton if any members of the public wished to address the board. Ms. Benton said no one had requested to address the board. The chairwoman opened the floor to members of the public. With no one present to speak, Chairwoman Mitchell closed the public comment period.

K. Chairwoman Mitchell asked if any changes were needed for the June 10, 2020 board meeting minutes. No directors had changes. Director Blancett made a motion to approve the minutes. Vice Chair Lentschke seconded the motion. Director Huff and Director Cohen abstained. With none opposed, the motion passed unanimously.

L. Chairwoman Mitchell presented a chair’s report. Chairwoman Mitchell welcomed the Honorable Ellen Cohen to the board of directors and thanked her for her willingness to serve. Chairwoman Mitchell reminded the board to use the Microsoft Teams “hand raise” function to ask questions during staff presentations.

M. As part of the president’s report, Dr. Stout reminded the board that as sections eliminate backlogs and complete older cases overall turnaround times increase because the calculation is from the moment a request is made through the point when a report is issued. At the moment, turnaround times are being impacted by the forensic biology, latent prints and toxicology sections working through their backlogs. The toxicology section, he added, is completing cases at an impressive rate despite reducing onsite staffing numbers due to the pandemic. Dr. Stout said recruitment for open and new positions continues. He said Courtney Head, manager of the forensic biology/DNA section, is temporarily filling the technical leader post until another staff member fulfills all the educational requirements for the role. Dr. Stout said nearly all in-person outreach events have been cancelled because of the pandemic, though Councilmember Tiffany
Thomas and her staff did tour the lab. Virtual outreach activities are increasing, and Dr. Stout presented to the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association’s Rusty Duncan Conference and to a Jewish Federation women’s professional group. Dr. Stout said the pandemic is impacting operations and 10 HFSC staff have tested positive for the coronavirus. Of those, five had since returned to work onsite. Dr. Stout said the multimedia unit has recovered after it was unable to respond to audio/video call outs due to staff being out either with the coronavirus or as a result of exposure. Several other staff remain self-quarantined due to exposure. Dr. Stout said the 27-member crime scene unit continues to feel strained by the increased number of call outs and limited staffing. CSU has implemented an on-call schedule and may resort to emergency 12-hour shifts if needed. Dr. Stout said seized drugs and client services and case management returned to alternating shifts on July 6 to reduce the number of staff onsite. He said the pandemic is causing issues across the justice system, noting the Harris County courts have a backlog of 80,000 criminal cases. Chairwoman Mitchell said HFSC is following Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and combining in policy guidelines for first responders and health care providers. She added that HFSC is taking aggressive steps to protect staff. In response to Chairwoman Mitchell’s question regarding whether the lab has enough personal protective equipment (PPE.) Dr. Stout said the lab has about a 12-month supply. Director Blancett asked if the lab uses the same reagents as those used in COVID-19 testing and whether it is being impacted by a shortage of those chemicals. Dr. Stout said the lab has not experienced reagent shortages but continues to monitor the. He said at crime scenes CSU is now double gloving, wearing eye protection and using N95 masks instead of surgical masks. Dr. Stout said it appears all COVID-19 positive cases on staff have either been from household exposure or from outside of work. He said visits to the lab are restricted and all visitors must have their temperature checked before entering and wear a mask. Staff are also wearing masks. In addition, curtains have been hung to separate cubicles and chairs have been removed from common areas and conference rooms. HFSC has also contracted with Bode Technology to perform weekly COVID-19 testing, which began July 6. Bode has promised a 48- to 72-hour turnaround time on results, allowing HFSC to more quickly identify staff who are positive. HFSC will provide the testing every Monday in July. Director Blancett asked if staff confirmed positive for the virus can get tested at HFSC. Dr. Stout said that if a staff member that has tested positive meets CDC clinical guidelines for recovery from the virus, they can come at the end of the day to get tested again. Staff who are symptomatic must get tested elsewhere, he added. Chairwoman Mitchell asked if COVID-19 testing has impacted Bode’s ability to complete analysis on rape kits. Dr. Stout said the virus testing is a separate function, though HFSC is closely monitoring whether Bode will maintain the promised turnaround time on COVID tests. In response to a question from Director Blancett about whether there is any local or federal funding available to pay for the COVID-19 testing, Dr. Stout said it is possible, but everyone is currently struggling to find funding mechanisms. Chairwoman Mitchell asked how staff felt about having tests available to them. Dr. Stout said the response from staff has been overwhelmingly positive. Dr. Stout said the pandemic also delayed plans for creating annual goals for next year and they will be discussed in September. Dr. Stout said that also by September, the forensic biology section will have a better idea of the impacts the new probabilistic genotyping software, or STRMix, will have on the section’s capacity for their annual goals since complex data from the software increases case review time. He said other labs have had their productivity cut in half the first year of implementing the software. In a mid-year review of 2020 goals, Dr. Stout said HFSC had accomplished its biggest annual goal and moved to the new facility. HFSC has also completed goals relating to one-on-one meetings, semi-annual reviews and voluntary turnover. The lab is struggling to meet its goal of
having an overall turnaround time of 45 days. As backlogs are eliminated, turnaround times go up in a contradictory manner making the goal challenging if not impossible to accomplish, Dr. Stout explained. The goal will not be changed mid-year, but the impact to staff will be minimal, though a failure to meet this goal will impact him and Dr. Castillo. Dr. Stout said the lab set a goal to have no more than a 15 percent backlog for received requests in a year, which will also not be achieved. Dr. Stout said the 2021 goals presented in September will better consider how to create a production goal that is both possible to meet and reflects stakeholder needs.

N. Dr. Amy Castillo, vice president and COO, said the lab’s turnaround time increased because the toxicology section completed nearly 700 backlogged cases last month, impacting the average. Dr. Castillo said the latent print section is also working older cases in the backlog in addition to newer rush requests. The section is averaging a 400- to 500-day turnaround time as it completes the oldest cases in the backlog. Dr. Castillo said as coronavirus cases climb in Houston, the seized drugs and client services and case management sections returned to rotating schedules. The seized drugs section is creating a paperless workflow to allow for more work from home. Dr. Castillo said the five new positions in the toxicology section will help with a backlog in blood alcohol requests. Dr. Castillo shifted focus to the forensic biology/DNA section’s rape kit backlog, noting 1,130 sexual assault kits are over 30 days old. Of those, 511 are awaiting a review to determine whether any DNA profiles in the cases are eligible for upload into the DNA database, 296 will be analyzed by a commercial vendor and 323 will be completed by HFSC. Dr. Castillo reminded the board the backlog had grown because it took longer than expected to train analysts to use new probabilistic genotyping software and because vendor laboratories did not have capacity to immediately complete cases as the lab shutdown to move to the new facility. Dr. Castillo said another challenge the section faces is that the five new analysts must have their first 50 cases administratively and technically reviewed by section management. This too is slowing down the process. Dr. Castillo said the section has 10 full-time DNA analysts, four of whom are authorized to conduct administrative and technical reviews. She said one of the four analysts had to quarantine recently due to a potential exposure to a person who was COVID positive, slowing down that part of the process. To help mitigate futures bottlenecks in the review process, Dr. Castillo said that new analysts will receive technical review training after they complete the requirement to have 50 cases reviewed by section management. Dr. Castillo said in addition to sexual assault kits, DNA analysts also perform work on other crime types and often receive requests to rush a case. In June, 40 percent of the work completed were urgent requests.

O. Dr. Castillo told the board HFSC had selected two vendors to do sexual assault kit analysis: Signature Science, LLC in Austin and Bode Cellmark Forensics in Virginia. She said HFSC has worked with both vendors previously. HFSC will use federal grant dollars not exceeding $648,850 to pay the vendors for the work. Dr. Castillo said cases sent to Signature Science will be completed by October. Cases sent to Bode Cellmark will be completed by March 2021. Dr. Castillo added that analysts from both laboratories are licensed to testify in Houston. Director Cohen asked if the contract is based on a flat fee or on the number of kits HFSC sends to the labs. She also asked whether the contract includes recourse for HFSC if the labs fail to meet the promised turnaround time. Dr. Castillo said HFSC does not have to send a certain number of kits to get the fixed price. She said the contract does not include penalties for delayed turnaround times. Dr. Castillo requested board approval to enter into a contract for DNA services with both Bode Cellmark Forensics and Signature Science, LLC using the FY 2019
DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction federal grant to not exceed $648,850. Director Moore made a motion to approve. Director Blancett seconded the motion. Secretary Benton called the roll and the following directors were in favor: Stacey Mitchell, Philip Hilder, Anna Vasquez, Francisco Medina, Janet Blancett, Lois Moore, Vicki Huff, Mary Lentschke and Ellen Cohen. With none opposed, the motion passed unanimously.

P. Mr. David Leach, CFO and treasurer, requested board approval to reallocate funds in the current fiscal year budget. Mr. Leach thanked the City of Houston’s finance department for expediting HFSC’s funds for the new fiscal year. Mr. Leach said no changes had been made in the total budget but as spending continued money needed to be moved around to better reflect that activity. Director Blancett made a motion to approve the budget reallocations. Director Moore seconded the motion. Secretary Benton called the roll, and the following directors were in favor: Stacey Mitchell, Philip Hilder, Anna Vasquez, Francisco Medina, Janet Blancett, Lois Moore, Vicki Huff, Mary Lentschke and Ellen Cohen. With none opposed, the motion passed unanimously.

Q. Mr. Leach presented the treasurer’s report and provided an overview of HFSC spending, noting that as usual, more than 70 percent of the budget is for personnel. The remainder is for services, supplies, capital and non-capital expenses. Mr. Leach compared the 2019 budget to 2020, noting revenue had remained the same. Grant funding had increased slightly, he said. Mr. Leach said the largest difference between last year’s budget and this year’s budget is the $30 million in capital spending for the 500 Jefferson lease and vehicles for the crime scene unit. Mr. Leach showed the board how personnel costs had increased between 2018 and 2019 as staffing grew in the latent print section and crime scene unit. The toxicology section’s five new employees will be reflected in next year’s budget. Of the forensic disciplines, Mr. Leach said the forensic biology/DNA section costs the most to operate.

R. Mr. Jerry Pena, director of the crime scene unit (CSU) and multimedia section, said the multimedia section had been particularly hard hit by COVID-19 with three staff members testing positive and another two quarantined due to direct exposure. Two other staff members that had previously tested positive had since recovered and reported back to work. However, the multimedia section had no staff available to respond to audio/video callouts. Those calls were being covered by the crime scene unit. Mr. Pena said one crime scene investigator is also recovering from the virus and another had recovered and reported back to duty. CSU had five staff in June quarantined either due to a positive test result or direct exposure. Those absences impacted the short-staffed, 24/7 unit, especially as the call volume continues to rise. He said the unit began a temporary on-call schedule July 3. Under this schedule, a CSI remains on call for 12 hours after they complete a shift. Mr. Pena said if CSU suffers anymore personnel losses, he will implement an emergency, two-shift, 12-hour schedule to ensure full coverage for HPD. Director Blancett asked what type of PPE CSIs are wearing at scenes and whether it offers sufficient protection. Mr. Pena said CSIs are double gloving and using N95 masks, eye protection and disposable shoe covers at scenes. They also have Tyvek suits if necessary. Chairwoman Mitchell asked Mr. Pena what the worst-case scenario is for CSU if the call volume continues to increase. Mr. Pena said the unit would need to prioritize scenes, with officer-involved shootings getting top billing, followed by murders, sexual assaults and aggravated assaults. The severity of the case will also dictate how many CSIs get deployed to a scene. Typically, HFSC sends at least two CSIs to a scene. But if necessary, the pair will be split up to cover multiple scenes after one is secured. He said if staffing is hit hard, the unit
may have to turn down calls. Mr. Pena said in January, CSU received a record high number of 63 or 64 vehicles to process at the vehicle examination bay. He said in June the unit processed 58 vehicles. Mr. Pena said the vehicles received must be processed quickly because the search warrants typically have a time limit. He said except for May the average number of vehicles received each month in 2020 has surpassed the number received in 2019.

S. Mr. Charles Evans, director of business development, updated the board on the upcoming renovations to the vehicle examination building. The Houston City Council approved the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with HFSC on June 17 allowing HFSC to use the city’s vetted construction companies. Mr. Evans reviewed the scope of the $152,000 project, noting 75 percent is funded by a federal grant and 25 percent by HFSC. Mr. Evans said the final project details will be decided July 16. The project must be completed by December to accommodate the grant guidelines. Mr. Evans said a larger motor for venting had been installed in the basement firing range as well as additional duct work. The landlord covered the expenses. Mr. Evans said the Houston City Council approved on July 1 a 10-year lease with HFSC for the crime scene house located at 1620 Crockett St. Mr. Evans said the former fire station allows HFSC to host community outreach events and CSU training exercises.

T. Ms. Erika Ziemak, quality division director, said the division met its June goals for submitting blind quality controls but was encountering new challenges as some disciplines adjust their workflows due to the pandemic. The greatest challenge is currently in the latent print section. The section has two request types: a processing request, which is a submission for physical item of evidence to see if prints can be developed, and comparison requests, when an examiner compares prints after it has been developed. Many comparison requests are automatically made when an officer submits a latent lift card to the Houston Police Department Property Room. But sometimes an officer asks for a case to be prioritized or “rushed.” Ms. Ziemak said the latent print section is currently prioritizing older cases and rush cases. As a result, the latent print section is not completing blind cases. Ms. Ziemak said the quality division is also challenged by mixtures of DNA. She reminded the board about two forensic biology blind cases mentioned at the June meeting. Ms. Ziemak noted she had detailed the findings of one of the mixture cases but had not shared information about the second as the investigation was ongoing. That second investigation has since been completed and turned out to be more complex than the first one which uncovered that the staff member who had swabbed the back of her neck to create the blind sample had her spouse’s DNA on her body, creating the mixture. In the second instance, however, the staff member, who also swabbed the back of her neck to create a single-source DNA sample, resides with several people. The resulting mixture was low quality, making it difficult to determine whether there were two or three contributors. Two analysts agreed the results pointed to a three-person mixture but suggested running it through the new probabilistic genotyping software. Ms. Ziemak said the software backed the analysts’ conclusions that the sample was a three-person mixture, however, was unable to determine profiles for two of the contributors. Ms. Ziemak said the quality division will take additional steps to ensure single-source DNA samples submitted as part of the blind program do in fact have only one person’s DNA present. She said the two blind cases speak point to the sensitivity of DNA testing and are an example of the complexity of mixtures submitted to the section from different crime scenes. Director Huff asked if the cause of the mixture is known. Ms. Ziemak said they were unable to determine the DNA profiles of the second and third contributors. Ms. Ziemak said the lab is undergoing a remote virtual assessment that began July 1. She said there is one who will focus on the forensic biology/DNA section. Other
sections may also be asked to provide documentation. The assessor is reviewing documents virtually and using FaceTime to observe staff in the lab. Ms. Ziemak said the FBI’s assessment, used to ensure the lab meets the standards necessary to access the national DNA database, is scheduled to occur onsite in October, though this could change due to the pandemic. Ms. Ziemak reminded the board that in December 2018 they passed a resolution requiring HFSC to adopt applicable standards on the Organization of Scientific Area Committees registry. She said nine standards had been published and the lab has implemented five of them HFSC is working to implement the remaining four standards. Ms. Ziemak highlighted a multidisciplinary standard that requires analysts to have 16 hours of continuing education annually. HFSC adopted the standard and broadened it to apply to all staff. Ms. Ziemak said staff have not testified since Harris County suspended jury trials in March, which has now been extended through September 1.

U. Chairwoman Mitchell requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Moore made a motion to adjourn. Director Cohen second the motion. The meeting ADJOURNED at approximately 11:41 a.m.

By: _________________________________________

Jordan Benton Secretary
President’s Report

August 14, 2020
HFSC and COVID-19

• 13 positives, one individual out
• Testing weekly through August 17
• As of August 10:
  • 159 tested, about 79 percent of staff, nearly everyone that comes onsite at least once a week
  • Of those, 40 have been tested five times
  • 491 total collections, 459 analyzed
  • About two dozen tubes have leaked
Average Turnaround Time for - July 2020

- Latent Prints: 487 days
- Biology: 253 days
- Toxicology: 154 days
- Crime Scene Unit: 50 days
- Digital and Multimedia: 28 days
- Controlled Substances: 10 days
- Firearms: 6 days

Requests Completed by Section

Turnaround Time - Days: 125
Completed Requests: 2366

This data is current as of 7/31/2020.
Staffing August 5, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>200 staff</th>
<th>5 active vacancies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 192 HFSC employees</td>
<td>• 1 forensic biology/DNA analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 7 City of Houston civilians</td>
<td>• 1 manager latent print lab*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 toxicology fellow (Army)</td>
<td>• 3 toxicology analysts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12 open positions, 7 offers accepted</th>
<th>2 vacancies on hold</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 2 experienced crime scene investigators</td>
<td>• 1 forensic biology/DNA technical lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 crime scene investigator trainees</td>
<td>• 1 seized drugs analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 multimedia analyst</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 experienced toxicology analysts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Incumbent provided 90 day resignation notice

Note: Includes recruitment of five toxicology analysts approved in FY2021 budget.
Outreach

My items:
- Virtual meeting with Council Member Sallie Alcorn and staff

Virtual staff presentations:
- STRmix training for HPD investigators
- Gap Science webinar featuring Kelly Freeman of DNA: “A Day in the Life of a DNA Analyst”
- James Miller trained HPD officers on controlled substances and dangerous drugs
- George Mason University hosted Skype A Scientist with DNA analyst Ema Ruzic
- DNA analyst Aja Moss participated in a Math Modeling Speaker Series hosted by Claflin University in South Carolina
- Firearms examiner Melissa Nally presented to Iowa State University students and the CSAFE, the Center for Statistics and Applications in Forensic Evidence
- Toxicology analyst Melissa Rodriguez presented at a CSI camp for high school students hosted by the University of Mississippi
Miscellaneous catch up

• Shooting range: inspections complete, all in working order
• Treasurer’s report:
  • Quarterly, unless there’s something urgent
  • Not much change month to month
  • Annual audit is ongoing
RANT AHEAD
Forensics in the US

What labs face nationwide
The jurisdictional return on investment from processing the backlog of untested sexual assault kits

Paul J. Speaker

John Chambers College of Business and Economics, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV, 26505, USA

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

The economic problem for the forensic laboratory is a problem faced in all arenas: it is possible to address seemingly unlimited desires. This is as true for entities in the public sector as it is for private entities.

https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20150043

The Effects of DNA Databases on Crime

By Jennifer L. Doleac

Every US state has a database of criminal offenders’ DNA profiles. These databases receive widespread attention in the media and popular culture, but there has been no rigorous analysis of their impact on crime. This paper intends to fill that gap. I exploit the details and timing of state DNA database expansions in two ways.

• Economic evaluation of return on Investment (ROI) on ONE type of evidence
• For testing all SAKs ROI between 9,800% to 64,000%
• A CODIS entry is estimated to be worth $20,000
Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories: Resources and Services, 2014

Matthew R. Durose and Andrea M. Burch, BJS Statisticians
Kelly Walsh and Emily Tiry, Urban Institute
3.8 million requests received in 2014
More than half have less than 24 employees
Average: 35 employees
~$440 per request

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 9</th>
<th>Annual operating budget for publicly funded forensic crime labs, by type of jurisdiction and number of full-time employees, 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of labs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All labs</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of jurisdiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>State</td>
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<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of full-time employees*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>100 or more</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-24</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 or fewer</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The workload:
- Latent prints: 4 to 24 percent
- Seized drugs: about 33 percent
- Toxicology: about 25 percent
- DNA casework: 2 to 13 percent
National backlogs *increasing* despite $500M federal investment
• $640M additional needed annually by labs (2017)
• Controlled substances expenses increased 37%, tox increased 25%.
  • Lab growth: less than 3%
• Thousands of additional practitioners needed.
• Federal funding available for DNA.
  • Dedicated funding not available for ALL other disciplines.
In the face of these pressures, how do we do more?
Reimagining Property and Evidence Handling

Houston and Harris County
Consolidating property and evidence handling under one joint city/county independent civilian oversight umbrella would, among other thing, improve the disposal of evidence, increase efficiencies in the crime laboratories, lead to better outcomes for the criminal justice system and greater public trust.

The goal
Toxicology blood evidence rejection

- Began rejecting ambiguously identified cases
- Training and policy changes insufficient. Kits redesigned
- Tox instruments down for 2 months
- New kit launched
- HFSC takes over purchasing all kits
- Rejection rate remains between 2.6%
HPD: evidence received vs evidence disposed
Property management systemic impacts

- **Law enforcement**: Lost time to inconsistent policies, administrative overhead of tagging property.
- **Laboratories**: poor quality evidence reduces forensic results, resources lost to remediation. Increased risk of poor outcome.
- **Prosecution**: Inconsistent policies, poor quality evidence compromises cases. Bottleneck of transfer of evidence. Increased risk of poor outcome.
- **Defense**: Inconsistent policies, poor quality evidence compromises cases. Increased risk of poor outcome. Difficulty with disclosure.
- **Defendants/victims**: Lost and damaged evidence and property. Opaque system. Lack of trust in system. Risk of unjust outcome.
5-year, 10-step plan to consolidate Harris County Sheriff’s Office and HPD property operations

- Negotiate governance structure
- Establish property management task force
- Facility updates, management
- Migration audit
- Seek philanthropic investment
- Implement evidence management and automated systems to reduce human error
- Establish pricing structure for other smaller agencies to join consolidated structure
Evidence impacts *everything* in criminal justice

- 6 minutes to accession a correct toxicology kit
- An incorrect kit:
  - 1 hour for the lab to report, 2 hours for the officer to fix, 3 hours for lawyers and courts
  - 6% rejection = 390 rejections per year
  - **2,400 labor hours per year**
  - Cost of unjust results?

- Must have a mechanism to focus on improved process and disposal
- Improve trust in system
- Property management is high risk _a risk that does not have_ to rest with law enforcement
CONSOLIDATION OF CITY/COUNTY PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE MANAGEMENT

Executive Summary

The City of Houston and Harris County have successfully consolidated services in recent years leading to efficiencies in services that impact both municipalities and the criminal justice system, most notably the Joint Processing Center. Similar to those collaborations, consolidating the City and County’s property and evidence systems under one joint city/county civilian management structure would benefit all stakeholders from law enforcement to district attorneys, defendants and crime victims.

Consolidating property and evidence handling under one independent civilian oversight umbrella would, among other thing, improve the disposal of evidence, increase efficiencies in the crime laboratories and lend to greater public trust. The justice system is exquisitely dependent on proper evidence handling and property management, since when it goes awry it can lead to wrongful convictions and other egregious miscarriages of justice.

Consolidating the management of the facilities does not require any new structures to be built at this time. Rather the goal is to utilize an existing secure facility to expand capacity for high-risk items while improving the efficiency of storage in existing facilities. The establishment of an evidence disposal task force including the Harris County District Attorney’s Office, the courts and other stakeholders is essential to managing inventory.

This paper provides a more in-depth look at what such a consolidation might look like, data that highlights opportunities for improvement and a 10-step plan for delving into a merger.
CONSOLIDATION OF CITY/COUNTY PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:
Property and evidence management is a challenge for law enforcement agencies nationwide. Typically, these agencies, as is the case in Houston and Harris County, are tasked with properly maintaining, storing and inventorying evidence for years, and often decades. Like others in the justice system, law enforcement is dependent on effective, proper evidence handling to succeed, yet this complex logistical enterprise falls outside their core technical capabilities. It is often overlooked, underfunded and shunted aside due to the more immediate and pressing task of ensuring public safety. Unfortunately, when evidence is mishandled or lost it only adds to negative perceptions. Recent events put new emphasis on the need to help law enforcement mitigate unnecessary risks and allow them to dedicate resources toward excelling at community policing. Property management is one high-risk function that can be better handled outside of law enforcement.

A POSSIBLE SOLUTION
HFSC’s unique structure, a local government corporation overseen by a nine-member board of directors, has a clause in its founding documents that allows expansion to include county representatives. Consolidating Houston and Harris County property under HFSC would save money and resources, while improving public safety and the justice system’s efficacy.

The physical facilities would remain largely intact. In fact, multiple structures provide the region with greater resilience in a natural disaster. Rather, this effort focuses on consolidating management and logistics to improve evidence handling and quality.

The new organization would address multiple issues. First, it would need to standardize evidence packaging and handling and create a consistent tracking and inventory system, including one management system. This improves efficiency and quality. Personnel training and accreditation would be addressed. A consolidated organization would work more effectively with the courts and the Harris County District Attorney’s Office to focus on disposal, reversing the alarming increase in the receive-to-dispose ratio.

Notably, laboratory efficiency also benefits. Some federal agencies, such as the Department of Justice and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST,) are focused nationally on poor quality evidence. Standardization, improved handling and training all result in better evidence going to the labs. Like in most parts of the country, this region does not have enough laboratory capacity, so consolidating those functions provides...
little return on investment. But improving property management and evidence handling would yield real savings and efficiencies.

**IN HOUSTON AND HARRIS COUNTY TODAY:**

Harris County and Houston have a multitude of evidence storage facilities, each overseen by a different agency using a unique tracking system. Yet all are destined, as part of trial, to land in a Harris County courtroom.

The Houston Police Department (HPD) had been plagued by past evidence and property room problems and now oversees an ISO 9001 accredited facility considered one of the best in the nation. And they still struggle with the size and complexity of the task of inventorying nearly 1.2 million items.

HPD’s property operation, which includes a facility on Washington Avenue and a narcotics warehouse, is challenged by an imbalance of items coming in and disposal of older pieces. The trend over the last four years has risen to a receive-to-dispose ratio of more than 7:1. This is unsustainable. Significant effort is necessary to bring the ratio below one, which is ideal.

Meanwhile, the Harris County Sheriff’s Office has its own property management system plagued by similar issues. Each constable office and precinct in Harris County also handles evidence. Their problems have made spectacular headlines.

Comparatively, the Las Vegas Police Department’s property room, widely regarded as a leader in this field, maintains an inventory of about 1.1 million items and receives approximately 180,000 items annually, a little more than HPD. Las Vegas, though, with an annual budget of $6 million and 47 staff, achieved a receive-to-dispose ratio of 0.83 in 2019.

**WHAT THIS ENTAILS:**

Property management is high-risk. It is dependent on disciplined, relentless attention to detail. It must be a high-reliability organization. It also, for reasons real and perceived, directly impacts public trust in law enforcement, further increasing the risk. A 10-step plan consolidates HPD and HCSO property functions in the first five years. Independent civilian oversight of these functions would be a visible and real effort that will improve public trust, just as putting the forensic laboratory functions under the LGC structure significantly improved credibility.

To succeed, city and county budgets for property management must be re-apportioned. HFSC’s experience demonstrates that consolidating existing personnel and remediating legacy challenges is a long, arduous process. It is that experience that helps HFSC know how to navigate the journey.
TEN-STEP PLAN

1) **Expand HFSC’s board by two seats to make it an 11-member body.** The two additional seats would be Harris County appointees, ideally representing the judicial and community advocate perspectives.

2) **Negotiate a separate legal agreement between HFSC, the City of Houston and Harris County that allows for the consolidation of property and evidence management but does not change existing agreements between HFSC and the City of Houston regarding crime laboratory operations.** The new agreement should provide a non-punitive path for classified personnel to be reassigned to other, more important law enforcement duties, within their agencies within a matter of months. Civilian personnel currently working in those facilities must all be provided a path to other jobs within the city and county to allow HFSC to hire personnel that specialize in inventory, logistics and evidence handling.

3) **HFSC has an experienced senior management staffer that has proven adept at handling large-scale projects,** such as HFSC’s recent facility move. That staff member would be dedicated to managing this project. A senior individual experienced in materials logistics management, such as retail warehousing, would be hired at the onset of the project.

4) **Seek philanthropic investment,** particularly from the Arnold Foundation, the Charles Koch Foundation and others.

5) **Establish a task force with HCDAO, HCSO, HPD and the courts to build universal destruction policies and procedures.** No property management system can endure a 7:1 receive-to-dispose rate. HFSC has a core group of Lean Six Sigma engineers with 3 certified black belts that can rebuild more efficient processes. The destruction process must be scrupulously evaluated and rebuilt to decrease the ratio to 0.9.

6) **HPD has the dominant evidence management system (EMS) on the market, Porter Lee’s EMS.** This is a serviceable software that could easily handle consolidated operations. HFSC and HPD already operate in a linked, cloud-based environment. Harris County is now moving to a similar platform and will be able to connect in the same manner. Networking improvements in existing facilities and migrating EMS to the cloud environment is an early stage improvement. HFSC’s experience is that IT systems are as important and central as the physical facility.

7) **Additional facility space is needed in the system.** HPD’s property room is well designed but over capacity and it is likely other property rooms in the county suffer from similar space issues. HFSC has identified a secure downtown facility that could hold the highest risk evidence, such as drugs, guns and cash, freeing up space in existing warehouses. This facility could include an incinerator to facilitate drug disposal.

8) **Migration audit.** A significant audit of current items in HPD and HCSO facilities.

9) **Rebuilding and identifying high-tech systems that will reduce human error and increase efficiencies across systems.**

10) **Establish pricing structure and mechanisms for other, smaller regional agencies to join the consolidated system.** Once HCSO and HPD are consolidated, it will be easier for constable offices and other agencies to utilize the consolidated service.
Operations Report

August 14, 2020
July 2020 Company Overview

Open Quality Reports

61
Quality TAT
23%
Goal: 35, 36

% of Requests in Backlog

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2020</td>
<td>24.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>22.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 2020</td>
<td>22.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 2020</td>
<td>22.40%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

HFSC Request Turnaround Time

- HFSC TAT (Past 30 Days): 111
- HFSC TAT (Past P3 Days): 105

Section Request TAT (Past 30 Days)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>TAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blood Alcohol</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSU Response</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV Examination</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV Call Out</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODIS</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFL</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSCM Test Acc.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSICM Test Rep.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DME</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent Comps.</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toxicology</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latest Proc.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms Exa.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seized Drugs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIBIN Only</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At this time the CODIS TAT is not included in the overall HFSC TAT.

HFSC Request Backlog

- HFSC Backlog: 6867

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latent Comps.</td>
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<td>Blood Alcohol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toxicology</td>
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<td>Latent Proc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toxicology ...</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSICM Test Rep.</td>
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<td>DNA</td>
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<td>DFL</td>
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<td>Firearms Exa.</td>
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<td>Seized Drugs</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIBIN Only</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section/Service Backlog Present if >15 requests are in the Backlog.
Highlights

• Schedule for operations reports
• Overview of COVID 19 impacts to labs
• Backlog update: forensic biology/DNA and latent prints
Schedule for Operations Report Highlights

**Aug. 2020**
- Lab updates
- Staff presentations: latent prints

**Sep. 2020**
- Toxicology update
- Staff presentation: toxicology 3 year plan
- Forensic biology/DNA and sexual assault kit update
- Staff presentation: impact of STRMix on capacity & training update

**Oct. 2020**
- Lab updates
- Staff presentations: lean six sigma and R&D update

**November 2020**
Section Impacts from COVID-19
Seized Drugs

- New semi quantitative marijuana test responsive to Texas hemp legalization to rollout August 31
- Rotating teams work one, 50 hour week onsite and one week offsite
- 14 day turnaround time
Blood Alcohol/Toxicology

- Recruiting for new positions: 3 accepted, 3 open
- Production increased despite pandemic

Blood Alcohol Backlog: 1459
Drug Testing Backlog: 602

Includes blood alcohol, toxicology screening and outsourcing
Firearms/National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN)

- Two teams rotate one week onsite, one week offsite
- NIBIN technicians onsite daily. Average turnaround time of 38 hours.
- Firearms turnaround time increasing, looking at process to address this
Backlog update

Sexual assault kits and latent prints
Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) Backlog 981

Definitions:
- In house: sexual assault kits to be processed by HFSC
- Outsourcing: sexual assault kits to be tested by a commercial laboratory
- Outsource Reviews: sexual assault kits that have been tested by a commercial laboratory but require HFSC review to determine if DNA profiles are eligible for upload into the DNA database
DNA Backlog Elimination Timeline

**DNA Backlog Elimination Timeline**

- **January 2021**: All analysts at full capacity
- **April 2021**: In house kits completed
- **August 2021**: 4 additional analysts begin casework
- **February 2022**: Last batch of outsourced cases entered into CODIS

**Number of SAKs shipped to vendor labs**: 363

**Number of SAKs returned from vendor labs**: 0
Latent Print Comparison Backlog 2,419

Contributing factors to increase in the backlog

- Increase in number of items per request
- Four latent print examiner vacancies
HFSC Latent Print Section
Latent print comparison requests: 2018-2020
Make-up of Latent Print Comparison Requests

- Lift Cards/Request
- Suitable Prints/Request
- Linear (Suitable Prints/Request)
Size of Old Cases

Size of CSU cases now
Current Strategy

- Four latent print apprentices were trained offshore for 5 months
- Returned in March, tested out of training modules
- Three trainees began supervised casework in June
- Full independent casework authorization expected by January 2021
So, why does a latent print case take so long?
The number of latent prints within a package has increased and it can vary from case to case.

1. Examiner inventories and uniquely identifies each item (lift card or photograph)

2. Examiner analyzes each latent print to determine if its suitable for comparison

3. After suitability is determined, a second examiner verifies that conclusion
• Each latent print deemed suitable for comparison is searched in multiple databases

• The database generates candidate lists and are then *manually* compared by an examiner

• Contrary to how it works on TV shows, the database *does not* compare or “match” prints.
AFIS is just a tool generating candidate lists of what it thinks may be a match.
Often, latent prints are distorted and degraded. It takes an examiner to make the determination of a possible association.
Almost done ...

Once the examiner finishes, the case is technically and administratively reviewed by a different examiner, who thoroughly check the case documentation and work performed to ensure accuracy before release
So, back to this latent lift case.....
This particular case only had **11 latent lift cards**

However, **47 suitable latent prints** were contained on those 11 lifts.

Once searched in database systems, **six different individuals** were preliminarily associated.

The case was assigned on **May 22, 2020**.

The case was completed on **July 14, 2020**.

**THE STAKEHOLDER BENEFITS FROM MORE INFORMATION BUT THE PROCESS IS LONGER**
As you can see, the process is complex and can be lengthy ...

A lean six sigma project starting in October will examine the processes and determine resource needs
Latent Print LSS Project
Lean Six Sigma Development Group

**February 2018 – September 2018**
Supply Chain Management: improved supply chain process by decreasing purchase order turnaround time from 16 to 8 days. Cost savings of $60,000/year in standing orders.

CODIS Process: turnaround time decreased from 43 days to 20 days. Section has maintained improvements even with an increase in requests.

**June 2018 – February 2019**
Management Dashboard: designed a dashboard with actionable, real-time production data.

**August 2018 – February 2019**
Multidisciplinary Requests: implemented gun magazine preservation policy internally and externally to better preserve the integrity of potential latent print and DNA evidence on the items.

Work Product Evidence Return: created process to return test fire evidence to Houston Police Department property room and inventory and improve storage of DNA extract evidence created during analysis. Critical to complete before HFSC move.

**HFSC Move November 2018 – November 2019**

**June 2019 - Current**
Review Project: In progress. Goal is to improve the technical and administrative review processes.
Quality Score: In progress. Goal is to design a way to measure quality at HFSC.
Latent Print Project Overview

• Goal is to improve current processes
  o gain efficiency
  o reduce backlog numbers
  o decrease turnaround time

• Quality of the work cannot be compromised due to process changes

• Build capacity

• Develop a staffing projection model to predict future needs and to determine whether or when latent section needs to expand as CSU grows and requests increase
Project Risks

• Project team time
  o 10-20% a week
  o significant section participation

• Production output will be impacted

• Virtual meetings

• Stakeholder collaboration
  o internal
  o external
Project Team Selection Process

**Project Champion**
- Executive management

**Subject Matter Experts**
- External expert

**Analysts**
- Examiners/processors
- Trainees

**Section Management**
- Manager
- Technical Leader
- Supervisor

**Support Staff**
- Client Services/Case Management
- Quality division
- Research and development

**Perspective**
- Other sections
Timeline: 6 - 8 Months

Define
- Define the project and areas of improvement

Measure
- Measuring the process and collecting data from stakeholders

Analyze
- Identifying improvements

Improve
- Launch pilot process

Control
- Maintain improvements
Crime Scene and Multimedia

August 14, 2020
July 2019 vs July 2020
Total Calls

- 63 (Jul-19)
- 69 (Jul-20)
July 2019 vs July 2020
Homicides

- July 2019: 13
- July 2020: 29
July 2019 vs July 2020
Aggravated Assaults

15

20

Jul-19  Jul-20
July 2019 vs July 2020
Vehicle Examination Requests

43
52

Jul-19  Jul-20
### Homicides: 10 Largest U.S. Cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>1/1/2019</th>
<th>7/31/2020</th>
<th>1/1/2020</th>
<th>7/31/2020</th>
<th>Percent increase/decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>435</td>
<td></td>
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<td>51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memphis</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>146</td>
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<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
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<td>243</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
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<td>228</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>168</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Vehicle Examination Building: Renovation Plan

• Renovation to begin in coming weeks
  • Air conditioning
  • Enclosing open bays
  • Bathroom

• Began with broad scope
  • Replace floors to prevent evidence contamination
  • Redesigning office area
  • New perimeter fencing
  • Repaving lot in front of VEB

  HAD TO PRIORITIZE DUE TO AVAILABLE BUDGET: $152,000
How we prioritized

• Air conditioning:
  • Old system, about to die
  • Condensation falls on vehicles, potentially damaging evidence, including biological evidence
  • Climate controlled environment critical for evidence preservation on vehicles, especially potential biological evidence

• Bay enclosures and expansions:
  • Climate control
  • Current partial enclosure doesn’t protect evidence from heat, humidity
  • Not enough space for number of vehicles

• Bathroom
  • Flooded in Harvey
  • Renovations at that time subpar, better conditions for staff
Security

• HPD helping fund this priority:
  • Security camera upgrade
  • Badge access for the Dart Street vehicle gate

Seeking funding to upgrade lighting inside and outside of VEB
Detail data
Key for Dashboard Section Pages

Report type
- Key=Dashboard Section Pages
- Center of ring=total pending cases
- Ring=breakdown of age for all pending cases

Pending work
- # of Unassigned
- # Pending Draft
  - # Pending Tech
  - # Pending Admin
  - Goal: Threshold for the max # of requests in each bucket

Pending quality reports
- Open Quality Reports
- Quality TAT
  - Goal: 30, 31
  - Avg Age of Open Reports: 17

TAT= Turnaround Time
MTD= Month to date
Critical age=30 days
Critical pending=requests open over 30 days
Key for Dashboard Historical Pages 1/2

Date Range
8/1/2018 - 8/31/2019

Total TAT by Month

Requests Completed

TAT= Turnaround Time

Requests more than 30 days old are considered to be backlogged requests.

Overall average for the selected date range
26.11
Total TAT (Rec'd-Compl.) Avg
16.08
Assigned TAT (Asgnt-Compl.) Avg

Data broken down by month

Selected Time Frame Averages

Type of testing

Report type

Type of testing

Report type

Data broken down by month

Overall average for the selected date range

Overall average for the selected date range

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
Client Services and Case Management (CS/CM)
**Total Time by Section (Hours)**

- Total: 75.22
- Other: 33.42
- Seized Drugs: 13.68
- Morgue Run: 4.55
- Firearms: 4.50
- Biology: 2.40
- Toxicology: 1.58
- Digital & Multimedia: 1.48

**See Time Categories by Section slide for breakdown**

**Total Items by Section**

- Total: 1528
- Other: 1528
- Seized Drugs: 1493
- Morgue Run: 1018
- Firearms: 661
- Biology: 225
- Toxicology: 165
- Digital & Multimedia: 124
- Latent Print Processing: 1018
- Latent Print Comparison: 1493
Requests by Type

- Subpoena for Records, 7
- Discovery, 14
- ALR, 12
- 3914 Request, 4
- Errors, 4
- Other, 3
- Supplemental Discovery, 2
- Request for records, 129

Subpoenas & Records Requests

- Subpoenas
  - April: 20
  - May: 60
  - June: 40
  - July: 20

- Records Requests
  - April: 160
  - May: 140
  - June: 120
  - July: 180
Time Categories - July

Evidence Handling

- Toxicology
- Seized Drugs
- Other
- Morgue Run
- Latent Print Processing
- Latent Print Comparison
- Firearms
- Digital & Multimedia
- Biology
## Date Range

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/1/2019</td>
<td>7/31/2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Total TAT by Month

### Request Type
- **GSCM Tox Accession**

### Priority Type
- **All**

### Selected Time Frame Averages

- **Total TAT (Rec’d-Compl.) Avg:** 3.98
- **Assigned TAT (Asgmt.-Compl.) Avg:** 2.17

## Requests Completed

### Received to Complete
- **6674** Requests Completed
- **31** Requests Completed > 30 Days Old

### % Completed > 30 Days Old
- **0.46%**

Requests more than 30 days old are considered to be backlogged requests.
Received by Month

- Total Received: 6,641
- Received per Month (Avg)*: 511

Completed by Month

- Total Completed: 6,674
- Completed per Month (Avg)*: 513

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
Received by Month

- Total Received: 181
- Received per Month (Avg)*: 14

Completed by Month

- Total Completed: 180
- Completed per Month (Avg)*: 14

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
Seized Drugs
**Request Type**
- Seized Drugs Examination
- Priority Type: All

**Selected Time Frame Averages**
- 12.04
  - Total TAT (Rec'd-Compl.) Avg
- 5.67
  - Assigned TAT (Asgmt.-Compl.) Avg

**Received to Complete**
- 6285
- Requests Completed
- 204
- Requests Completed > 30 Days Old
- 3.25%
- % Completed > 30 Days Old

Requests more than 30 days old are considered to be backlogged requests.
Received by Month

Total Received
6,244
Received per Month (Avg)*
480

Completed by Month

Total Completed
6,285
Completed per Month (Avg)*
483

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
Toxicology
**Date Range**
7/1/2019  7/31/2020

**Total TAT by Month**

**Requests Completed**

**Received to Complete**
5476  Requests Completed
5394  Requests Completed > 30 Days Old
98.50 %  % Completed > 30 Days Old

Requests more than 30 days old are considered to be backlogged requests.
Received by Month

Total Received
6,441
Received per Month (Avg)*
495

Completed by Month

Total Completed
5,476
Completed per Month (Avg)*
421

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
Service: Toxicology
Priority Type: All

Received by Month

- July 2019: 128
- August 2019: 201
- September 2019: 198
- October 2019: 171
- November 2019: 63
- December 2019: 68
- January 2020: 67
- February 2020: 45
- March 2020: 61
- April 2020: 83
- May 2020: 154
- June 2020: 137
- July 2020: 273

Total Received: 1,629
Received per Month (Avg)*: 125

Completed by Month

- July 2019: 68
- August 2019: 37
- September 2019: 141
- October 2019: 133
- November 2019: 139
- December 2019: 209
- January 2020: 115
- February 2020: 144
- March 2020: 151
- April 2020: 142
- May 2020: 142
- June 2020: 27

Total Completed: 1,354
Completed per Month (Avg)*: 104

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
Firearms
Service: Firearms Examination

**Received by Month**

- Total Received: 446
- Received per Month (Avg)*: 34

**Completed by Month**

- Total Completed: 413
- Completed per Month (Avg)*: 32

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
**Date Range**: 7/1/2019 to 7/31/2020

**Total TAT by Month**

- **Rec'd Assign TAT**
- **Assigned TAT**
- **Total TAT**

**Requests Completed**

- **Received to Complete**
  - 4,203 requests completed
  - 48 requests completed > 30 Days Old
  - 1.14% % Completed > 30 Days Old

Requests more than 30 days old are considered to be backlogged requests.
Total Received: 4,133
Received per Month (Avg)*: 318

Total Completed: 4,206
Completed per Month (Avg)*: 324

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
Forensic Biology
Total Pending Requests

- Days Old:
  - 70: 46
  - 60-70: 79
  - 51-60: 110
  - 41-50: 188
  - 31-40: 188
  - 21-30: 106
  - 11-20: 623

# of Unassigned: 935
Past Critical Age: 169
Avg Age of Requests > 30: 141
Age-Oldest Unassigned PL: 1206
Age-Oldest Pending Draft: 2269
Age-Oldest Pending Tech: 448
Age-Oldest Pending Admin: 47

Overall TAT (Month to Date):
198.5
Goal: 108

Overall TAT (Past 90 Days):
183.8
Goal: 108

Open Quality Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualtrax ID</th>
<th>Workflow #</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33435</td>
<td>2018-085</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34624</td>
<td>2018-094</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47766</td>
<td>2019-043</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49436</td>
<td>2019-IA-15</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55683</td>
<td>2019-093</td>
<td>151</td>
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<tr>
<td>56110</td>
<td>2020-001</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57152</td>
<td>2020-004</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quality TAT

- 23
Goal: 40, 41

Avg Age of Open Reports
120

TAT by Phase of Work (MTD)

- PL-Assign TAT MTD: 78.1
- PL-Draft TAT MTD: 114.6
- PL-Tech Review TAT MTD: 60.7

TAT by Phase of Work (Past 90 Days)

- 62.5
- 108.6
- 54.8
- 6.6

Month to Date

- Completed: 98
- Received: 120

30 Day Avg (Over Past 90 Days)

- Completed: 85
- Received: 119
# of Unassigned  # Pending Draft
0  308
Goal: 24 (+100%)  Goal: 24 (+1183.33%)

# Pending Tech  # Pending Admin
22  5
Goal: 24 (+83.33%)  Goal: 20 (+75%)

Goal: Threshold for the max # of requests in each bucket

### Total Pending Requests
- 331 Past Critical Age
- 227 Avg Age of Requests > 20...
- 0 Age Oldest Unassigned PL
- 1206 Age Oldest Pending Draft...
- 338 Age Oldest Pending Tech...
- 332 Age Oldest Pending Admin...

### TAT by Phase of Work (MTD)
- Open Quality Reports
  - Qualtrax ID: 33435, 34624, 47766, 49436, 55683, 56110, 57152
  - Age: 477, 459, 266, 241, 151, 144, 130

### TAT by Phase of Work (Past 90 Days)

### Quality TAT
- 23 Goal: 40, 41

### Month to Date
- Completed: 33
- Received: 5

### 30 Day Avg (Over Past 90 Days)
- Completed: 39
- Received: 4

*Reports without a workflow are not included in the average*
Received by Month

- Total Received: 1762
- Received per Month (Avg)*: 136

Completed by Month

- Total Completed: 831
- Completed per Month (Avg)*: 64

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
Received by Month

- Total Received: 989
- Received per Month (Avg)*: 76

Completed by Month

- Total Completed: 1045
- Completed per Month (Avg)*: 87

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
**Received Filter**

**Total Received**

2344

**Received per Month (Avg)**

180

**Completed Filter**

**Total Completed**

2556

**Completed per Month (Avg)**

197

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
Latent Prints
### Date Range
7/1/2019 - 7/31/2020

### Total TAT by Month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Rec'd-Assign TAT</th>
<th>Assigned TAT</th>
<th>Total TAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2019</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2019</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>97.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2019</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>83.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2019</td>
<td>124.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>124.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2019</td>
<td>106.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>106.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>140.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>140.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2020</td>
<td>143.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>143.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2020</td>
<td>104.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>104.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2020</td>
<td>158.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>158.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>822.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>822.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>493.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>493.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td>566.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>566.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2020</td>
<td>572.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>572.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Request Type
- Latent Comparison

### Selected Time Frame Averages
- Total TAT (Rec'd-Compl.) Avg: 299.79
- Assigned TAT (Asgmt.-Compl.) Avg: 28.10

### Requests Completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Requests Completed w/ in 30 Days</th>
<th>Requests Completed &gt; 30 Days Old</th>
<th>Total Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2019</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2019</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2019</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>175</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2019</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2019</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2020</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2020</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2020</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2020</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Received to Complete
- 1728 Requests Completed
- 1391 Requests Completed > 30 Days Old
- 80.50% % Completed > 30 Days Old

Requests more than 30 days old are considered to be backlogged requests.
Received by Month

- Total Received: 2,556
- Received per Month (Avg)*: 197

Completed by Month

- Total Completed: 1,728
- Completed per Month (Avg)*: 133

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
**Date Range**

7/1/2019  7/31/2020

**Total TAT by Month**

- **Rec'd Assign TAT**
- **Assigned TAT**
- **Total TAT**

**Requests Completed**

- **Received to Complete** 315
- **Requests Completed** 173
- **Requests Completed > 30 Days Old** 54.92%

Requests more than 30 days old are considered to be backlogged requests.
Total Received
545
Received per Month (Avg)*
42
Total Completed
315
Completed per Month (Avg)*
24
* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
Digital Multi-Media
Service | Priority Type
--- | ---
AV Call Out | All

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Unassigned</th>
<th># Pending Draft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Pending Tech</td>
<td># Pending Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: 15 (+100%)</td>
<td>Goal: 5 (+80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: 5 (+100%)</td>
<td>Goal: 5 (+100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Justice Trax Past Critical Age NaN Avg Age of Requests >30 Days 0 Age Oldest Unassigned 16 Age Oldest Pending Draft 0 Age Oldest Pending Tech 0 Age Oldest Pending Admin

Total Pending Requests
Days Old
- 0-15
- 16-30
- 31-60
- 61-90
- 91-120
- >121

Overall TAT (Month to Date) 8.0 Goal: 5, 6
Overall TAT (Past 90 Days) 9.0 Goal: 5, 6

TAT by Phase of Work (MTD)
- JT Assign TAT MTD
- JT Draft TAT MTD
- JT Tech Review TAT MTD
- JT Admin Review TAT MTD

TAT by Phase of Work (Past 90 Days)

Open Quality Reports

Quality TAT 25
Goal: 30, 31

Avg Age of Open Reports NaN

Month to Date
Completed
Received

30 Day Avg (Over Past 90 Days)
Completed
Received
**Date Range**

7/1/2019 - 7/31/2020

**Total TAT by Month**

- **Rec’d Assign TAT**
- **Assigned TAT**
- **Total TAT**

- **July 2019**: 4.2
- **August 2019**: 5.2
- **September 2019**: 18.1
- **October 2019**: 8.3
- **November 2019**: 4.3
- **December 2019**: 7.0
- **January 2020**: 4.5
- **February 2020**: 5.9
- **March 2020**: 4.3
- **April 2020**: 6.7
- **May 2020**: 6.6
- **June 2020**: 10.3
- **July 2020**: 8.0

**Request Type**

- **AV Call Out**
- **Priority Type**
- **All**

**Selected Time Frame Averages**

- **Total TAT (Rec’d-Compl.) Avg**: 7.23
- **Assigned TAT (Asgmt.-Compl.) Avg**: 5.75

**Requests Completed**

- **July 2019**: 5
- **August 2019**: 18
- **September 2019**: 10
- **October 2019**: 15
- **November 2019**: 12
- **December 2019**: 3
- **January 2020**: 14
- **February 2020**: 7
- **March 2020**: 4
- **April 2020**: 9
- **May 2020**: 5
- **June 2020**: 9
- **July 2020**: 5

- **Requests Completed w/in 30 Days**
- **Requests Completed > 30 Days Old**
- **Total Completed**

**Received to Complete**

- **116 Requests Completed**
- **2 Requests Completed > 30 Days Old**
- **1.72 % **

% Completed > 30 Days Old

Requests more than 30 days old are considered to be backlogged requests.
**Received by Month**

- **Total Received:** 114
- **Received per Month (Avg)*:** 9

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average

**Completed by Month**

- **Total Completed:** 116
- **Completed per Month (Avg)*:** 9

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
### Date Range

- 7/1/2019
- 7/31/2020

### Total TAT by Month

- **Rec’d Assign TAT**
- **Assigned TAT**
- **Total TAT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Rec’d Assign TAT</th>
<th>Assigned TAT</th>
<th>Total TAT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2019</td>
<td>22.3</td>
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<td>19.2</td>
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<td>20.8</td>
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<td>October 2019</td>
<td>19.6</td>
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<td>19.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2019</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>21.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Request Type

- AV Examination
- Priority Type
  - All

### Selected Time Frame Averages

- **24.65** Total TAT (Rec’d-Compl.) Avg
- **14.76** Assigned TAT (Asgmt.-Compl.) Avg

### Requests Completed

- **184** Requests Completed
- **27** Requests Completed > 30 Days Old
- **14.67 %** % Completed > 30 Days Old

Requests more than 30 days old are considered to be backlogged requests.
**Received by Month**

- Total Received: 183
- Received per Month (Avg)*: 14

**Completed by Month**

- Total Completed: 184
- Completed per Month (Avg)*: 14

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
DFL and DME

Received by Month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Received</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>58</td>
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<td>October 2019</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2019</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2020</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2020</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2020</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2020</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Completed by Month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2019</td>
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<tr>
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<td>September 2019</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2019</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2019</td>
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<td>December 2019</td>
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<td>January 2020</td>
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<td>February 2020</td>
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<td>March 2020</td>
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<td>April 2020</td>
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<td>May 2020</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2020</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Received: 746
Received per Month (Avg)*: 57
Total Completed: 751
Completed per Month (Avg)*: 58

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
Crime Scene Unit
Total Received
2,620
Received per Month (Avg)*
202

Total Completed
2,487
Completed per Month (Avg)*
191

* months with zero activity are not calculated into the average
Quality Division Report
August 14, 2020
Blind Quality Controls Submitted in July

![Bar chart showing the comparison between July and monthly goals for various categories. The categories include Toxicology, Seized Drugs, Firearms BQC, Firearms Blind Verification, Latent Print Processing, Latent Print Comparison, Latent Print Blind Verification, Biology, and Multimedia. The chart indicates the number of blind quality controls submitted in July versus the monthly goal for each category.]
Blind Quality: Accomplishments and Challenges

• Blind program presentation will be given at the virtual Southwestern Association of Forensic Scientists (SWAFS) conference

• The annual Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners (AFTE) conference officially canceled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forensic Discipline</th>
<th>Cases Completed in July</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toxicology – BAC</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seized Drugs</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>1 (DNA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 (screening)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind Verification</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent Print Processing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent Print Comparison</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent Print</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind Verification</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimedia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Internal Audits/Assessments

• No nonconformances in our remote/virtual assessment
  • Forty six standards/requirements assessed
  • Assessment spanned July 1 to July 30
  • Primary focus was forensic biology/DNA and the quality management system

• FBI Quality Assurance Standards (QAS) assessment scheduled for October
  • Assessment will be to the July 2020 revision of the QAS audit document
Survey Responses

Help us improve! We would like to ask you a few questions about HFSC and our services. Please take this short survey.

25 responses have been received since February 2020

- Satisfied or very satisfied
  16 responses
- Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
  3 responses
- Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
  6 responses
#17

## COMPLETE

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</table>

### Page 1

**Q1**

For the purpose of this survey, how would you define yourself?

**Investigator**

**Q2**

What section are you giving feedback on?

**Forensic Biology/DNA**

**Q3**

How satisfied are you with HFSC services?

**Very Satisfied**

**Q4**

This space can be used for all feedback. If your feedback is case specific, please include all relevant information, including agency case number and your contact information so we can directly address your feedback. If you would like to be contacted regarding your feedback, please indicate your contact information.

I think the HFSC does a great job. I can't think of anything to suggest to make it better, just my opinion.
Page 1

Q1 For the purpose of this survey, how would you define yourself?  Prosecutor

Q2 What section are you giving feedback on?  Crime Scene Unit

Q3 How satisfied are you with HFSC services?  Very Satisfied

Q4 This space can be used for all feedback. If your feedback is case specific, please include all relevant information, including agency case number and your contact information so we can directly address your feedback.

thanks for really good performance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Defense attorney</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the purpose of this survey, how would you define yourself?</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Toxicology</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What section are you giving feedback on?</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with HFSC services?</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Q4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This space can be used for all feedback. If your feedback is case specific, please include all relevant information, including agency case number and your contact information so we can directly address your feedback. If you would like to be contacted regarding your feedback, please include your contact information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Love the new discovery delivery via e-mail! Thank you.
Help Us Improve

#11

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Collector:</th>
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</table>

Page 1

Q1 For the purpose of this survey, how would you define yourself?  
Other members of the public (outside of Houston)

Q2 What section are you giving feedback on?  
Latent Print

Q3 How satisfied are you with HFSC services?  
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied

Q4 This space can be used for all feedback. If your feedback is case specific, please include all relevant information, including agency case number and your contact information so we can directly address your feedback. If you would like to be contacted regarding your feedback, please include your contact information.

Too expensive. Why just because there is forensics involved the classes are so expensive. It is a rip off!!!!!!!!!!! You are just sucking money from people who don’t have enough sense to see it
Q1 For the purpose of this survey, how would you define yourself?

Q2 What section are you giving feedback on?

Q3 How satisfied are you with HFSC services?

Q4 This space can be used for all feedback. If your feedback is case specific, please include all relevant information, including agency case number and your contact information so we can directly address your feedback.

I’m dissatisfied with the time it takes to complete the analysis of a sexual assault kit, and conformation of known buccal swabs. Several years ago it was a 30 day process now it can be 180. Why?
#14

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 1:53:38 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 1:55:37 PM
Time Spent: 00:01:59
IP Address: 204.235.229.17

Page 1

Q1 For the purpose of this survey, how would you define yourself? Investigator

Q2 What section are you giving feedback on? Latent Print

Q3 How satisfied are you with HFSC services? Neither satisfied or dissatisfied

Q4 This space can be used for all feedback. If your feedback is case specific, please include all relevant information, including agency case number and your contact information so we can directly address your feedback. If you would like to be contacted regarding your feedback, please include your contact information.

A request for comparison was rejected due to duplicate requests. There are no directions or guidance where and how I can view the outcome in order to follow up with charges.
WHY WAS YOUR LATENT PRINT REQUEST REJECTED?

You are receiving this email because you either submitted a Latent Print Comparison (LPC) request or a Latent Print Processing (LPP) request over the past year. In an attempt to make the submission process easier for you and to decrease the number of requests we reject, we are sharing a few guidelines to follow.

1. DUPLICATES
Latent lift card evidence is generally not requested. THIS MEANS YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING. THE EVIDENCE WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE REQUESTED BY THE HOUSTON FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER.

If you submit an LPC request for evidence that has automatically been requested for analysis, the request you created will be rejected. Your contact information will be added to the auto request and you will receive a copy of the final report when the analysis is complete.

IN THIS INSTANCE, YOU WILL RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING EMAIL:
Your request has been rejected because it is a duplicate. Latent print cards are AUTOMATICALLY SUBMITTED for analysis. Your contact information has been added to the request. You will receive a copy of the final report once analysis has been completed. If you have additional questions or require more assistance, please email triage@houstonforensicscience.org or call 713-929-6760.

2. INAPPROPRIATE SELECTION
For latent lift cards or images of developed latent prints: ONLY submit an LPC request.

IF YOU SUBMIT THE REQUEST INCORRECTLY,

HFSC rejects duplicate analysis submission requests and those that are submitted incorrectly. Here's what you need to know about submitting latent print evidence.

YOUR REQUEST WILL BE REJECTED, AND YOU WILL RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING EMAIL:

The item of evidence submitted are latent lift cards. You submitted a LPP request which are for physical items of evidence that need to be processed to develop latent prints. If latent prints are developed from an item of evidence, a LPP request will automatically be generated.

To have your latent print cards analyzed, please re-submit your request and select LPC.

If you have additional questions or require more assistance, please email triage@houstonforensicscience.org or call 713-929-6760.

For a physical item of evidence that needs to be processed to develop latent prints: submit an LPP request.

IF YOU SUBMIT THE REQUEST INCORRECTLY, YOUR REQUEST WILL BE REJECTED, AND YOU WILL RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING EMAIL:

The item of evidence submitted is a physical item of evidence. You selected an LPC request which are for latent prints that need to be analyzed AFTER they have been developed, such as latent print cards. To have your evidence processed for potential latent prints, please resubmit your request and select LPP.

If you have additional questions or require more assistance, please email triage@houstonforensicscience.org or call 713-929-6760.

3. PACKAGING, HANDLING, SUBMISSION ISSUES

If you submit a request that is inappropriate for latent prints, incorrectly packaged or otherwise compromised, your request will be rejected and you will receive the following email:

The item you submitted was incorrectly packaged to preserve the value of the evidence or your item is not an appropriate item of evidence for latent print processing or examination. There are multiple potential issues and we would be happy to discuss solutions with you. Please contact triage@houstonforensicscience.org or call 713-929-6760.
2020 Testimony Data

• Transcript review project
  • Second round of transcripts requested in June
  • 12 transcripts received in July for review

• Harris County has officially suspended jury trials through October 1
  • HFSC staff testified remotely in hearings
Detailed Data
# 2020 Proficiency Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Tests in Progress</th>
<th>Tests Completed</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seized Drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toxicology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime Scene</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent Prints</td>
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<td><strong>Multimedia</strong></td>
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<td>Audio/Video</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forensic Biology</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
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</table>
## Quality Division Notifications
**Incidents, Corrective and Preventive Actions**

### Biology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Notified</th>
<th>Summary of Notification</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020-052</td>
<td>Both reagent blanks of a differential extraction were contaminated with the DNA profile of the analyst performing the extraction. All of the samples in this extraction set will be re-portioned and re-extracted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-055</td>
<td>An analyst failed to record the unique identifier of the pipettes that were used to prepare a capillary electrophoresis plate in the Post-Amplification laboratory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-056</td>
<td>A sample was dropped during a differential extraction causing a portion of the extract to be lost. The extraction procedure was continued with the remaining volume. The results of this sample and the two adjacent samples in the extraction set will be reviewed to determine the potential effect.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-HA-11</td>
<td>During the internal audit, the Quality Division discovered that an additional on-site visit review of the outsourcing laboratory had not been documented. When an outsourcing agreement extends beyond one year, the FBI Quality Assurance Standards require the Technical Leader to perform an additional on-site visit or document their review of an approved on-site visit; however, there was no documentation that either had been done.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Crime Scene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Notified</th>
<th>Summary of Notification</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020-020</td>
<td>Crime Scene investigators were not consistently labeling outer evidence packaging with &quot;CSU&quot; as was required by the Crime Scene Unit (CSU) SOP. CSU management determined that the removing the requirement would not present a technical risk; the requirement was removed from the July 8, 2020 SOP revision.</td>
<td>*notification submitted in March 2020 but was not included in the board report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HFSC’s Quality Division investigates nonconforming work and helps develop solutions in compliance with accreditation and legal standards. With regard to the items listed above, the Division has not detected any use of inaccurate results in a criminal proceeding.
Quality Division Notifications
Incidents, Corrective and Preventive Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Notified</th>
<th>Summary of Notification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020-054 IR</td>
<td>Although the Crime Scene Unit’s laboratory activities were performed at the 500 Jefferson Street address after the section’s relocation in October 2019, the statement indicating that laboratory activities were performed at the 1200 Travis Street address was mistakenly included on reports for 108 cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-PARS PAR</td>
<td>The Crime Scene Unit revised their SOP to require comparative quality photography prior lifting a latent print that had been processed with small particle reagent. The revised language will help to mitigate the possible risks associated with lifting wet latent prints.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Firearms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Notified</th>
<th>Summary of Notification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020-053 IR</td>
<td>The stakeholder was not notified prior to a Firearms examiner rendering an inoperable firearm safe. The Firearms SOP requires that the stakeholder be notified if a firearm is received in an inoperable condition and the examiner believes that further damage could be done to the firearm in the process of rendering it safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-006 IR</td>
<td>A NIBIN technician placed the label on item 003 (a magazine) on item 008 (cartridges); neither item was opened or inventoried. This caused the electronic chain of custody for item 008 to reflect transfers that occurred for item 003. Item 008 did not have any electronic transfers prior to the discovery of this nonconformance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Seized Drugs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Notified</th>
<th>Summary of Notification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020-057 IR</td>
<td>The temperatures for two Seized Drugs refrigerators and one freezer were not manually recorded the week of December 23, 2019 and July 13, 2020. Because these temperatures are not critical, weekly monitoring is not required; however, the section’s intent is to record the temperatures on a weekly basis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Notified</th>
<th>Summary of Notification</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020-058</td>
<td>Statistical sampling was completed on four Seized Drugs cases and while the reports included a statement documenting that statistical sampling was used, the reports did not include a statement about confidence levels or an inference regarding the population as required by the Quality Manual section 7.8.5.d. The report template has been updated to include the required statements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-059</td>
<td>While packaging Toxicology evidence for outsourcing, one blood tube fell out of the bubble-wrap bag and broke on the laboratory floor. Upon further inspection it was observed that the bag had a hole at the bottom that had not been previously noted. Since there was more evidence sample in the case, another blood tube was outsourced for confirmatory testing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-060</td>
<td>A blood vial with a replacement top was analyzed prior to consulting section management as required by the Toxicology SOP. This verification is required to ensure the sample matrix is appropriate for the required testing. The Toxicology manager retroactively approved and determine that the testing for this evidence sample had been appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-062</td>
<td>A blood alcohol quality control failed to meet acceptance criteria. During blood alcohol analysis every 10 cases must be bracketed by alternating high (BQC1) and low (BQC2) quality controls. Upon further investigation, it was determined that the analyst had mistakenly aliquoted BQC1 into the BQC2 vial. The positive cases bracketed by this quality control will be re-analyzed as required per the Toxicology SOP.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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