



Lewis County Coroner's Office
IAC&ME Accredited

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07/12/23

Q2 Budget amendment request memo

This a memo outlining the request for an additional \$130,000. 00 for the professional services line item.

Line item total: \$ 250, 800

Amount spent year to date: \$ 168, 634

2020: Total spent: \$190, 007

2021: Total spent: \$250, 580

2022: Total spent: \$221, 511

The increase in 2023 is due to many factors beyond my control:

The increased cost of autopsies and external exams and the increased number of both types of exams (include using out of county facilities/pathologists).

The increase in the cost of removals (per removal) and the unpredictable number of removals per month. There has also been an increase in transports due to the use of other autopsy facilities (Cowlitz County Coroner and Snohomish County ME). This is due to the limited number of board certified forensics pathologists available.

The increase cost in toxicology testing now that we have to use an expanded panel to look for fentanyl/xylazine. There has been an increase in the number of cases requiring toxicology.

A. Pathologists (autopsies/external exams):

2022-Rates: \$1500-autopsy/\$1000-external

By 06/30/22: 33 autopsies/19 externals-Year end: autopsies 70/Externals 41

2023: Rates: \$1900 per autopsy/\$1000 per external

By 06/30: 48 autopsies/30 externals Year end: Unpredictable

Cost per autopsy went up by \$400 over 2022 rates

The autopsy reimbursement for Jan-Jun has been submitted and it is for \$138, 165 with 40% of hat being \$55, 266 coming back to the county. This is the highest reimbursement we have ever submitted.

B. Mortuary-removals

2022: Average of 25 per month at rate of \$350 per removal

2023: By 06/30: average of 22 per month at rate of \$450 per removal

Cost per removal went up by \$100 over 2022

Effective 07/01/23, per new RCW, we can submit for reimbursement for 40% of transportation costs.

C. NMS Tox lab

2022: 50 submissions at \$136 per test

2023: By 06/30: 35 submissions at \$225 per test

Cost per test went up \$89 as we now are doing the expanded screening to include fentanyl and xylazine. The number of submissions have also increased over 2022 as the potential number of drug ODs we are seeing.

WSP Tox lab does not charge anything but their turnaround time is 4-5 months. This does not fall within the requirements for accreditation and as of 2024 any coroner/ME office not accredited will lose the ability to get the 40% reimbursement rates for autopsies.

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