

HB

225

HFIN

FILE

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
 Bill Version: HB 225
 (H) Publish Date: 4/1/05
 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction):

Title RELATING TO MEDICAL EXAMINERS AND DEATH EXAMINATIONS

RDU Public Health

Component State Medical Examiner

Sponsor MCGUIRE

Requester HOUSE (HES)

Component No. 293

Expenditures/Revenues

(Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE

(Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1094 GF						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost:

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: *(Attach a separate page if necessary)*

This bill would amend current law to give the Deputy Medical Examiner the same authorities and duties as the State Medical Examiner. It also would add a mandate that the Commissioner "shall" appoint a Deputy Medical Examiner (current law allows that the Commissioner "may" appoint a Deputy M.E.), and clarifies that the Commissioner may appoint Assistant Medical Examiners.

The Governor's proposed FY06 operating budget for the State Medical Examiner's Office will support this proposed bill, as the budget includes funding for both the State Medical Examiner and the Deputy Medical Examiner positions. There currently are no Assistant Medical Examiners established and funded in the budget, but since this bill does not require the Commissioner to appoint Assistant Medical Examiners, no additional funding is required for this legislation.

Prepared by: Richard Mandsager, M.D.
 Division: Public Health
 Approved by: Joel S. Gilbertson, Commissioner
 Agency: Department of Health and Social Services

Phone: 465-3090
 Date/Time: 03/29/2005
 Date: 03/30/2005

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Session
State Capitol Building, Room 118
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Phone (907) 465-2995
Fax (907) 465-6592

Interim
716 West Fourth Avenue, Suite 430
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Phone (907) 269-0250
Fax (907) 269-0249



REPRESENTATIVE LESLIE MCGUIRE
HOUSE DISTRICT 28

Chair
Judiciary Committee

Member
House Leadership
Rules Committee
Health, Education
& Social Services
Committee
Oil & Gas Committee
Military & Veterans'
Affairs Committee

SPONSOR STATEMENT HB 225

"An Act relating to medical examiners and medical death examinations."

Last year alone, there were nearly 1,100 cases filed with the State of Alaska's medical examiner's office. All of these cases require responsibilities ranging from autopsies, administrative duties and legal responsibilities, such as testifying in court. With this sizeable caseload for our state, how many medical examiners do we have to handle it? The answer is, one.

Our one state medical examiner has been stretched so thin with this caseload that he has been forced to decide which cases will actually receive autopsies. Currently autopsies are required only when the death was suspicious or if there was a crime involved. When forced to pick and choose, something could be overlooked in these remaining cases that did not receive the attention they should have. We also have to consider what would happen if our one medical examiner became ill or for any reason could not fulfill his duties.

The position of the state medical examiner is a critical function in the state and a tremendous responsibility. It is a responsibility not only to the families and friends to the victim, but also to the community as a whole. The fact that there is such a large caseload for only one medical examiner has become a growing concern for policy makers, law enforcement officials and the community.

Under current state law, the commissioner of health and social services is required to appoint only a medical examiner. HB 225 would require the commissioner of health and social services to appoint both a chief medical examiner and a deputy medical examiner to share the extensive workload.

Suzanne Cunningham

From: Clarke, Janet E. [Janet_Clarke@health.state.ak.us]
Sent: Monday, April 11, 2005 7:00 PM
To: Amanda Ryder; Anna Kim
Subject: FW: FW: Deputy Medical Examiner
Importance: High

Amanda:
More follow-up on your questions on the subject of the Deputy Medical Examiner.
Janet Clarke

From: Smith, Robin
Sent: Monday, April 11, 2005 4:01 PM
To: Clarke, Janet E.; Lowenstein, Cheryl; Baker, Laura
Subject: RE: FW: Deputy Medical Examiner
Importance: High

Under AS 12.65.015 the Commissioner already has the authority to appoint a deputy medical examiner and assistant medical examiners. DPH previously had two deputy medical examiners (which is a working title, the job class is exempt staff physician in the SME budget) while the Chief Medical Examiner position was vacant. One of the incumbents was promoted to Chief on 6/24/04. After the promotion, the deputy position vacated by him was kept vacant due to funding limitations.

The other deputy resigned effective 11/30/04. That position is now being recruited. One of the three medical examiner positions in the SME component (chief and two physicians who are referred to as deputy medical examiners) is unfunded, but the division has sufficient funding to fill the chief and one deputy as is currently the plan regardless of whether HB 225 passes or not.

Hope this helps.
Robin

From: Amanda Ryder [mailto:amanda_ryder@legis.state.ak.us]
Sent: Monday, April 11, 2005 1:47 PM
To: Clarke, Janet E.
Subject: Re: FW: Deputy Medical Examiner

Thanks! Just a few more questions. How much (and what kind of) funding is needed for the Deputy Medical Examiner? Why are you hiring this position now and not waiting for the bill to pass? What happens if HB 225 does not pass? You stated that this funding is currently in the budget--is there something that will not be done because this position is being filled? In other words, what has the funding been used for? Thanks for your help.

Clarke, Janet E. wrote:

Amanda and Anna:
Here is the information as requested.
Janet Clarke

4/12/2005

DHSS

From: Smith, Robin
Sent: Monday, April 11, 2005 1:14 PM
To: Clarke, Janet E.
Cc: Baker, Laura; Lowenstein, Cheryl
Subject: Deputy Medical Examiner
Importance: High

I spoke to Cheri and she says we do not currently have a deputy medical examiner, but we are in the final process of hiring one. DPH has done second interview on one candidate and has another one flying up for second interview soon (possibly a third candidate, Cheri wasn't positive). In the budget we have the Chief position and 2 staff physician positions. The Deputy Medical Examiner currently in hiring process would fill one of those 2 physician positions. They don't currently have the funding to hire a second deputy ME into the remaining vacant position.

Let me know if you need additional info.

Robin