

**Westchester County Department of Laboratories and Research**  
**2016 Proposed Operating Budget**

**Mission**

This department's mission is two-fold:

1. Performance of all major laboratory testing for Westchester County including:
  - a. Microbiological testing of clinical specimens for TB, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, Swine Flu, and new emerging diseases. Major client: Westchester County Dept. of Health.  
  
Testing for biodefense – related incidents as a member of the nationwide CDC Laboratory Response Network. Clients: Emergency response and related agencies of the seven (7) counties in the lower Hudson Valley.
  - b. Environmental testing of air, water, food, soil, and waste to monitor the environment and control disease. Major clients: Westchester County Dept. of Health, Westchester County Dept. of Environmental Facilities, municipal water departments.
  - c. Forensic Science (“crime lab”) evidence collection and analyses including DNA, illicit drugs, trace evidence, and photography to aid in crime prevention, crime solving and prosecution of criminals. Major clients: 43 Town and Village Police Departments, Westchester District Attorney, New York State Police, and Federal CODIS (DNA Identification Program).
  - d. Toxicological analyses of body fluids and tissues for Medical Examiner and DWI/DFSA cases. Major clients: 43 Town and Village Police Departments, Westchester District Attorney, Westchester Department of Public Safety, New York State Police.
2. Medical Examiner functions including investigation of all unexpected deaths occurring within Westchester County.

**Accomplishments**

During the past year this department achieved a number of accomplishments including the following:

The **Forensic** division's DNA section validated a new DNA procedure for measuring very small quantities of DNA in evidence. This will allow the lab to identify probative evidence in cases such as homicides, sexual assaults and will be helpful in burglary cases. The 4 Gas Chromatograph - mass spectrometers the laboratory purchased with Capital funds allowed the laboratory to quickly analyze numerous undercover buys that lead to three large sweeps and indictments of drug dealers in the County within the last few months . The laboratory is currently validating an instrument in the drug laboratory that will help us better analyze hallucinogenic substances and we will be looking into its use in analyzing synthetic cannabinoids ( Spice- type drugs ), which may become Penal law violations in the new year.

**Toxicology** updated and validated the blood benzodiazepine LC/MS/MS method to decrease the time of extractions, solvent use and improve sensitivity. The amphetamine/amine procedure was updated and bath salts, now called NPS (Novel Psychoactive substances) have been added to the method and found in case work. Tramadol and venlafaxine methods were moved to the LC/MS to improve sensitivity. The urine marijuana metabolite method was updated with a newer internal standard.

The **Environmental** division has improved its operational efficiency in order to meet the additional laboratory testing requirements place upon it by the Department of Environmental Facilities by recent sewage treatment plant improvements. The division has also established a joint program with the Health Department whereby testing services are provided to homeowners, on a fee basis, that must comply with

the requirements of the Westchester Private well Water Law. Comparison test studies have been performed on samples collected for bacteriological analyses by the Health Department and other clients in order to determine if more efficient and streamlined test procedures can be utilized to replace less efficient out dated test methodologies. Conclusions are pending.

The Division of **Microbiological** Services purchased and installed a new computer server for the SCC Laboratory Information System (LIS) to replace our two current and nearly obsolete computer servers. Following a period testing and validation of the new server, it is expected to go live in mid-December 2015. The Mycobacteriology section will complete the implementation of the Cepheid Xpert MTB/RIF molecular diagnostic assay before the end of November, thereby allowing diagnosis of new cases of active tuberculosis in 24 hours or less instead of the typical minimum of 2-3 weeks for diagnosis using mycobacterial culture methods. This rapid assay also screens for a mutation of the tubercle bacillus that confers resistance to rifampin, a first-line drug for treatment of active tuberculosis. The Diagnostic Immunology section of Virology modified its test menu and LIS reflex laboratory test orders to incorporate the newest CDC recommendations for the serologic diagnosis of HIV-1 infection.

### **Tax Levy**

The 2016 Budget that is before the Board of Legislatures at this time, proposes a tax levy of \$9,422,096.

### **Expenditures**

#### Annual Regular (1010)

- This account decreases \$103,270 which includes removal of funding for the pay plan raises for Medical Examiner office MD's and elimination of one Lab Assistant position and the downgrading of two forensic positions from a job group 11 to job group 10s.

#### Materials & Supplies (3000's)

- This account decreases by \$41,437. due to the stable water rates at the Valhalla Campus.

#### Expenses (4000's)

- This account decreases by 17,038. This includes the continued Advance to Grants line for operation of the Biodefense Laboratory based on reduction of grant funding by NYS and also the addition of funding for the NYS Dept. Criminal Justice Services Aid to Crime Lab grant due to its capping of fringe reimbursement at 55%.

#### Interdepartmental charges (5000's)

- These charges for county supplied support services show an overall decrease of \$262,630.

### **Revenue**

#### Departmental Income (9067)

- Revenue is increased by \$60,000., as a result additional testing.

#### Lab State Aid (9708)

- State Aid has been decreased by \$158,670. , due to continued changes of eligible expenses by NYS.