

Westchester County Department of Laboratories and Research
2018 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 which includes Westchester, Putnam, Rockland, Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan and Ulster.
 - 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 is finishing up the validation of DNA software that will allow us to look at complex samples of DNA in cases such as homicides and assaults. The laboratory has put on line a robotic instrument that processes drug cases faster and allows for quantitation of drug concentrations. We have partnered with the DA's Intel center to provide them with investigative information on opioid drug overdoses. This information will allow investigators to pinpoint areas in the County where certain types of opioids such as Fentanyl are being sold and are resulting in overdoses. We are currently developing new methods to deal with synthetic marijuana.

Toxicology continues to add and detect new fentanyl analogues, illegal designer benzodiazepines and opiates/opioids to screen and confirm in casework. There is an increase in opiate/opioids, fentanyl, fentanyl analogues in deaths and an increase in the use of these drugs in DWAI (Driving While Ability Impaired) casework. The lab increased the screening for all blood samples received for DWI/DWAI cases, regardless of the alcohol level. The lab continues to validate new LC/MS instrument to move methods from the HPLC to increase sensitivity, decrease sample size, decrease solvent use and decrease turn-around-time. This is an ongoing process. We continue to support all breath instruments used in Westchester County and testify for refusal cases in court.

The **Environmental** Section has implemented a new digital environment monitoring system to track the temperature in incubators and refrigerators. This system replaces a tedious manual process of temperature recording and thermometer calibration. The laboratory has purchased an LC/MS/MS instrument to assist the Health Dept. in complying with a new state mandate to monitor PFOS (Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid) and PFOA (Perfluorooctanoic acid); which are Fluorinated organic chemicals used in firefighting foams and as water resistant agents in carpets, clothing, fabrics, food packaging; in drinking water. Our laboratory was one of six labs chosen by the NYS Health Dept to participate in the Free Lead Testing Pilot Program. This program, funded through a grant, provides any NYS resident with the opportunity to have their drinking water tested for lead.

Microbiological Services implemented rapid molecular testing for Chlamydia and Gonorrhoeae on a new instrument. Using this instrument, the turn-around time has been reduced from a full day test to a 2 hour test. The shorter turn-around time allows for quicker follow-up, treatment and contact investigation. The Diagnostic Immunology lab validated a new HIV supplemental assay as recommended by the updated CDC algorithm. Increased submissions for water sample testing for Legionella occurred due to client awareness of updated NYS regulations and recent Legionella outbreaks.

Tax Levy

The 2018 Budget that is before the Board of Legislatures at this time, proposes a tax levy of \$9,523,903.

Expenditures

Materials and Supplies (3000's)

- The water account decreased by \$30,000., as readings are more accurate with the installation of new water meters. The Lab supply account is increased by \$50,000 to accommodate for rising supply costs. Postage is up due to the cost of sending out sample bottles for the Free Lead Water Testing Program, which is reimbursed by NYS.

Revenue

Departmental Income (9067)

- Revenue is decreased by \$273,000., as a result of fewer special projects by DEF and the 18 month cycle of required testing of municipal and community water supplies for Synthetic Organic Compounds, like Pesticides and Herbicides.

Lab State Aid (9708)

- State Aid has been increased by \$72,462. , due to increases in supply expense and the Free Water Lead Testing Program.