

MEMORANDUM
COUNTY OF PLACER
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PROCUREMENT SERVICES DIVISION

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jim Boggan, Purchasing Manager *JB*

DATE: January 22, 2008

SUBJECT: Approve the Renewal of Sole-Source Blanket Purchase Order No. 14421 with National Medical Services for Forensic Toxicology Laboratory Services in the Maximum Amount of \$70,000.00

ACTION REQUESTED

Approve the renewal of sole-source Blanket Purchase Order (BPO) No. 14421 with National Medical Services (NMS) of Willow Grove, PA, for forensic toxicology laboratory services for the Coroner's Office, and authorize the Purchasing Manager to sign the resulting blanket purchase order in the maximum amount of \$70,000.00.

BACKGROUND

The Coroner's Office has requested the sole-source renewal of BP014421 for forensic toxicology laboratory services with National Medical Services. Competitive Bid No. 8943 for this service was awarded to NMS in 2002, and was renewed four times under the Purchasing Manager's authority. Due to the unusually high workload in the Coroner's Office last year, your Board approved a fifth renewal as a sole source award to NMS on February 20, 2007. The Coroner's Office has submitted a strong sole source justification (Attachment A) requesting the sixth annual contract period with National Medical Services. In accordance with the Purchasing Policy Manual (PPM) Section 1.3(a), County policy allows for the sole source renewal of BP014421 as an expert and professional service that is exempt from competitive bidding due the extensive knowledge and expertise required. National Medical Services has agreed to renew at the same price and terms as the previous BPO.

FISCAL IMPACT

The BPO resulting from this recommendation will be in the maximum amount of \$70,000.00 and will be effective from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008. The Sheriff's Department's Fiscal Impact Statement is attached.

Attachment A: Letter from Dr. Donald M. Henrikson, Forensic Pathologist
Attachment B: Sheriff's Department Fiscal Impact Statement

cc: Dennis Watt, Coroners Office
Barbara Besana, Administrative Services Manager – Sheriffs Office
Elisabeth Zmyslowski, Accountant Auditor/Supervisor – Sheriffs Office



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SHERIFF
CORONER-MARSHAL



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EDWARD N. BONNER
SHERIFF-CORONER-MARSHAL

DEVON BELL
UNDERSHERIFF

01/03/2008

Re: Forensic Toxicology Services with National Medical Services (NMS)

I cannot emphasize strongly enough the need for the Placer County Coroner to continue its contract with NMS for forensic toxicology services.

We are finding that comprehensive toxicology testing is becoming increasingly important for us to determine cause and manner of death. In part this results from the State of California's intent to promote pain relief, using powerful pain-relieving medications prescribed by physicians. State law now requires clinicians to receive regular continuing medical education training on pain relief. Secondly, young people are increasingly abusing prescription medications (especially pain relievers) with consequent lethal outcome so that ethanol plus illicit drug testing post mortem is not enough to identify these cases (as it was in the past, when young people were content to abuse ethanol and illicit drugs). NMS is fully capable of this comprehensive testing.

NMS has a national – indeed, international – reputation. NMS has the expertise (at least three individuals with Ph D degrees), equipment and quality control assurance programs in place to provide results that will stand up in court. I have attended several national meetings, where presentations were made by personnel from NMS, reflecting their well-recognized expertise.

NMS has so much more experience providing forensic toxicology services than California based labs that it actually serves as a reference lab for local labs.

As part of their reports to us NMS Toxicologists provide brief interpretations (what the results mean) that save us a lot of time (and money) in determining cause and manner of death. Otherwise – for example, if we have received results with no interpretations - we would have to spend time consulting reference works and other experts to understand what the results mean.

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Currently, we do not have facilities to store toxicology samples after autopsies. Instead, we send all of our samples to NMS, I doubt very seriously that any other labs would be willing to receive all of our samples and we would have to spend money on larger storage facilities.

Whatever the decision Placer County makes regarding forensic toxicology services will have an impact on other counties too. Currently, Nevada and Sierra County Coroner's autopsies are conducted at the Placer County Morgue. If Placer County were to contract with any other lab, while Nevada and Sierra counties continued to contract with NMS, it would complicate our handling of toxicology specimens significantly.

Recently, we became aware of a case in which a cause of death was botched because post mortem toxicology testing was not carried far enough (vitreous electrolyte chemistry studies were needed to establish diabetic ketoacidosis as the cause of death). I am convinced that at least part of the reason this happened is that counties, where this Pathologist usually works, do not spend enough money on post mortem toxicology services.

As you can see, I cannot emphasize strongly enough the need for Placer County Coroner to continue its contract with NMS for forensic toxicology services.

Sincerely,
Donald M. Henrikson, MD
Placer County, Forensic Pathologist

PLACER COUNTY
SHERIFF
CORONER-MARSHAL



EDWARD N. BONNER
SHERIFF-CORONER-MARSHAL

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors
FROM: Sheriff Edward Bonner
DATE: December 26, 2007
SUBJECT: Fiscal Impact Statement
BPO Renewal for MultiService for the period 01-01-08 – 12-31-08

The MultiService BPO is used by the Coroner's Unit for toxicology. The request for the new BPO is for \$70,000 per history and projections of the current activity. The amount in the budget for this fiscal year is \$40,000. At the current usage and rates, we anticipate spending approximately \$60,000 - \$70,000 for FY 07/08. These services are not an option when needed as part of a Coroner's examination. Expenditures for this and other Coroner's services were anticipated to exceed the current funding available by the department. Upon review at Final Budget, the CEO Analyst felt that the Professional Services used by the department would not be exceeded on the whole. Therefore no increases were approved at that time. Recommendations were made that should these services exceed that budgeted, the department should have flexibility in covering the shortfall through unused salaries and benefits. Should this not be the case, the CEO agreed to review the shortfall for funding alternatives.

Therefore, the fiscal impact is that this BPO will exceed the amount allocated for it in the budget, but that the shortfall will be offset in other Sheriff programs.