



# County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors  
Chambers  
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor  
Salinas, CA 93901

## Board Report

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**File #:** 12-320, **Version:** 1

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- a. Direct staff to prepare a plan for an independent Medical Examiner's Office to include the creation of new positions and an analysis of the fiscal implications of the plan; and
- b. Authorize the Contracts/Purchasing Officer to execute Amendment No. 3 to Professional Services Agreement A11139 with Dr. John Hain for conducting postmortem examinations through the Coroner's Office in an amount not to exceed \$320,000 annually, extending the agreement on a month to month basis.

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Direct staff to prepare a plan for an independent Medical Examiner's Office to include the creation of new positions and an analysis of the fiscal implications of the plan; and
- b. Authorize the Contracts/Purchasing Officer to execute Amendment No. 3 to Professional Services Agreement A11139 with Dr. John Hain for conducting postmortem examinations through the Coroner's Office in an amount not to exceed \$320,000 annually, extending the agreement on a month to month basis.

### SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The position of Coroner is currently an elected position in combination with the position of Sheriff, and carried out by a contracted forensic pathologist. Section 24010 of the California Government Code states:

*Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the board of supervisors may by ordinance abolish the office of coroner and provide instead for the office of medical examiner, to be appointed by the said board and to exercise the powers and perform the duties of the coroner. The medical examiner shall be a licensed physician and surgeon duly qualified as a specialist in pathology.*

The creation of an Office of Medical Examiner could provide the opportunity for future federal funding that will be available to governmental entities that have independent, accredited Medical Examiner offices.

Due to inconsistent practices throughout the country, recent studies have recommended significant changes to the provision of Coroner services. Creating an accredited Coroner function is a common recommendation of these studies, and federal grant funds may be available to agencies that can become accredited. A key component of the accreditation process is that the Medical Examiner be independent from the law enforcement agencies he or she serves.

The proposed study would include an analysis of the potential costs and benefits of an independent Office and the identification of alternative staffing scenarios.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Auditor-Controller's Office concurs in this report. County Counsel has approved the agreement and Risk Management and the County Administrative Office have reviewed the report.

FINANCING:

There is no increase in General Fund Contribution from the original contract as a result of this recommendation.

Prepared by: James Colangelo, Acting Chief Deputy, Administration

Approved by: Scott Miller, Sheriff-Coroner

Attachment: Amendment No. 3