

## Questions for the ME regarding the CCMEO Toxicology Lab privatization:

At the Skokie hearing Monday night you said your estimate of \$1 million in cost savings was based on a cost study. You said you would make that study available to the Commissioners. Where is the cost study?

Did the cost study include some of the costs of privatization that you mentioned on Monday night?

- You said that the private lab will do the public health reporting and analysis that the County Toxicology Lab currently performs. How much will that cost?
- You said you would have a toxicologist come to the Lab to meet with the doctors weekly and hold grand rounds monthly. How much will that cost?
- You said the private lab will perform out-of-scope testing beyond what the pathologists specifically request just at the County toxicologists do. How much will that cost?

What will it cost to have a toxicologist from a private lab come here from Pennsylvania to testify in court when needed?

Can you walk us through where in your budget we will find the increased costs associated with privatization – like the cost of the private lab, the cost of bringing in toxicologists weekly and monthly to meet with the pathologists, the cost of bringing the private lab staff in to testify?

During your initial budget hearing you mentioned a reason for privatization was the Toxicology Lab's turn-around time which caused a Phase I or minor deficiency during accreditation. Was that your only deficiency? Was the ME's Office accredited? How many minor deficiencies can you have and still maintain accreditation? Are you addressing any other deficiencies through privatization?

Before you announced this plan to privatize, did you approach your Toxicology Lab employees or their union to discuss ways to increase efficiency? Why not?

We heard very compelling testimony from the Toxicology staff about the fentanyl overdose epidemic. It was a great example of our in-house lab, connected to what is occurring here in our county and committed to a public health mission, went above and beyond to find a cause of death. How are you going to maintain that level of service under a private lab, where the toxicologists will be unaware of what is happening in pathology and where they simply get paid per test?

Your plan after privatization is to keep four staff in the Lab to handle a variety of duties and staff the Lab 365 days a year. How did you make the assessment that four people could handle the non-privatized duties made? Where is the work study?

How will you ensure the fidelity of chain-of-custody for specimens being sent out for testing? What are the legal ramifications of sending specimens out of state?