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# COUNTY OF ERIE

**MARK C. POLONCARZ**

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

March 19, 2013

Erie County Legislature  
92 Franklin Street – Fourth Floor  
Buffalo, New York 14202

**RE: Erie County Medical Examiner Variable Minimum**

Dear Honorable Members:

As the primary source of medical investigation in Erie County and also several other counties operating under agreements, the Erie County Medical Examiner's office plays a critical role in helping bring closure to the families of the deceased to working with law enforcement to bring criminals to justice.

Following an extensive, months-long recruitment process, the Medical Examiner's Office has identified a highly qualified candidate for the position of Associate Chief Medical Examiner, job group 22, who will be available to start working on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. We are requesting authorization to fill this position with a starting salary at a variable minimum of step 4. There is no increase to the 2013 Budget.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Health Commissioner Gale R. Burstein, MD. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.  
Erie County Executive

MCP  
Enclosure

cc: Health Commissioner Gale R. Burstein, MD

## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature  
**From:** Department of Health  
**Re:** Erie County Medical Examiner Variable Minimum  
**Date:** March 12, 2013

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### **SUMMARY**

Authorization is requested provide a variable minimum for the position of Associate Chief Medical Examiner, job group 22, step 4 to be filled by a recently recruited highly qualified candidate.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

No additional County dollars are required for this request. The vacant title is already budgeted at \$136,779 in 2013, while the salary at step 4 is \$129,453. If approved, the reallocations will realize a net savings to the County (annualized) of approximately \$7,326.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The Medical Examiner's Office preforms hundreds of autopsies a year, and is a crucial component of the criminal justice system, and the County's public health apparatus. It is incumbent upon Erie County to staff the office with competent, qualified forensic pathologists.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Due to a vacancy since fall 2012, the Medical Examiner's Office has been functioning with just a Chief Medical Examiner and one Associate Chief Medical Examiner in addition to utilizing a fee-for-service pathologist. After an extensive recruiting effort, the Department of Health has identified a candidate interested in joining the Medical Examiner's team at the Associate Chief Level, provided we offer a variable minimum.

Having a third medical examiner will lead to a reduction in the county's utilization of our fee-for-service pathologist, although we will still require such services intermittently.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

The Department of Health will be unable to properly manage the Medical Examiner's Office.

### **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

The Health Department will work with the Division of Budget and Management and the Department of Personnel to implement this request.

**A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

**RE: Erie County Medical Examiner Variable Minimum**

**WHEREAS, the Erie County Department of Health provides forensic medical services through the Office of the Medical Examiner; and**

**WHEREAS, the need for expert pathological skills is critical for the function of the medical examiner's office; and**

**WHEREAS, the Erie County Medical Examiner's office provides crucial support and determinations to the law enforcement community and**

**WHEREAS, as such, the Department of Health is requesting authorization to fill the vacant title of Associate Chief Medical Examiner at a variable minimum; and**

**WHEREAS, funding for these changes is already available in the 2013 enacted budget with a net savings to the County,**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

**RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature hereby authorizes the hiring of one Associate Chief Medical Examiner, Job Group 22, at a variable minimum hiring level of Step 4 (annual salary \$129,453); and be it further**

**RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution will be forwarded to the County Executive, the Office of the Comptroller, the Department of Personnel, the Division of Budget and Management, and to Commissioner Gale R. Burstein in the Erie County Department of Health.**