

December 20, 2013

**Cost Proposal for
Pathologist to Provide Turnkey Autopsy and Related Services for
Hidalgo County at Contracted (Funeral Home) Facility and Designated County
Morgue Facility**

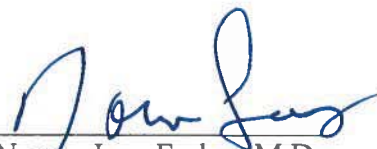
- I. Autopsy cost (with understanding that the morgue will be relocated to Hidalgo County facility during contract period).
 - A. Full autopsy (head and body) - \$1,450.
 - B. Partial – \$1,100.
 - C. External examinations – \$1,000.
 - D. Embalmed bodies - \$2,250
 - E. Exhumed bodies - \$3,500
 - F. Toxicology Only Cases- Fee from NMS Labs only
 - G. Non-human skeletal remains
 - 1. 1-4 bones – no charge if no report stating non human remains
 - 2. 5-10 bones - \$50
 - 3. multiple bones with non human skeletal remains report \$75
 - H. Single body part, small e.g. finger or toe with report - \$150 (DNA analysis included)
 - 1. Sent to University of North Texas, packing, shipping, reviewing DNA report
 - I. Single body part large e.g. arm, leg, head with report (not a suspected homicide) - \$250
 - J. Body part(s) suspected to be a homicide - \$1000 with additional body parts recovered later at no additional charge
 - 1. Includes testimony
 - K. Unknown tissue
 - 1. uncomplicated less than 20lbs with report - \$25
 - 2. complicated less than 20lbs requiring additional testing with report (human vs nonhuman, sending DNA to University of North Texas, microscopic slides extra) - \$150
 - L. Chart Review –
 - 1. Non-homicide -\$0 - \$250 depending on difficulty of case.
 - 2. Homicide - \$500 includes testimony
 - M. Autopsy cost includes:
 - 1. Office manager and Administrator for Valley Forensics
 - 2. CD of photographs as needed.
 - 3. Transcription costs.
 - 4. Any testimony needed for homicide cases at no charge while under contract.
 - 5. Locum tenens pathologist as needed (vacation and conference coverage).

- N. The cost to provide testimony or review material at the request of Hidalgo County on cases other than homicides or homicides which were not autopsied by Dr. Farley will be billed to the County at a rate of \$100/hour. The hourly rate will include preparation, travel, and testimony.
- O. Autopsies will be performed at Ceballos Funeral Home until the County facility is operational with the same fees charged when operating at the County facility. All morgue expenses including personnel, on call personnel for the morgue, security, maintenance and supplies are the responsibility of Ceballos Funeral Home except for the supplies currently being provided by Valley Forensics and personnel provided by the county.. Although the administrative office for the forensic pathologist and staff was originally to be located at Ceballos Funeral Home per the original contract with the County, the office has moved to a separate facility due to a lack of available space. Internet, fax, printer and telephone service for the morgue is being supplied by Valley Forensics.
- P. Fees will remain in effect when autopsies are performed at the County facility.

II. Fees not included:

- A. Histology and Microbiology–
- B. Toxicology – usually \$154.00 to \$270.00 per case possibly higher depending on the complexity of the case and decomposition of the body (most forensic cases – homicides, excited delirium cases, overdoses, some motor vehicle accidents, etc.). Urine drug screens will be performed when necessary.
- C. X-rays. - \$50 per X-ray (maximum charge of \$300)
 - 1. Will be performed at the facility using Valley Forensic equipment.
 - 2. X-rays are performed on every gunshot wound case, stab wound case, skeletonized case (looking for bullets etc), decomposed body, airplane crash victims and infant/small children (to identify fractures).
- D. Sexual Assault Kit - \$50 to complete a sexual assault kit when not warranted (e.g. decomposed, other), \$25 if warranted and County/investigative agency supplies kit,\$50 if warranted if Valley Forensics provides the kit, \$75 if not warranted and Valley Forensics supplies the kit.
- E. DNA testing only when needed - usually homicides/decomposed bodies and only when no dental identification or other identification is present (tattoo identification). These cases will be discussed with the Justice of the Peace/District Attorneys Office prior to testing.
- F. Expert consultation:
 - 1. Neuropathology on infant/child homicide cases with blunt head trauma requiring diffuse axonal injury stains – only a few cases a year .cost determined by Neuropathologist.
 - 2. Eye pathology – retinal hemorrhage analysis – only if approved by District Attorney after consultation. Cost depends on laboratory used.
 - 3. Dental Odontology – bite mark analysis. Only if approved by the District Attorney.
- G. Physical evidence and ballistics.
 - 1. Collected at the time of autopsy and released to investigating agency (CD of photographs at no charge).

2. Bullets will be released to investigating agency.
 - H. Prints of photographs – \$25.00 to be paid by the requesting agency (CD of photographs at no charge).
 - I. Laboratory analysis when necessary (vitreous chemistry needed on a few infants a year with dehydration or heat stroke victims), vitreous glucose on cases of diabetic ketoacidosis, microbiology – all infants suspected of SIDS, H1N1 cases, infectious disease.
- III. Additional fees associated with County autopsy facility
- A. All morgue expenses are the responsibility of Hidalgo County including but not limited to:
 1. Autopsy assistant(s).
 2. On call personnel for the morgue to answer telephone calls after hours only if the proposed working hours and emergency contact number after hours are not accepted by the County (M-F, 8am-5pm).
 3. Security for the building (monitored access), maintenance, medical waste and supplies
 4. All utilities for the building and IT assistance to include internet service and telephone service.
 5. Access to the building after hours supplied by the County or there will be a charge of \$25 per event.
- IV. The above cost proposal is with the understanding that the current Justice of the Peace system will continue and does not reflect fees or staffing necessary to support a Medical Examiner's system. The above cost proposal is intended for Hidalgo County with no agreement to supply services for other counties.


Norma Jean Farley, M.D.
1/15/14