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**NYC OFFICE OF CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER ANNOUNCES DEPARTURE OF
CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER DR. BARBARA SAMPSON**

*-First woman appointed to the role led period of transformational change for the agency and
oversaw country's largest-ever mass fatality management operation during COVID-19
pandemic-*

*-First Deputy Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Jason Graham Appointed Acting Chief Medical
Examiner-*

NEW YORK, NY – The New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) today announced the departure of Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Barbara Sampson. Appointed to the position by Mayor Bill de Blasio in 2014, Dr. Sampson led a period of transformational change for the independent agency serving public health and the criminal justice system with advanced forensic science and oversaw the nation's largest-ever mass fatality management operation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first woman appointed Chief Medical Examiner of New York City, Dr. Sampson has served at OCME for over 20 years in various leadership roles spanning from the 2001 World Trade Center disaster through the onset of the pandemic and the City's ongoing recovery. She will step down on November 30 to become the Vice Chair for Laboratory Strategic Initiatives and Academic Affairs and Professor of Pathology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

“As a native New Yorker raised in a family of physicians, serving as Chief Medical Examiner has been the honor of a lifetime and the realization of a dream since I was a teenager, and now after more than two decades of science serving justice, the time has come to return to my roots in academic medicine and medical education,” said **Dr. Barbara Sampson, Chief Medical Examiner of the City of New York**. “I am enormously proud of OCME for maintaining our steadfast tradition of independent investigations in the service of public health and the criminal justice system and helping New Yorkers cope with the most difficult moments of trauma and loss. I leave the agency knowing that we are stronger and poised to address whatever challenges come next for our city, thanks to the support of the de Blasio administration and the dedication of every single OCME employee.”

Dr. Jason Graham has been appointed Acting Chief Medical Examiner. He most recently served as First Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, the second highest leadership position at the agency, since 2013. Dr. Graham joined OCME in 2006 and has also served as Deputy Chief Medical Examiner for Manhattan. An expert in the investigation of overdose fatalities, he leads OCME's response to the opioid epidemic in coordination with local, state and federal partners.

“I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have served alongside Dr. Sampson as she instituted innovations in forensic science and led our agency in response to the greatest public health crisis in a generation, and I am committed to a smooth transition that preserves strength and stability at OCME with support from our executive leadership team and all our dedicated employees,” said **Dr. Jason Graham, incoming Acting Chief Medical Examiner of the City of New York.** “We thank Dr. Sampson for her tireless public service and wish her the best in her new position, where she will focus on the education of future pathologists at a time when expertise in forensic pathology is urgently needed.”

Dr. Sampson leaves OCME in a leading position as the nation’s largest and most complex medical examiner’s office. Her track record of accomplishments as Chief Medical Examiner spans advances in forensic pathology, laboratory operations and mass fatality management. Signature achievements of her tenure include the following.

- Overseeing the largest mass fatality management operation ever conducted in the United States in response to COVID-19, working with other City, State and federal agencies to support healthcare facilities faced with a surge in fatalities, and establishing the first of its kind long-term storage operation at the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal to allow families of pandemic victims more time to arrange final disposition, in operation for nearly 500 days with demobilization concluded in September 2021.
- Growing and diversifying the next generation of forensic pathology leaders through the expansion of the OCME Forensic Pathology Fellows Program, which has trained 95% of the medical examiners hired at the agency in the last eight years, 20% of all board-certified forensic pathologists nationwide, and 25 Chief Medical Examiners across the United States.
- Reorganizing Pathology Operations from five locations to three in 2015 to maximize resources and improve the level of service for families citywide while increasing on-site training opportunities for staff.
- Establishing the Forensic Quality Control Unit in 2014 to provide independent quality assurance over mortuary operations and ensure accuracy in handling of decedents.
- Securing support for continued scientific innovations at OCME’s world-class laboratories in Forensic Toxicology, Forensic Anthropology, Forensic Biology (DNA), and Molecular Genetics, the only laboratory of its kind housed within a medical examiner’s office, and incorporating these scientific advances into everyday operations and casework.
- Instituting the agency’s first Wellness Committee to connect employees with resources on mental health, physical activity, nutrition, health prevention, and resilience.

As Dr. Graham assumes the role of Acting Chief Medical Examiner, the position of Acting First Deputy Chief Medical Examiner will be filled by Dr. Michele Slone, who most recently served as Deputy Chief Medical Examiner in Manhattan. Dr. Terra Cederroth, who currently serves as Senior Staff Medical Examiner and associate program director for the Forensic Pathology Fellowship Program, will serve as Acting Deputy Chief Medical Examiner in Manhattan.

Established in 1918 as the nation’s first comprehensive medical examiner office, OCME provides the public with the highest standards of service across the forensic sciences. The agency

operates the largest and most advanced DNA public crime laboratory in North America, and houses laboratories in toxicology and histology, in addition to the nation's only public molecular genetics laboratory. OCME is home to the country's largest forensic pathology training program, having produced more than 100 board-certified forensic pathologists since 1990. OCME also houses a department of forensic anthropology and maintains a division of specially trained experts to respond to any and all mass fatality events and disasters.

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