

**Texas Forensic Science Commission  
Minutes from October 25, 2019 Meeting in Austin, Texas**

The Texas Forensic Science Commission met at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, October 25, 2019 at the Tom C. Clark Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room, 205 West 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Austin, Texas 78701.

Members of the Commission were present as follows:

Members Present: Barnard, Budowle, Daniel, Drake, Johnson, Kerrigan, Parsons, Buzzini

Members Absent: Downing

Staff Present: Lynn Garcia, General Counsel  
Kathryn Adams, Commission Coordinator  
Leigh Savage, Associate General Counsel

**1. Review and adopt minutes from August 16, 2019 Forensic Science Commission Quarterly meeting.**

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to adopt the meeting minutes draft. Parsons seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

**2. Office administrative update (FY2019 budget status report first quarter; update on staff attorney job posting).**

Staff reported on the status of the FY 2020 budget that includes the new attorney position. Members discussed interviewing candidates for the position next week. Barnard, Kerrigan, Daniel and Parsons will participate in the interviews by phone or in person.

**3. Update on statewide validation of qualitative method to distinguish hemp from marihuana.**

Kerrigan reported on the status of validating a qualitative method for distinguishing hemp from marihuana. Houston Forensic Science Center's Seized Drugs Section Manager James Miller, Department of Public Safety Seized Drugs Coordinator Charles Cline, and Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences Drug Chemistry Manager Kay McClain are participating in the effort. The qualitative method is based in part on the DEA's qualitative method for distinguishing hemp from marihuana. The group is currently waiting on materials and supplies for the validation. The group has been running the method and making tweaks/improvements and will begin validating soon.

Garcia reported on accrediting body ANAB's approval of the qualitative method. ANAB confirmed it considers the method qualitative (as opposed to quantitative) as long as reports are limited to qualitative conclusions.

The team validating the qualitative method plans to give a presentation/training on the method at TDCAA's elected prosecutor conference in December 2019.

**4. Discuss and consider pending complaints and laboratory self-disclosures as well as new complaints and self-disclosures received through October 4, 2019.**

Disclosures Pending from August 16, 2019

1. No. 19.18; Department of Public Safety – Waco (DNA, Seized Drugs, Blood Alcohol)

A self-disclosure by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Waco regional lab reporting the results of a vault audit including three disciplines (some DNA items; all seized drugs items and all blood alcohol items) where 58 items of evidence were not in the expected locations as documented in the lab's LIMS.

DPS updated the Commission providing that DPS established authority for destruction was received for all missing items. DPS also identified various possible causes for the lack of barcoding to the destruction box and/or failure of staff to identify the items as destroyed in the LIMS system.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to take no further action on the disclosure given the recent update from DPS. Drake seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

\*Commissioner Johnson recused himself from discussion and vote on this item.

2. No. 19.23; Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences (Serology)

A self-disclosure by the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences (HCIFS) describing an incident in its forensic biology section where several cases initially reported negative for acid phosphatase (AP) but showed positive AP results upon retesting due to improper AP pressing technique used by two serologists.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to take no further action on the disclosure given the corrective actions taken by the lab, including the case review, retraining of analysts, revisions to the serology manual, hiring of a training manager, appropriate notifications to affected stakeholders, and conclusion of the remediation period for the analyst. Parsons seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

Michal Pierce, Quality Director at HCIFS, addressed the Commission's questions with regard to the disclosure.

3. No. 19.26; Department of Public Safety – Austin (Toxicology)

A self-disclosure by the DPS Austin laboratory reporting an incident in the lab's toxicology section where two of the controls for morphine did not meet acceptance criteria in a batch and subsequent investigation revealed 5 additional batches were impacted by the same issues totaling approximately 50 affected cases.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to table the disclosure pending receipt of the final quality incident report. Drake seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

\*Commissioner Johnson recused himself from discussion and vote on this item.

Self-disclosures Received as of July 26, 2019

4. No. 19.30; Bexar County Criminal Investigation Laboratory (Body Fluid Identification)

A self-disclosure by the Bexar County Criminal Investigation Laboratory in its forensic biology section wherein the laboratory discovered reagents created by certain analysts were slightly weaker than they should have been and therefore gave false negative results in some cases.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to take no further action on the disclosure given the corrective actions taken by the laboratory, including the review and resubmission of cases, revisions to procedures with regard to creating reagents. Drake seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

Assistant Laboratory Director, Erin Reat, addressed the Commission's questions. Reat stated the laboratory is moving toward a completely new method for creating reagents that will avoid this issue in the future.

5. No. 19.33; Department of Public Safety – Laredo (Seized Drugs)

A self-disclosure by the DPS Laredo regional laboratory reporting an incident in its seized drugs section where an analyst discovered one baggie of cocaine missing (believed to be discarded by custodial staff) from 51 baggies previously counted and weighed in a case.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to take no further action on the disclosure given the corrective actions taken by the laboratory, including instructions to analysts on checking floor and work areas prior to cleaning, the rearranging of workspace, and the instruction to evaluate whether to stop testing activities if cleaning crews arrive. Parsons seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

\*Commissioner Johnson recused himself from discussion and vote on this item.

6. No. 19.34; Department of Public Safety – Houston (Forensic Biology)

A self-disclosure by the DPS Houston regional laboratory reporting an incident in its forensic biology section where an analyst discovered she inadvertently testified incorrectly. When asked about the range used to determine the result in the case was inconclusive, the analyst gave the validated inconclusive range for likelihood ratio values for the Identifiler Plus kit instead of the validated inconclusive range for likelihood ratio values for Minifiler.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Buzzini moved to take no further action on the disclosure given the corrective action taken by the laboratory, including notification to affected parties in the case. Budowle seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

Vanessa Nelson, Director of DPS's Forensic Biology Program, is conducting a systemwide assessment to evaluate testimony where similar problems may have occurred. Thus far, she has identified two testimonies with similar issues. Nelson indicated one of the kits was discontinued, so the problem will not arise in future testimony.

\*Commissioner Johnson recused himself from discussion and vote on this item.

7. No. 19.37; Department of Public Safety – Lubbock (Forensic Biology)

A self-disclosure by the DPS Lubbock regional laboratory reporting an incident in its forensic biology section where an envelope containing buccal swab reference samples was inadvertently discarded by the evidence technician receiving the samples.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to take no further action on the disclosure given the corrective action taken by the laboratory, including the laboratory's discussion and remediation with the evidence technician, revisions to instructions, and additional monitoring to verify corrective actions taken were sufficient to prevent recurrence. Parsons seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

\*Commissioner Johnson recused himself from discussion and vote on this item.

8. No. 19.38; Houston Forensic Science Center (Firearms/Toolmarks)

A self-disclosure by the Houston Forensic Science Center reporting three incidents of nonconformance in its firearms unit where a firearms analyst imaged and uploaded to NIBIN fired cartridge cases under the incorrect incident numbers.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to take no further action on the disclosure given the corrective actions taken by the laboratory, including changes to the laboratory's technical and administrative review processes, the audit completed, and other corrective actions. Johnson seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

9. No.19.39; Houston Forensic Science Center (Toxicology)

A self-disclosure by the Houston Forensic Science Center reporting an incident in its toxicology section where a blood alcohol report was released with incorrect analytical results due to a typographical error in the blood alcohol concentration.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *No further action given the corrective action taken by the laboratory, including amendments to the report, notification to affected parties, the laboratory's audit of cases, and changes to its review process.)*

Complaints Received as of October 4, 2019

10. No. 19.29; Blair, Randy (Department of Public Safety – Abilene; Seized Drugs)

A complaint by defendant Randy Blair alleging law enforcement officer Wayne Cockerham of the Taylor County Sheriff's Department Narcotics Unit and Abilene Police Department officer Christopher Hall conspired to perform a warrantless search of Blair's vehicle and tampered with evidence to secure his conviction for possession of a controlled substance.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to dismiss the complaint for failure to allege any professional negligence or misconduct with respect to the forensic analysis in the case. Drake seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

Brady Mills, Deputy Director of Crime Laboratory Services at DPS, stated he had the case file reviewed by the laboratory and no mistakes were found.

11. No. 19.31; Jones, Lee Charles (Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office; Fort Worth Police Department Crime Laboratory; Ballistics)

A complaint by defendant Lee Charles Jones alleging he was coerced to plead guilty in his murder and aggravated assault convictions and requesting a copy of the Fort Worth Police Department Crime Laboratory ballistics/firearms report in his case.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to dismiss the complaint for failure to allege any credible professional negligence or misconduct with respect to the forensic analyses in the case. Drake seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

12. No. 19.32; Striblin, James (Bexar County Forensic Toxicology Laboratory; Toxicology)

A complaint by defendant James Striblin alleging the Bexar County Medical Examiner's Office Toxicology Laboratory fabricated toxicology results, that a 9-1-1 call was "doctored," a police detective gave false court testimony about bloodstain patterns in the case, and an expert gave false ballistics testimony in court to secure his false conviction for murder.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to dismiss the complaint for failure to allege any credible professional negligence or misconduct with respect to the forensic analyses in the case and because general allegations of conspiracy are insufficient. Johnson seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

Members instructed staff to add in the disposition letter instruction that the complainant provide supporting information with respect to his forensic allegations.

13. No. 19.35; Green, Brandon (Quest Diagnostic; Hair Follicle Drug Test)

A complaint by Brandon Greene alleging a hair test done on his child (ordered by Child Protective Services) incorrectly reported the amount of methamphetamine and will result in criminal charges against him.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to dismiss the complaint because the test was conducted principally for the purpose of civil/administrative litigation. Parsons seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

14. No. 19.36; Wallace, Misty (Texas Alcohol and Drug Testing; Hair Follicle Drug Test)

A complaint by Misty Wallace, alleging a hair follicle drug test conducted on her hair sample showed positive for methamphetamine even though she has not used meth since August 2018. Wallace had a subsequent test that produced negative results and attributes the fault in the first test to the way the laboratory cut her hair.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to dismiss the complaint because the test was conducted principally for the purpose of civil/administrative litigation. Parsons seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

**5. Update on collaboration with the Standards Coordination Office at the National Institute for Standards and Technology regarding possible pathways for improving accreditation for forensic science service providers in Texas.**

Garcia gave an update collaboration with the Standards Coordination office. Staff has shared examples of laboratory self-disclosures with Warren Merkel, Chief of the Standards Coordination Office. The team is working on an outline of key issues, including an analysis of the gaps between assessment and the accreditation process.

**6. Discuss status of crime laboratory accreditation program, including:**

**a. Accreditation non-conformances received since August 16, 2019 quarterly meeting;**

Staff described accreditation reports and non-conformances received since the August 2019 meeting.

**b. Review Expertox responses to cited nonconformances;**

Staff received descriptions of the responses from Expertox to numerous CAP nonconformances considered resolved at the laboratory's last CAP assessment in 2017. The main concern Commissioners have is the nature of the recurring deficiencies, including analysts without degrees or associate degrees working without supervision. Kerrigan requested staff take a look at CAP's accreditation program, and request the agency present at the Commission's January 31, 2020 meeting. Commissioners also requested staff invite Expertox to attend the Commission's next

meeting to address the deficiencies. Members discussed that it is unclear how many cases, if any, are being used in criminal procedures but that none of the analysts at the laboratory are licensed by the Commission. Kerrigan will review all documents provided by Expertox. Commissioners directed staff to request a written response from Expertox.

**c. Discuss the Commission’s recognition of the College of American Pathologists (CAP) – Forensic Drug Testing program;**

Commissioners directed staff to invite a representative from CAP’s forensic drug testing accreditation program to answer questions about its accreditation program and respond to questions about deficiencies cited in Expertox’s last assessment. Savage mentioned that most of the laboratories accredited by CAP are also accredited by SAMHSA, another organization for which the Commission recognizes accreditation. Garcia raised the issue of whether we need to recognize CAP and SAMHSA laboratories at all if the primary purpose of the testing these laboratories conduct is not forensic analysis in criminal cases.

**d. Review outstanding accreditation rules and proposed rule concepts for approval including the rule recognizing the merger of ABFT and ANAB; and**

Staff updated members on the publication of this rule approved at the Commission’s August 16, 2019 quarterly meeting.

**e. Discussion of inquiries from companies with field drug identification tools, including Detectachem mobile phone drug identification tool, DART drug identification tool, Draeger saliva field test, and CANN-ID technology for distinguishing marijuana for hemp.**

Garcia reported on drug identification tool vendor questions received by staff. Commissioners discussed that most of the technology is intended for screening purposes only and confirmatory testing by an accredited laboratory is required by Texas law, particularly in cases involving toxicology. The Commission has the authority to exempt certain forensic analyses or tests from accreditation oversight so they can be admissible in a criminal action. Peter Stout, President of the Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (TACL D), stated the TACL D can assist in vetting the technology inquiries and will provide recommendations to the Commission.

**7. Discuss Licensing Advisory Committee, including:**

**a. Update on licenses issued;**

Staff provided an update on licenses issued. Staff has issued a total of 1281 licenses, consisting of 820 regular licenses, 19 provisional, 2 technical reviewer, and 440 blanket licenses. Staff has administered 42 exams since the Commission August 16, 2019 meeting.

**b. Update on roll-out of renewal process, including CFE reporting for licensees;**

Savage provided an update on staff's roll-out of the renewal process for licensees and how continuing forensic education is reported. Instructions for renewal of a forensic analyst or technician license are posted on the Commission's licensing page. Staff expects to renew in the next couple months about 440 blanket licenses and about 10 provisional licenses that expire December 31, 2019.

- c. Review outstanding licensing rules and proposed rule concepts for approval;**
- i. Clarifications to provisional license eligibility;**
  - ii. Specification of CFE for Technician;**
  - iii. Blanket rule revisions, including discussion of continuing forensic education requirements for blanket licensees and responses to any comments; and**

Savage reported on the publication of rules the Commission instructed staff to draft at the Commission's August 16, 2019 meeting, including: 1) clarifications to the provisional license that candidates must be employed at a Texas-accredited crime laboratory to be eligible for provisional licensure; 2) the requirement that forensic technicians complete the Commission-sponsored Mandatory Legal and Professional Responsibility course each license cycle; and 3) revisions to the blanket rule to bring the requirements more in line with what is required of in-state forensic analysts. All of the rules have a comment deadline of November 18, 2019. Members of the Commission expect to address blanket rule comments at the January 31, 2020 quarterly meeting. The Licensing Advisory Committee will meet December 6, 2019 to address all comments to the blanket rule and make recommendations to the full Commission on the appropriate level of oversight for blanket-licensed out-of-state laboratories.

Members also discussed eligibility for the General Forensic Analyst Licensing Exam and whether analysts practicing in exempt areas of forensic science such as anthropology should be eligible for the exam. Under the Commission's current rules, analysts practicing in exempt disciplines are ineligible for the exam. However, the Commission has the authority to adopt voluntary licensing rules for forensic disciplines exempt from accreditation requirements. The Commission plans to begin a voluntary licensure program with the discipline Crime Scene Reconstruction in the next year. Commissioners instructed staff to add the issue of exam eligibility to the Licensing Advisory Committee's next agenda.

- d. Review recommendation from Texas District and County Attorneys Association (TDCAA) and vote on prosecutor appointment to licensing advisory board to fill prosecutor seat.**

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Parsons moved to appoint TDCAA nominee Calli Bailey to the Commission's Licensing Advisory Committee. Kerrigan seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*



**8. Discuss proposed rule giving staff authority to dismiss complaints that are not forensic analysis and edits to the Commission's policies and procedures regarding the same.**

Savage explained that Commissioners currently have given staff authority to dismiss complaints that may be referred to the DNA Mixture Review Team, complaints related to an autopsy, and complaints where the testing at issue is not a test on physical evidence and thus not a forensic analysis under Texas law. Staff recommends expanding the rule to permit staff to dismiss complaints that are not considered forensic analysis at all under Texas law. Examples of such cases are the two civil cases the Commission reviewed during its complaint screening agenda item at today's meeting.

Staff is still required to summarize and report these complaints or inquiries each quarter, and Commissioners may raise the complaints at a meeting and request an inquiry or investigation into the matter as necessary.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Buzzini moved to expand the rule permitting staff to dismiss complaints regarding tests that are not performed on physical evidence to include complaints that are not forensic analysis under Texas law. Kerrigan seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

**9. Discuss quadrennial rule review.**

Savage explained that under the Texas Government Code Chapter 2009, administrative agencies are required to conduct a review of all rule publications to assess whether the reasons for initially adopting the rules continue to exist. Staff published notice of the rule review as required by law. No comments were received during the 30-day comment period. Staff determined the reasons for initially adopting the rules continue to exist. Staff published re-adoption of all Commission rules and the adoption is currently outstanding with a publication date of November 1, 2019.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Buzzini moved to concur with Commission staff's determination the reasons for initially adopting all Commission rules continue to exist. Kerrigan seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

**10. Update regarding Collins, Robert (DPS Houston; Forensic Biology) complaint #19.04 investigative panel.**

Vanessa Nelson, Forensic Biology Program Coordinator for the Department of Public Safety Crime Laboratory System, addressed the Commission regarding the agency's case review. Dr. Nelson has reviewed 35 cases to date and has approximately 35 additional cases to review. Nelson will report back with an update at the Commission's January 31, 2020 meeting.

**11. Update from Crime Scene Investigation Working Group.**

No update for this agenda item as the group has not met again. The group plans to meet again prior to the Commission's January 31, 2020 quarterly meeting.

**12. Review and adopt draft guidelines from statistical sampling committee.**

Garcia reported she is making final revisions in accordance with comments from commissioners received just yesterday. Garcia plans to publish the document next week.

**13. Discuss and consider recommendations regarding the FBI's Non-CODIS Rapid DNA Best Practices/Outreach and Courtroom Considerations Task Group's guidance document for law enforcement agencies implementing Rapid DNA technology.**

Garcia reported the guidelines have been published on the Commission's website. Staff will add a statement to its website posting that the Forensic Science Commission encourages agencies using the technology to follow the guidance in this document.

Texas Ranger Troy Wilson gave an update on the crime scene investigation aspect of the technology.

ANDE (manufacturer of the Rapid DNA technology) counsel addressed the Commission's questions on the technology, including implementation and training concerns.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Daniel moved to recommend Texas agencies using the technology at a minimum follow the guidance laid out in the FBI's guidance document. Kerrigan seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

**14. Discuss and adopt recommendations regarding the following OSAC Registry standards:**

- a. Materials (Trace)**
  - i. ASTM E3085-17**
  - ii. ASTM E1610-18**
  - iii. ASTM E2937-18**
  - iv. ASTM E2927-16e1**
  - v. ASTM E2926-17**
- b. Seized Drugs**
  - i. ASTM E2329-17**
  - ii. ASTM E2548-11e1**
- c. Toxicology**
  - i. ANSI/ASB Standard 017**
- d. Interdisciplinary**
  - i. ISO/IEC 17025:2017**
  - ii. ISO/IEC 17020:2012**
  - iii. ISO/IEC 17025/2005**

Peter Stout circulated standards to TACLD for comment. Not many comments were received, but TACLD expects the subsequent standards to have more comments.

Kerrigan requested staff develop a way to recognize/acknowledge laboratories that have adopted OSAC standards. Staff will work on a method for distinguishing the laboratories that have adopted these standards.

Brady Mills addressed the Commission on DPS's adoption of the standards. The DPS laboratory system is working on building the standards into its processes over time.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Kerrigan moved to adopt a recommendation to encourage voluntary adoption of all OSAC registry standards. Buzzini seconded the motion. The FSC unanimously adopted the motion.*

### **15. Update from Task Group on Analytical Methods for Marihuana Cases.**

Garcia explained the Commission should be prepared to answer questions from legislators with respect to recommendations on issues that need to be addressed legislatively, including the definition of marihuana.

Members requested staff contact Dr. Mahmoud A. Elsohly, President and Laboratory Director of Elsohly Laboratories, Inc., who has been assisting in the research and development of drug identification standards for testing in marihuana cases. Staff will reach out to Dr. Elsohly and invite him to talk to commissioners and drug chemists in Texas.

Daniel emphasized the Texas definition of marihuana is outdated and its shortcoming needs to be addressed by the group, including what the Legislature means in its definition of marihuana plant substances, derivatives, and extracts.

Parsons stated the statute providing the definition of marihuana should be updated to make it consistent with the science today, but that delving into comments on penalty groups and punishments for marihuana are more legislative policy decisions.

### **16. Update on triage projects for DNA mixture review; update on Austin Police Department cases under review by UNTHSC-CHI.**

Staff from Stacie Lieberman, Director of the Forensic Project at Capitol Area Private Defender Service's office gave an update on Travis County's review of DNA mixture cases. Staff reported receiving 500 responses from its notices, including 550 cause numbers, 450 responses from individuals requesting testing 45 cases that require clarification. 110 cases have been closed or transferred to UT innocence clinic for conflicts or other reasons. 10 cases are being prepared for writ litigation and the remainder are in some level of the review process. None have been sent to Dr. Budowle for review since December due to the timing of litigation deadlines and statute tolling rules once laboratory results are received and the staff's ability to address each case within those deadlines.

Nicholas Hughes provided an update from the Harris County Public Defenders Office Appellate Division Chief, Bob Wicoff. Wicoff is waiting on numerous calculation requests and expects final report after first of year.

Dawn Boswell, Tarrant County Conviction Integrity Unit Chief, reported on Tarrant County's DNA mixture case review. Boswell reported all amendments have been issued and reviewed. The Unit is finished with its review with its review. The Unit issued 300 notices and reviewed about 140 total cases.

**17. Discuss plans for February 2020 DNA training for criminal lawyers at Bexar County Central Jury Room.**

Garcia reported on staff plans to host a DNA training for lawyers in Bexar County to be held in late February or early March next year. Commission staff and a representative from the Bexar County District Attorney's Office are working on the curriculum and faculty for the program.

**18. Update from September 17, 2019 staff meeting with State Auditor's Office regarding the 86<sup>th</sup> Legislature's budget rider requiring the State Auditor's Office to develop a plan to evaluate and identify barriers in the processing of sexual assault kits in Texas.**

Garcia reported a staff meeting and correspondence with the State Auditor's Office to assist the Office in its mandate to develop a plan to evaluate and identify barriers in the processing of sexual assault kits in Texas. The State Auditor's Office has a full team working on the project and has been in touch with multiple stakeholders. Brady Mills reported some of the Department of Public Safety staff has been in touch with the auditor's office to assist in answering questions, including the state CODIS administrator, Gary Molina.

**19. Discuss developments with respect to kit backlog reduction and standardization efforts.**

Savage gave an update written by Downing who could not attend the Commission meeting, because she was accepting an award for being named an American Academy of Nursing Fellow. Downing reported the Texas A&M Center of Excellence in Forensic Nursing website now includes links to the updated Texas Evidence Collection Protocol and kit documentation that can be found at the following link: <https://nursing.tamhsc.edu/cefn/index.html>. In addition to the Office of Attorney General contract to develop the telehealth center for Texas, the Center of Excellence for Forensic Nursing received a \$4 million grant from the Office of Victims of Crime to plan, develop and pilot Tex-TRAC – Texas Teleforensic Remote Assistance Center. The grant provides funds to develop innovative telehealth equipment with the engineering department specific for sexual assault medical forensic exams, create an online mentoring program for ongoing education and support of rural providers, and partner with TAASA to ensure advocacy is available in those communities. The grant supplements the OAG funding to support health care providers in rural and underserved areas to provide trauma-informed, patient-centered medical forensic exams without having to transfer patients to hospitals with SANE programs. Downing also anticipates this intervention will result in improved documentation and physical evidence collection. The Center is systematically examining these outcomes with this research grant. Following is a media release on the project: <https://vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/federal-grant-to-develop-teleforensic-remote-assistance-center/>.

**20. Discussion of United States House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space & Technology September 10, 2019 hearing on forensic science and standards and October 16 CSAFE Congressional briefing.**

Garcia reported on her invited testimony before the United States House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space & Technology and on her attendance at the October 16 CSAFE Congressional briefing.

**21. Update on Raman Spectroscopy Texas State Bar working group.**

Brady Mills reported the Department of Public Safety is still in the process of procuring the instrument and waiting on delivery. Mills will report back at the Commission's January 31, 2020 meeting.

**22. Update on Rio Grande Identification Project.**

Budowle gave a brief update on the Rio Grande ID project. UNTHSC-CHI and other entities have made progress with the FBI, the government of Mexico and other governments in the northern triangle region on the ability to compare family reference samples to samples from unidentified remains.

**23. Update from Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors, including update on establishment of task group to address issues with analysts returning to testify after employment.**

Peter Stout reported the United States Congress reauthorized the Debbie Smith Act, authored by Sen. John Cornyn. The act is the key grant funding source for crime laboratories nationwide to perform DNA testing on sexual assault kits and eliminate longstanding backlogs.

**24. Report from Bitemark "thinkshop" sponsored by NIST.**

Garcia reported on her attendance and participation in CSAFE's bitemark "thinkshop".

**25. Consider proposed agenda items for next quarterly meeting.**

Staff will include all discussed items on the next quarterly meeting agenda and circulate the proposed agenda for additions.

**26. Schedule and location of future panel and quarterly meetings.**

The Commission will meet again January 31, 2020 in Austin.

**27. Hear public comment.**

No further public comments were given other than that noted throughout the agenda above.

**28. Adjourn.**