

Illinois Forensic Science Commission- Public Policy Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

August 21, 2025, 12 p.m. meeting

I. Call to order

Mr. Hanlon called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 p.m. The meeting was held via Web Ex.

II. Roll call

The following subcommittee members and staff were present:

1. Dr. Ponni Arunkumar, FS Commission Member, subcommittee member
2. Jillian Baker, FS Commission Member, subcommittee member
3. Claire Dragovich, FS Commission Member, subcommittee member
4. John Hanlon, FS Commission Member, subcommittee chairperson
5. Cris Hughes, FS Commission Member, subcommittee member
6. Carrie Ward, FS Commission Member, subcommittee member
7. Amy Watroba, Executive Director-Forensic Science Commission
8. Gina Havlik, Northeastern Illinois Regional Crime Lab
9. Amanda Shanbaum, Illinois State Police Forensic Science Center-Chicago

III. Review/Adoption of Minutes

1. The Meeting Minutes of 7/10/25 were adopted by unanimous vote.

IV. Discussion:

1. Identification and reporting of emerging drugs in Illinois
 - i. Ms. Watroba noted that the subcommittee discussed during its last meeting the option of recommending that the Commission create an ad hoc Drugs Subcommittee at the September Commission Meeting. At the Commission Meeting the subcommittee can identify the need, goals, and type of work envisioned for the Drugs Subcommittee. The Emerging Drugs Working Group falls outside of the Commission, so a Drugs Subcommittee inside the Commission would provide a forum for the Working Group to share information with other stakeholders, such as medical examiners, coroners, public health officials, and law enforcement. Via the Drugs Subcommittee, the Commission could also push out data related to emerging drugs via its website and to stakeholder groups, including those involved in legislative initiatives. The Drugs Subcommittee also could address other issues related to

controlled substances, including proposed legislative amendments to the Illinois Controlled Substances Act.

- ii. Ms. Baker inquired whether there is another group doing the type of work proposed for the Drugs Subcommittee. No one is aware of a similar group, and even if one exists, it would not preclude the Commission from working in the same space. The subcommittee discussed the possible long-term option of bringing the Emerging Drugs Working Group under the umbrella of the Commission if a change to the Open Meetings Act could be achieved legislatively. If the Working Group and Drugs Subcommittee have deliverables from the initial proposed model it likely would help support a request for such a long-term structure and exemption from the Open Meetings Act.
- iii. Mr. Hanlon inquired about the procedure for making the recommendation and Ms. Watroba noted that the Commission's enabling statute allows the Commission to create ad hoc subcommittees. The Public Policy Subcommittee could make the recommendation to the full Commission at the next Commission meeting and then the Commission will ultimately decide whether to create an ad hoc Drugs Subcommittee.
- iv. Ms. Ward voiced her approval for the creation of a Drugs Subcommittee and noted that issues related to drugs and emerging drugs often require specific subject matter expertise whereas the Public Policy Subcommittee often addresses broader policy issues. The Drugs Subcommittee could coordinate with the Public Policy Subcommittee on issues where appropriate or necessary, especially when issues arise related to legislation.
- v. The subcommittee voted unanimously via consensus vote to recommend that the Commission create an ad hoc Drugs Subcommittee. The subcommittee's recommendation is for a broader "Drugs Subcommittee" so that the new subcommittee is not limited to considering only issues related to emerging drugs.

V. Old Business

Dr. Hughes provided a brief update on the issue of securing funds for medical examiners and coroners to identify human remains. Dr. Hughes and Ms. Watroba discussed the proposed legislation from last session related to the Missing Persons Identification Act and they will check on the status of those bills. Ms. Watroba also noted her continuing efforts related to SB 1889 from last session.

She has a call with Senator Morrison later today and will continue to work towards the goal of having that bill re-introduced next session to make the changes to the DUI-Cannabis statute that the Commission already voted to recommend.

VI. New Business

Ms. Watroba noted that re-introducing SB 1889 may be timely given the recent article in Injustice Watch about THC testing at AFTL. Ms. Watroba also suggested that the Public Policy Subcommittee may consider working in tandem with the Quality Systems Subcommittee on recommendations based on what occurred at AFTL. One specific issue mentioned during a Quality Systems Subcommittee meeting that might be appropriate for Public Policy to examine is mechanisms in place in Illinois for complaints related to forensic testing; specifically, what mechanisms currently exist, how those mechanisms work, and whether there is a need for additional complaint mechanism(s). The subcommittee noted that examining how other jurisdictions handle complaints might be useful.

VII. Public Comment

Ms. Havlik and Ms. Shanbaum voiced support for creation of a Drugs Subcommittee. The Emerging Drugs Working Group has met once and has their next meeting scheduled. They are working through logistical issues. Ms. Shanbaum shared that she has been the point person for ISP on controlled substances legislation for one or two years and that it would be helpful to have a Drugs Subcommittee as a resource and forum for discussion related to such legislation.

VIII. Next Meeting/Adjournment

The next meeting will be scheduled via Doodle Poll. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:30 p.m.