

New York medical examiner blasted as 'inept' by Bronx City Council member

Democrat Maria del Carmen Arroyo fumed at acting chief examiner Barbara Sampson, but Sampson said she and her colleagues 'fully embrace the council's goal of ensuring a high level of transparency.'

BY [RYAN SIT](#) AND [DANIEL BEEKMAN](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2013, 9:30 AM



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Councilwoman Maria del Carmen Arroyo, D-Bronx, center, expressed frustration at the Office of Chief Medical Examiner on Monday.

A City Council member blasted the medical examiner as "inept" Monday for an ongoing series of mistakes.

The examiner's office has been under pressure to institute reforms since January, when it was revealed that a lab technician had potentially botched rape tests. Now the agency and the council are arguing over oversight bills.

"Everyone in this room thinks you're inept," Maria del Carmen Arroyo (D-Bronx) fumed at acting chief examiner Barbara Sampson.

"Two hearings in a row you sit here and you don't have a handle on what happened," Arroyo, chairwoman of the council's health committee, said at a hearing Monday on the bills.

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The director of the OCME's DNA laboratory and a top deputy resigned earlier this year, and another deputy was terminated. This month, an OCME worker dumped the dead body of a Bronx hit-and-run victim into a van alongside a trash bag full of recyclable bottles.

The acting chief medical examiner, Barbara Sampson, insisted she and her colleagues "fully embrace the council's goal of ensuring a high level of transparency and accountability."



Dr. Barbara Sampson, is heading up the OCME. The director of the OCME's DNA laboratory and a top deputy resigned earlier this year, and another deputy was terminated.

But Sampson testified Monday against a provision that would require the OCME to post information about its inner working on the Internet for public view.

Making certain information public could compromise forensic work and put employees at risk, Sampson and a union rep said.

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Sampson stressed that changes are being made at the OCME. The agency is close to hiring a new DNA lab director, she said.

Tim Kupferschmid until recently headed Sorenson Forensics, the outside consultant that ripped management practices at the OCME's DNA lab in a review it published May 2.

Sorenson called for a management overhaul but also recommended cross-the-board raises for staffers.

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