



National Association of Medical Examiners

Hic locus est ubi mors gaudet succurrere vitae

National Association of Medical Examiners

The National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) is the national professional organization of forensic pathologists, physician medical examiners, medical death investigators and death investigation system administrators who perform the official duties of the medico-legal investigation of deaths of public interest in the United States. NAME was founded in 1966 and currently has over 1000 members.

Organizational Achievements:

Work-force issues: NAME is concerned with the relatively static numbers of FP Fellows and Pathology residents / residencies. NAME continues in Pathology round table discussions for a multi-factorial plan to address shortfalls in pathology and forensic pathology recruitment. Some major obstacles remain in ACGME standards for small, usually single fellowship slots which are often a branch of governmental agencies, rather than academic and hospital based programs with overriding GME programs.

NAME Members and Offices are overwhelmed by the consequences of the national opiate / opioid epidemic in the US and abroad. All offices are affected; some reporting over 50% increase in cases. Drug deaths now exceed motor vehicle deaths and in many offices, firearm deaths. The demands of a smaller workforce are staggering; too few pathologists and forensic pathologists are trained to handle routine medical-legal death investigation; this crisis is compounding the situation. Toxicology laboratories are stretched to provide basic services and are challenged with standards and protocols for the ever-evolving synthetic opiates coming in large quantities from abroad.

There is proposed federal legislation creating an "Office of Forensic Pathology / Forensic Medicine / Medicolegal Death Investigation" within the CDC to balance the proposed "Office of Forensic Science" within the US Justice Department. It is NAME's strong position that medical examiners should NOT be a part of the criminal justice / law enforcement branches of government but should be represented at a public health level. Both proposed office structures would have strong medical examiner independence language.

Education and Research issues:

1. Received funding from SUDC Foundation for a study, along with the American Association of Pediatrics, for a study of sudden death in infants and children. There are unmet needs of parents and communities as well as disparities in classification and certification of these deaths. This study will be structured along lines of the highly successful opiate death investigation manuscript three years ago.
2. NAME continues active CME, CE and SAMs programs for its members. CME, CE and SAMS were offered at the NAME Annual meeting in Minneapolis, MN and recently in New Orleans, LA at the AAFS meeting and NAME Interim meeting. Partnering with ASCP, the "RISE" examination for forensic pathology fellows continues strong performance for current FP fellows.
3. Building on the success of the opiate drug death investigation paper three years ago, NAME and several organizations (Neurology, Cardiac) interested in sudden death in epileptics and sudden death in adults, are reviewing protocols and investigation of these types of death.
4. Working with the APC, PRODS and ABP for autopsy requirements during residency training. The joint task force of APC, PRODS, representative Autopsy Directors at University residency path programs and NAME have a working document for this issue.

NAME Foundation is active and financially healthy. NAME Foundation serves to promote public charitable, educational, and scientific advancement of NAME and Medicolegal death investigation. In 2016, awards were made for “Best Papers” for members and affiliates at the NAME Annual meeting.

NAME members were pleased with bylaws changes specifically addressing MOC. Once a member has achieved Fellow status in NAME with board certification, this is not in jeopardy solely if MOC is not maintained.

NAME continues to grow and thrive in its mission of promoting excellence in medical legal death investigation and to promote and enhance the role of medical examiners in society. We are a small professional society, with just over 1000 members and 1.2 staff, however, our contributions to improvement of death investigations, forensic pathology and collaborations with scientists and researchers in several areas of sudden death, trauma and mental health programs are significant, sustained and growing.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Ann Sens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "S".

Mary Ann Sens, M.D., Ph.D.

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