

IACME *news*

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Progress Report on EDRS at IACME Fall Meeting

A year ago, the Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) replaced the paper registration process. Melissa Bird of the Iowa Dept. of Public Health will speak at the IACME Fall Meeting on the challenges and value of the new system. Ms. Bird works with stakeholder groups to make EDRS efficient and accurate.

Excellent program on tap for IACME Fall Meeting & Education Expo

Timely presentations on in-custody deaths, explosions, victim identification after transportation disasters and Iowa cold cases will highlight the IACME Fall Meeting and Education Expo November 20-21 at the West Des Moines Marriott.

The IACME Fall Meeting is open to medical examiners, medical examiner investigators, law enforcement, funeral

directors, nurses, emergency medical technicians and anyone involved in death investigation. The program focuses on practical topics that help death investigators do a better job.

The registration deadline is November 7. There will be a \$25 late fee for anyone who registers after that date. October 29 is the deadline for making hotel reservations. ♦

October 29 is the deadline for reserving a room at the group rate at the WDM Marriott

Fast and easy online registration

You can register online and pay via credit card for the IACME Fall Meeting. Just go to the Fall Meeting section of the IACME web site, www.iacountyme.org. The web site also has a paper registration form you can download and print if you prefer to register and pay by mail.

IACME elections Friday, November 20

The Iowa Association of County Medical Examiners will hold annual elections on Friday evening, November 20 at a member meeting in conjunction with the 2015 IACME Fall Meeting and Education Expo.

Offices up for election on November 20 are: President (incumbent Daniel Cole, MD); Vice President (incumbent Paul Jensen, PharmD, MD); and Secretary-Treasurer (incumbent Dennis Crabb, MD).

Also up for re-election are Board seats held by Thomas Carroll, MD, Sheila Holcomb, MD and Marcus Nashelsky, MD. A fourth Board seat which has been vacant since the death of Dennis Mallory, DO is also up for election. All offices and board seats carry 2-year terms.

Also on the agenda of the November 20 Member Meeting will be a bylaws change approving the addition of a second investigator board seat. ♦

Decorated Air Force Colonel will be guest speaker at IACME Banquet

Colonel Reginald Ash, III, USAF, will be the guest speaker at the IACME Annual Banquet Friday evening, November 20 at the West Des Moines Marriott. Colonel Ash is the Commander of the 21st Mission Support Group, which is part of the 21st Space Wing at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. He is responsible for civil engineering, communications, contracting, logistics, security, personnel and services support to Peterson AFB, as well as units operating worldwide to execute their missile warning and space control missions. He has a variety of leadership experience in the Defense and State

departments. Colonel Ash is decorated with valor for leading his flight's response during the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attack on Khobar Towers, near King Abdul Aziz Air Base, Saudi Arabia in 1996. At the IACME Banquet, he will speak on *"An Air Force Perspective on Crisis Leadership."*

The IACME Program Committee, chaired by Dennis Klein, MD, has assembled an excellent lineup of expert speakers and timely topics.

In-custody deaths, an issue in the news for the past several years, will be the focus of a special presentation on Friday afternoon by Michael Graham,



Colonel Reginald Ash, III

MD. Dr. Graham is Chief Medical Examiner for the City of St. Louis and an expert in in-custody injuries. He will discuss common types of force used during law enforcement apprehension attempts and injuries likely to occur during stages of confinement.

Also on Friday, Elias Kontanis, PhD, will discuss victim recovery and identification following transportation accidents. Dr. Kontanis is coordinator of medicolegal operations for the National Transportation Safety Board's Disaster Assistance Division. Robert Carlson, a certified explosives specialist with the ATF, will discuss investigation of explosions.

Presentations on recent trends in drug abuse, investigating deaths of the elderly and Iowa cold cases will be also on the weekend agenda. For easy online registration, visit the Fall Meeting section of the IACME web site, iacountyme.org.

A Message from Our President

by Daniel Cole, MD, President, IACME

November 20 is rapidly approaching. The IACME Fall Meeting Nov. 20-21 will be one of the best meetings you can attend to advance your forensic education. What could be timelier than deaths while in custody and blast injuries with the recent "police" shootings and the seemingly daily terrorist attacks all around us. These topics and the usual camaraderie that occurs when we all get together will make the meeting a "must do" event. Please read your brochures and register for this meeting. I personally look forward to seeing the usual attendees and making new acquaintances. Hope you're having a good Fall. See you in November. ♦

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Cole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

New law requires release of preliminary medical examiner reports

Gregory Schmunk, MD, Polk County Medical Examiner and IACME Board Member, discusses a new law affecting Iowa's medical examiners and medical examiner investigators.

In its recent session, the Iowa Legislature passed SF335, and the bill has been signed by Governor Branstad. What exactly does this law require?

It requires that MEs release the preliminary report of investigation to the Iowa Donor Network. *"Preliminary reports of investigations by the medical examiner and autopsy reports for a decedent by whom an anatomical gift was made in accordance with chapter 142C shall be released to an organ procurement organization as defined in Section 142C.2, upon the request of such organ procurement organization, unless such disclosure would jeopardize an investigation or pose a clear and present danger to the public safety or the safety of an individual."*

What sparked introduction of this legislation?

I assume they wanted information on a case ASAP and were unable to get the information via normal channels of reasonable communication with some county MEs. However, I believe this law is an overreaction to a situation that could have been resolved without legislation. The medical directors of tissue processors do not need this information on day one, but it is reasonable for them to receive it days to weeks later, before a decision on usage is made, in order to ascertain transplant suitability. I also recognize that it is appropriate for certain organizations and individuals, including family members, to receive the ME1 at some time after the death, since that document has vital information available in no other arena.

How will this law affect Iowa MEs and MEIs?

The law as written requires county MEs to attempt to justify why each and every case may need to be withheld from IDN on the basis of jeopardy to the investigation or danger to the public. This is an onerous and unnecessary requirement. IDN can contact us for information on the suitability of a donor without receiving the preliminary ME1. Analysis of the law's language indicates the ME1 must be sent to IDN (upon their request) within the first few hours of the death, at which point the report may contain sensitive information which may not be verified or even factual. It is not always possible to determine in the first few hours after a death whether there is sensitive information, but the ME will need to attest to that fact in order to withhold the report.

It is clear that the intent of the law is to get the ME1 in the first few hours of the investigation. After that time, the recovery will be complete and no further decisions will be made until days or weeks later when the medical director at the tissue processor (not IDN) needs to make decisions on suitability of placement of the tissues. ♦

Iowa Association of County Medical Examiners

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