



# 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: Advances were made in 2014 to (1) participate in Federal and national forensic initiatives, the National Commission on Forensic Science. Evolving from the NAS 2009 report on Forensic Science, a challenge remains to define and maintain forensic pathology (as well as other medical forensic specialties) as the practice of medicine. Additional activities included continuing workforce issues, support of members and systems with individual legislative challenges and to advance knowledge of forensic pathology, medicine and forensic sciences.

### 1. Updates from 2014 initiatives:

- a. Tara Snethen of the ASIP continues as our meeting manager; our 2014 meeting in Portland, OR was extremely successful and the first model where the program chair and planner was not from the host city.
- b. NAME Facility and Accreditation / Inspection: The voluntary I&A program for forensic systems continues to improve and expand. Over 77 offices are accredited and over 30 in process of accreditation and review. The NAME I&A program has also served as consultants for improvement of existing systems. Studies are underway to become or partner with an organization to achieve ISO standards for the accreditation program.

### 2. Seminal presentation at AAFS by Andy Baker, Chief Medical Examiner of Hennepin County in the Plenary Session on Cognitive Bias with a presentation entitled “ **History, cognitive bias, incompetence, and corruption are not the same things**”

### 3. 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.

### 4. Education and Research issues:

- a. NAME continues active CME, CE and SAMs programs for its members. CME, CE and SAMS were offered at the NAME Annual meeting in Portland, OR where a record attendance at a modified meeting structure was successful. Partnering with ASCP, the “RISE” examination for forensic pathology fellows continues strong performance for current FP fellows.
- b. NAME continues support and increases involvement with scientists and researchers in several areas of sudden and unexpected death including SIDS, SUDI, SUDC and SUDEP.
- c. Publication of co-sponsored and researched “Opiate drug death investigation, classification and certification standards should improve accuracy of death investigations in this rising epidemic of opiate drug and prescription drug deaths.

5. 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 2013, awards were made for "Best Papers" for members and affiliates at the NAME Annual meeting.
6. Amicus briefs: NAME was asked and is providing several amicus briefs for various judicial appeals in basic issues for forensic pathology and medicolegal death investigation systems.

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 that reads "Mary Ann Sens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

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