



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 2015 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. 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**”
 - a. Continued pressure to treat forensic pathology more as a “forensic science”, questioning medical history and professional interpretation in forensic pathology. Some advocate “sequential unmasking”, that is blinding the pathologist to most historical, medical and scene information prior to and during an autopsy. We continue to advocate that forensic pathology is the practice of MEDICINE and hence it is imperative to know historical, scene and medical information prior to an autopsy.
 - b. Continued participate in many forensic related federal committees.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

5. 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.
6. Appointment of a new Executive Vice President (January 1, 2016): Dr. Mary Ann Sens was selected to be the EVP of NAME, following Kurt Nolte, who held this position for seven years. Dr. Nolte is now Chief Medical Investigator for New Mexico. Dr. Sens brings a wealth of experience to NAME from an academic and rural practice perspective.

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 "M. Sens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

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

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