



The Examiner

<http://www.wcmea.com>

Spring

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Professionalism. Whether you are an EMT, a law enforcement officer, or a physician, it is the yardstick by which we are measured. The concept of professionalism has multiple meanings, but the basic idea is the same: it is the skill, competence, or standards expected of a member of a profession. We adopt our ideas of professionalism from a variety of sources. Most of us became MLDIs by way of a previous job in the medical or criminal justice fields, and we brought our views of professionalism with us when we became death investigators. But how do we maintain and enhance our professionalism in this field when every C/ME office has different policies, resources, and budgets? The answer is we must each take personal responsibility for our own professional measurements, and the WCMEA is here to help.

Skill in any field is a product of the training we receive. Skills are the tasks we are asked to perform in the course of our duties and encompass everything from our field investigations to report writing. Are you taking advantage of the training available to you? Whether you are new to the field or a 30-year veteran, the WCMEA offers many opportunities to update your training and learn new skills. The Association offers two annual conferences each year with local, regional, and national speakers and hands-on training opportunities. Members have the opportunity each year to win one of two \$600 scholarships for continuing MLDI education. Our newsletter provides informative articles on a variety of subjects and a venue for us to share our knowledge. The WCMEA website includes articles, guidelines, policies, and training opportunities. We are constantly looking for ways to provide free and low-cost training to enhance the knowledge and skills of our members.

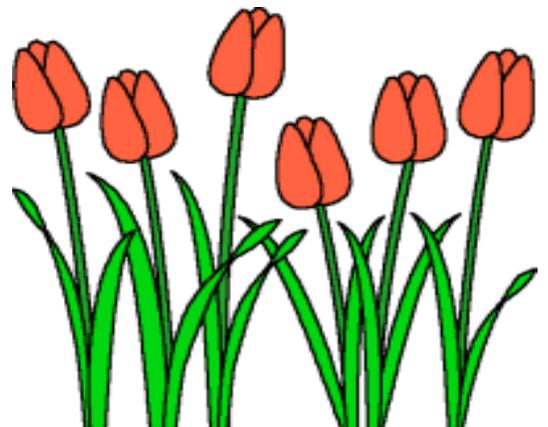
Competence is the measurement of our skill and knowledge in its application. In other words – are you good at what you do? We take pride in our work and helping the families we serve, but how is that objectively measured? The WCMEA promotes certification through the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators by providing convenient opportunities for testing in

conjunction with our conferences. Do you have expertise in a specific area of death investigation? Demonstrate your competence by presenting your topic at one of our conferences or write an article for the newsletter.

Standards are guidelines, definitions, or rules, approved and monitored for compliance by an authoritative agency or professional body as a minimum acceptable benchmark to measure quality, safety or performance. Do you have operational guidelines in your office that provide a standard for competent services? The WCMEA has guidelines available for free on our website. WCMEA membership tells others that you are part of a professional association dedicated to promoting standards of practice in Wisconsin, and that you support the ideas and traditions that will shape the future of our profession.

In the end, it is up to each of us to promote our professionalism as individuals and as a group. Our skills, competence, and standards say that we care about what we do and how it gets done. The WCMEA shares and supports your professional goals. If you are not a current member, join today and take advantage of the opportunities available to you. When the professional yardstick is applied to you, how will you measure up?

Respectfully,
Jenifer Keach, President



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Burnout: Recognition and Prevention

We work in a field with enormous stress – and potential for burnout. The tragedy and grief, the workload of a busy office, even the lack of sleep and missed meals take a toll. Each of us copes with the stress in our own way – with differing results. Poor coping can lead to burnout. There are things we can do to reduce our stress and prevent burnout. What is the difference between stress and burnout? How do we recognize and prevent burnout from happening to us?

In general, stress is caused by too many pressures that demand too much of us physically and psychologically. Stress causes us to overreact emotionally, feel anxious, unable to sleep, and can cause physical illness. Our work, lifestyle, family and personality traits can cause stress. But we can cope with it, and feel like we can get things under control eventually. We feel like we have support, hope, and options.

Burnout occurs when our unrelenting and prolonged stress leaves us feeling like we don't have anything left to give. We can't cope and can't muster the energy to care. The signs and symptoms of burnout include depression and withdrawal, absenteeism, using drugs or alcohol to cope, negative attitude, feeling exhausted most of the time, feelings of failure and hopelessness, significant decline in work performance, and lashing out at others. The symptoms are present consistently over time – not just a bad day – and don't seem to be getting better.

Burnout is a gradual process and gets worse as time goes on. We might make excuses and deny there is a problem, but that can lead to a major breakdown. Divorce, suicide attempts, legal problems, major health issues, and job loss are just some of the possible outcomes of burnout. It is preventable. We can take steps to find balance and reduce the stress in our lives. Burnout prevention tips:

- Exercise to produce feel-good endorphins.
- Make a real effort to eat right and get enough sleep.
- Say no to more demands on your time and energy.
- Unplug from the technology.
- Take up a hobby that has nothing to do with work.
- Make time to relax and recharge.
- Spend time with friends and family.
- Soothe the soul with something that inspires you.
- Change your job or take time off.
- Ask for help when you need it.



If you think you might already be burned out, don't ignore it. Seek professional help to protect your physical and emotional health.

Sources:

American Psychological Association (apa.org), HelpGuide.org, Stressdoc.com

Submitted by Jenifer Keach, Rock County Coroner and WCMEA President

Put a Spring in Your Step for Spring Awareness 2010

With warmer temperatures and an abundance of sunshine, our cabin fever soon turns to spring fever. As we say goodbye to another Wisconsin winter, we can put our case of spring fever to good use. April and May are awareness months for many worthy causes, so why not participate in a local run, walk, or bike ride to show your support. Get outside, get moving, and get giving!! Listed below are just a few of the important causes highlighted nationally over the next two months.

April is . . .

Stress Awareness Month
National Child Abuse Prevention Month
Alcohol Awareness Month
Earth Day, April 22, 2010
SIDS Awareness Day, April 23, 2010

May is...

Mental Health Awareness Month
Stroke Awareness Month
Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month
Armed Forces Day, May 15, 2010



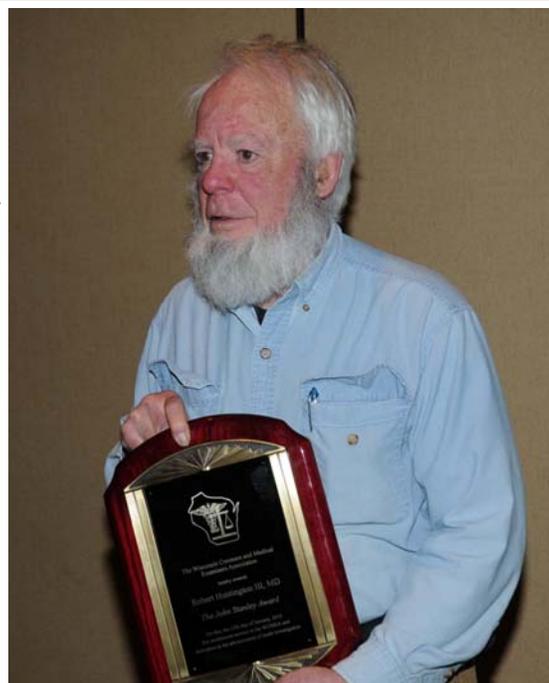
The John Stanley Award

For the first time, a special award was presented at the 2010 Winter Conference . . . the John Stanley Award. This award was created in memoriam of the late John Stanley and is the highest honor bestowed by the WCMEA. It is meant to recognize an individual or organization for their extraordinary contributions to the field of medicolegal death investigation. Dr. Robert Huntington was acknowledged for his long career as a forensic pathologist and his contributions. Congratulations on your hard work and dedication to the field Dr. Huntington!

According to Jon Hagen, WCMEA secretary, the John Stanley Award will not be given out annually, but as the need arises. The intent is to recognize those that consistently go above and beyond. Though it is still in the developing stages, nominations are always welcome.

For more information, or to offer a nomination, please contact Jon Hagen at jonhagen@aol.com.

Pictured at right: Dr. Robert Huntington



The New Wisconsin Tissue Bank

On February 1, 2010, BloodCenter of Wisconsin became the home of the Wisconsin Donor Network (WDN) and the Wisconsin Tissue Bank (WTB). Bringing WDN and WTB under the umbrella of BloodCenter of Wisconsin will significantly benefit the community, helping grow the number of organ and tissue donations in Wisconsin. BloodCenter has been serving Wisconsin by providing life-saving blood products to community hospitals throughout the state since 1947. There will be no changes in service to any of the hospitals or medical examiner and coroner offices that currently work with WDN and/or WTB. The organ and tissue donation referral and recovery processes will remain the same. The WCMEA has always shown great leadership in helping Wisconsin's community-wide effort of organ and tissue donation. We look forward to even greater success of saving lives and caring for families, along with your members, at their time of greatest loss. Please update your records with our new contact information: 9000 West Chester Street Milwaukee, WI 53214 and phone number (414) 937-6999 or toll free (800) 722-8230. Additionally, to refer a potential donor, please call (888) 278-0556 to speak with a coordinator.

Submitted by Rebecca Quall, Tissue Recovery Coordinator

**Wisconsin Tissue Bank
Medical Examiner/Coroner
Death Referral Process
1-888-278-0556**

To provide every family possible the option for donation, please refer all deaths within the following guidelines to the Wisconsin Tissue Bank. Staff is available 24 hours a day to assist you. Timing is essential to coordinate the donor screening and begin the recovery within the designated recovery time.

CRITERIA	
Age	Age limits change frequently, please refer all deaths which meet the criteria below.
Time After Death To Begin Recovery	All bone and tissue recovery must commence within a 24 hour period from the time of cardiac arrest or Last Seen Alive, provided the donor has been cooled within 12 hours of death. In the instance where the donor has not been cooled, all procedures must commence within 15 hours of cardiac arrest or last seen alive.
Absolute Rule Outs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HIV 2. Cancer with metastases 3. Hepatitis B & C 4. Leukemia b. Known IV Drug Abuse

Spring 2010.....Interesting cases handled by Wisconsin's death investigators....

- In Iowa County, a 27-year-old male who had co-starred in the ABC show "Boston Legal" was found dead outside of his wrecked Jeep; the vehicle had left the roadway, went down a steep embankment and hit some trees. Justin Mentell was not wearing a seatbelt.
- The DOT reported that January 2010 recorded only 21 traffic fatalities statewide, the lowest since 1943.
- In Milwaukee County, an 18-year-old male was sentenced to 8 years in prison for homicide by intoxicated use of a motor vehicle. The man hit and killed a 16-year-old pedestrian and struck another person, causing injury.
- In Calumet County, a 60-year-old man died when his pick-up truck left an icy roadway and struck a tree.
- In Outagamie County, a 17-year-old female was killed when another vehicle lost control on an icy road and struck her vehicle. She was dead at the scene.
- In Sheboygan County, a 25-year-old man has been charged with stealing the ashes of his stillborn child during an argument with the child's mother.
- In Lincoln County, a 19-year-old male who was convicted of killing a 25-year-old female who was working at a convenience store in 2008, has now asked a judge to withdraw his guilty plea. The man had been convicted of first-degree intentional homicide and armed robbery.
- In Rock County, a now 51-year-old man who had been convicted as a sex offender was found guilty of strangling and stabbing three people in January 2007. The man killed a 38-year-old woman, her 17-year-old daughter and her 14-year-old son.
- In Dane County, a 22-year-old female UW student died of bacterial meningitis.
- In Milwaukee County, a 39-year-old man was shot to death, allegedly by his cousin as they argued over money.
- In Milwaukee County, an 18-year-old man went to trial in the homicide death of a 21-year-old male college student. The victim was shot when he told the shooter that he didn't have any money during a robbery attempt. The 18-year-old shot another person 12 hours later; that person survived.
- The Wisconsin Appeals Court ruled that the dying words of a gunshot victim can be used to prosecute the man accused of shooting him in 2006 in Milwaukee. The dying man told responders that "Marvin" had shot him.
- In Milwaukee County, a 19-year-old man was shot to death in an alley. Two suspects were taken into custody.
- In Fond du Lac County, a 21-year-old man died when the car he was driving went out of control on a patch of ice and he hit another vehicle.
- In Marathon County, a 44-year-old man was charged with heroin distribution after a woman died of an overdose at a domestic abuse shelter.
- In Forest County, a 65-year-old man died when his snowmobile crashed into a tree.
- In Eau Claire County, a 44-year-old man pled not guilty to killing his 43-year-old girlfriend. She was missing for several days before her body was found in the woods in Adams County.
- In Vilas County, a 26-year-old man was killed after his snowmobile struck a tree.
- In Milwaukee, a double homicide occurred involving a man and a woman. They were allegedly shot to death by their 34 year-old son.
- In Green Lake County, a 45-year-old man died when the truck he was driving broke through the ice on the Fox River.
- In Madison, Rep. Amy Sue Vruwink has introduced a bill that would limit public access to recordings made on 911 calls. She drafted the measure at the request of the family of a UW-Madison student who was murdered in 2008. That case drew attention when the media learned that a dispatcher hung up on the student. Police were never sent despite sounds of a struggle when the call was placed.
- In Washington County, a 78-year-old man was killed when he became pinned between a building and the front-end loader he was using to plow snow.
- In Franklin, a 50-year-old man was found dead in a house fire.

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- In Dane County, a 40-year-old woman was sentenced to 3 years in prison for child neglect. Her 3-year-old granddaughter died after ingesting OxyContin.
- In Milwaukee County, a 3-month-old girl died. The child was co-sleeping with her mother and a two-year-old sibling.
- In Marinette County, a 40-year-old man pled guilty to five counts of homicide by intoxicated use of a motor vehicle. He was sentenced to 25 years in prison. He struck another vehicle, killing a 44-year-old man and his four children, ages 19, 16, 15 and 12.
- In Washington County, a 37-year-old man accused of strangling his stepson with a necktie in a Wal-Mart parking lot pled insanity. Police believe the man killed the boy as revenge to the boy's mother. She called police after the 37-year-old man attacked her with a hammer.
- In Milwaukee County, a 73-year-old man collapsed and died after shoveling snow.
- In Brown County, a 37-year-old man who returned to Mexico after a 1993 murder in Green Bay was sentenced to 22 years in prison for his role in the homicide of a 26-year-old male, who was stabbed to death. The man was arrested in Mississippi after a traffic stop.
- In Marathon County, a 31-year-old man died a few days after being scalded by hot liquid that was being used to strip paint in a factory.
- In Milwaukee, a clump of hair yanked from a man accused of killing two men outside a tavern is being analyzed for DNA. The men were 47 and 20 years old.
- In Sauk County, a 50-year-old man died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound after a two-hour police standoff. He had shot another man, 29, in the head, critically wounded him, before taking his own life.
- In Washington County, a 60-year-old man died in a three-vehicle crash. The car he was driving crossed the centerline and hit a SUV.
- In Oconto County, a 44-year-old man died when he lost control of his vehicle. He was ejected when the vehicle rolled over.
- In Rock County, a 13-year-old boy died of an overdose of OxyContin, allegedly given to him by a friend at school.
- In Manitowoc County, a 46-year-old woman was taken into custody after a man of the same age was found dead after using Fentanyl patches. It is likely that he chewed the patches. The woman allegedly provided the patches to the man.
- In Calumet County, an 85-year-old man died after falling into Lake Winnebago on the opening day of sturgeon spearing season. The death was ruled due to drowning. On the same day, a man speared the largest sturgeon ever taken in Wisconsin, weighing 212 pounds and measuring 84" long.
- In Milwaukee County, a 79-year-old woman died after being struck by a car in Greenfield.
- In Milwaukee County, a 22-year-old man who was shot by a security guard while robbing a check-cashing business last year, was convicted of felony murder in connection with the death of his cousin, who also was shot by the security guard during the robbery. Prosecutors determined that the guard's actions were justified and charges were not filed against him.
- In Milwaukee County, a 21-year-old man fired shots at a day care where his girlfriend worked. He later shot his girlfriend's sister and killed himself as police tried to arrest him. The woman was critically injured.
- In Dane County, a 16-year-old girl died of bacterial meningitis.
- In LaCrosse, a 21-year-old college student drowned after falling into the Mississippi River, again fueling rumors of a serial killer who preys on intoxicated men. The death was the 9th since July 1997. The blood-alcohol levels on those people ranged from 0.20-0.42. This man's blood-alcohol level was reported to be 0.28.
- In Washington County, a 47-year-old man died after he went around two vehicles stopped at a railroad crossing and his van was struck by a train. The death was ruled a suicide.
- In Milwaukee County, a 61-year-old worker died when an 8x10' piece of steel, weighing two tons, fell from an overhead lift hoist and struck him.
- In Green Lake County, a 31-year-old man died after the snowmobile he was driving hit an ice shanty. He was the 19th snowmobile fatality this season in Wisconsin.
- In Winnebago County, a 16-year-old girl died after the Jeep she was riding in lost control, crossed the median and struck another vehicle.

The 2010 Winter Conference

The annual WCMEA Winter Conference took place in beautiful Wausau January 11-13, 2010 at the Grand Lodge by Stony Creek. Approximately 74 people were in attendance. Presenters included Al Klimek, Peggy Peterson, Dr. Michael Stier, Dr. Brian Peterson, Dr. Mark Witeck, and Marc Playman among several others. Topics ranged from determining time of death and toxicology interpretations to scene photography and conservation, report writing, and accident reconstruction. All in all, a successful run.



Al Klimek



Dr. Brian Peterson and Dr. Michael Stier



Dr. Mark Witeck

The WCMEA would like to express its gratitude to the staff at the Grand Lodge by Stony Creek for their hospitality and to all of the vendors and presenters for their time and expertise. Special thanks also to John Larson and the Marathon County Medical Examiners Office for hosting the conference.

Training Opportunities

The next ABMDI test sitting will be arranged for the June WCMEA conference. Dates for the June conference are June 7-9, 2010. This will give you time for those of you interested in sitting for the exam, to complete your skills and the needed paperwork. Information for the completion of your pretest will be provided at the January WCMEA conference. Completion of the pre-test requirements takes time and must be completed before you sit for the test. Any questions please contact Angela Hinze at angela.hinze@co.columbia.wi.us or <http://medschool.slu.edu/abmdi>

National Association of Medical Examiners 44th Annual Meeting, Renaissance Cleveland Hotel in Cleveland, OH. October 1-6, 2010. For more information contact: Mary Fran Ernst (314) 422-6846 or ernstmf@slu.edu

W.A.H.I. 2010 Annual Training Seminar—Career Survival April 21-23, 2010, Hotel Mead, Wisconsin Rapids, WI. For further information go to: www.wi-homicide.org

Cyril H. Wecht Institute of Forensic Science and Law 10th Annual Conference - Cause and Manner of Death. November 19–20, 2010
Hosted by The Cyril H. Wecht Institute of Forensic Science and Law. To be held at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. Contact: wechtinstitute@duq.edu (412) 396-1330 www.duq.edu/forensics

Medicolegal Death Investigator Training Course, April 26-30, 2010
Sponsored by Saint Louis University School of Medicine, Division of Forensic Pathology. To be held in St. Louis, MO.
CONTACT: Mary Fran Ernst or Julie Howe, Saint Louis University School of Medicine, (314) 977-5970

Child Fatality Investigations, July 19-23, 2010
Fox Valley Technical College, Appleton, Wisconsin
www.fvtc.edu/childprotectctraining
Phone: 800-648-4966

Outdoor Recovery Course, June 7-11, 2010
To be held at the Forensic Anthropology Center, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN. CONTACT: Rebecca J. Wilson
250 South Stadium Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996-0720
fac@utk.edu

Medicolegal Investigation of Death sponsored by Wayne State University School of Medicine. April 21-23, 2010 at The Dearborn Inn, Dearborn, Michigan. The course fee is \$475. For registration information, call, write or send a fax to the Wayne State University School of Medicine, Division of Continuing Medical Education, 101 E. Alexandrine, Garden Level, Detroit, MI 48201. Telephone (313) 577-1180
Or e-mail dcme@med.wayne.edu

Waukesha County Welcomes New Associate Medical Examiner

Dr. Zelda Okia, a native of Uganda, recently joined forces with Dr. Lynda Biedrzycki in Waukesha County to serve as the Associate Medical Examiner. She was a general surgical pathologist for North Shore Pathologists and provided pathology services for Columbia-St. Mary's Hospitals in Milwaukee and Mequon. Dr. Okia had been with that group for eight years before completing her forensic training at the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office. She began her Waukesha post in November 2009, with the hope that the small office atmosphere and moderate caseload would be the perfect fit.

Okia is one of five children. She was born in Uganda, and moved to the United States with her family at the age of five. After moving around a bit, she and her family decided to make Montgomery, Alabama, their new home. As Dr. Okia transitioned from young girl to young woman, her interests led her to Oberlin College in Ohio where she went on to obtain her undergraduate degree. She chose the University of Wisconsin- Madison for medical school and received her degree in 1995. After completing her pathology residency and fellowship out of state, Dr. Okia returned to Wisconsin, where she now calls home.

Through the years, Dr. Okia has managed to keep herself busy, but remains grounded. She is the secretary of the Cream City Medical Society, which is a local branch of the National Medical Association. She has strong faith, and is very active in her Milwaukee church. Dr. Okia is also a member of the Ebony Ice Ski Club, a non-profit organization to promote skiing and other winter sports to youth of color. She is truly a woman of many talents.

On behalf of the WCMEA and the Waukesha County Medical Examiner's Office, congratulations and best wishes to Dr. Okia on her new position.

National Updates....Spring 2010

- Former child actor Corey Haim, 38, died at his California residence. Toxicology results are pending.
- In Dallas, Texas, a 32-year-old man died after completing a half marathon.
- In San Diego, a man committed suicide by jumping from a parking structure.
- In Oklahoma, two elementary school children have died from meningitis.
- In October 2009, a helicopter crashed in Oklahoma killing the pilot and passenger. Toxicology results revealed the pilot had methamphetamine and a painkiller in his system.
- In Chicago, a 31-year-old male died after being tasered by police.
- In Hilton Head, South Carolina, a man was killed when an airplane attempted to make an emergency landing on the beach where the man was exercising.
- In Illinois, a 26-year-old man died. He was chased by police and jumped into a river in an attempt to flee the officers. He was pulled from the river and died later on at a hospital.
- In Texas, a 9-year-old boy's death was ruled suicide.
- In Iowa, a 40-year-old man died. He had been working underneath a vehicle when the jack gave way, trapping him underneath. He was pronounced dead at the scene.
- In Oklahoma, a 23-year-old male died of blunt force trauma. He had participated in a Toughman contest three days before his death. His death was ruled accidental.
- In San Francisco, a 28-year-old woman, fell off a ferry in the San Francisco Bay and drowned.
- In Phoenix, Arizona, six people were killed. They were traveling on a bus, when the bus hit a pick-up truck, swerved and overturned.
- In Texas, a man deliberately piloted his plane into an IRS building, killing himself and an IRS employee who was in the building at the time of the incident.
- In North Carolina, an 87-year-old female's death was found to be natural. She was found deceased in her daughter's home. She had died several months prior to being found in her daughter's home.

Patrice Plungis & Jennifer Schroeter
Waukesha ME's Office
515 W. Moreland Boulevard
Waukesha, WI 53188
(262) 548-7575

Time to Spring Into Action!!

The Examiner is looking for interesting case investigations, as well as special WCMEA members to highlight in the summer publication.

Please forward any case reports or personal entries by May 28, 2010 to:

Patrice Plungis or Jennifer Schroeter
Waukesha County Medical Examiner's Office
515 W. Moreland Boulevard
Waukesha, WI 53188

pplungis@waukeshacounty.gov or jschroeter@waukeshacounty.gov

