

# **WISCONSIN CORONERS AND MEDICAL EXAMINERS ASSOCIATION**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **ARTICLE I**

#### **NAME AND MISSION**

SECTION 1 This organization shall be known as the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association.

SECTION 2 The mission of the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association:

To establish and promote standardized professional practices for Wisconsin Coroners, Medical Examiners, and their staff.

To provide and support education for all Coroners, Medical Examiners, and death investigators in order to promote competence and professionalism.

To draft and advance legislation which facilitates standardized professional practice and administration of the office of Coroner and Medical Examiner throughout the state of Wisconsin for the sake of public health and safety, and to deter any legislation that is detrimental to this mission or Association.

SECTION 3 Permission for use of the "Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association" name or logo for any accreditation, advertisement, or endorsement activity will be determined by the Board of Directors. Any fee for or restrictions on such accreditation, advertisement, or endorsement activities will also be determined by the Board.

### **ARTICLE II**

#### **OFFICERS AND THE BOARD**

SECTION 1 The officers of this Association will consist of: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Sergeant-At-Arms, and Past President .

SECTION 2 All officers, with the exception of the Past-President, will be elected by the membership of the Association.

The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the President and shall consist of three active members in good standing, which shall include any Past-President, any Trustee and any member-at-large.

SECTION 3 Officers shall serve for a term of one year commencing at the closure of the annual conference at which they are elected. Any officer may be re-elected to the office if the general membership so desires.

SECTION 4 The Association shall have a Board of Directors. This Board shall be comprised of eleven members and consist of: the President, the 1st Vice President, the 2nd Vice President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Sergeant-At-Arms, the Past President, a Member-at-Large, and three Trustees.

The term of each Trustee will be three years in duration with one term (the One Year Trustee's term) expiring every year, requiring the election of a Three Year Trustee at each annual meeting.

The Member-At-Large shall be appointed by the President.

The Past President position will be automatically filled by the immediate past president. If the immediate Past President cannot serve, the President shall appoint a former Past President of the Association. If no past President is available to serve, the President may then appoint a replacement from past officers of the Board, or a member-at-large if no candidates are available from past officers.

Any unexpected vacancy in any of the other officer positions on the Board of Directors may be filled by the President of the Association with a simple majority approval of the remaining Board members.

A special meeting may be called by the President to facilitate the filling of vacant officer positions, although the approval of the Board Members may be expressed through written or electronic means. To maintain a position on the Board of Directors, a Board Member must be a member in good standing.

SECTION 5 The Board of Directors shall handle all affairs of the Association between annual meetings, including but not limited to: legislative matters, financial matters, ethics matters, public relations, delegation of Association business/work to be done, and consideration of all general matters which affect the Association.

The Board shall report its decisions, actions, ideas and concerns to the general membership at the annual meeting.

Seven Board members are required for a quorum. For the purpose of attaining quorum, Board members may be considered present to discuss matters and vote by direct electronic communications with the Board in session.

The Board of Directors will meet quarterly at a place and time designated by the President. One Board of Directors meeting shall be held at the Annual Association Meeting. All Board of Directors meetings shall be open to members in good standing and invited guests at the discretion of the board.

Minutes of Board meetings are to be made available to the membership within two weeks after a Board meeting by the Secretary.

**SECTION 6** Board members may have no more than two excused absences from Board meetings annually to remain on the Board of Directors. Any unexcused absence or a third excused absence will be considered a vacancy in that seat, requiring immediate appointment of a replacement by the President.

**SECTION 7** Members of the Board shall be reimbursed from the Association treasury for necessary travel expenses (lodging, mileage and meals at the state rate) as approved by the president or determined by the Board.

**SECTION 8** The Association may approve or reject any action of the Board at its discretion by a majority vote at the annual meeting.

### ARTICLE III

#### **OFFICERS' DUTIES**

**SECTION 1** The President shall preside over all Association and Board Meetings, establish and appoint committees, and represent the Association in all matters of public affairs.

- SECTION 2 The 1st Vice President (or educational V.P.) shall assume the duties of President in the absence of the President or if the President vacates the office prior to the end of his/her term. The 1st V.P. shall be responsible for organizing the educational aspects of the seminars of the Association and for coordinating educational opportunities with other state agencies or organizations as deemed by the Board.
- SECTION 3 The 2nd Vice President (or administrative V.P.) shall assume the duties of the 1st V.P. should the 1<sup>st</sup> V.P. vacate the office or be removed from office prior to the end of his/her term. The 2nd Vice President shall assume responsibility for Membership issues, including the maintenance of all membership records.
- SECTION 4 The Secretary shall record the proceedings of all Board of Directors meetings and Annual Meetings of the Association, and maintain a written record of these proceedings. The Secretary shall receive and distribute communications as directed by the Board. Upon completion of the Annual Meeting, the Secretary shall compile, organize and preserve all reports, records, communications, membership lists, accounting records, and any other documents deemed important by the Board. This shall be transferred to electronic format and preserved in the records of the Secretary indefinitely. A duplicate copy of these records shall be provided to another Board member.
- SECTION 5 The Treasurer shall preserve and maintain accurate records of all Association financial transactions. A quarterly written summary of all financial transactions and financial status will be provided at the Board of Director's meetings. A detailed report will be provided at the Board's request. The Treasurer shall receive all monies from dues and other sources for the Association and the monies shall be placed into checking and/or savings accounts in the name of the Association. The Treasurer shall make all financial disbursements as directed by the Board.
- SECTION 6 The Sergeant-At-Arms shall maintain order during all meetings of the Board and the Association and shall serve as a parliamentary resource to the Board during meetings. The Sergeant-At-Arms shall also assume the responsibility for Association merchandising, including the sales, ordering and maintenance of inventory of all merchandise. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall provide an annual written report of merchandise and inventory to the Board.

SECTION 7 All officers shall provide a report of their official activities to the board at each meeting.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

SECTION 1. The Association membership shall be divided into four statuses: Active, Continuing, Associate and Honorary.

SECTION 2 Active Membership shall be open for duly elected or appointed Coroners, Deputy Coroners, Medical Examiners, Deputy Medical Examiners and Medical Examiner Investigators.

SECTION 3 Continuing Membership shall be open for Past Coroners, Past Deputy Coroners, Past Medical Examiners, Past Deputy Medical Examiners and Past Medical Examiner Investigators, provided that said persons held Association membership during their term of office.

SECTION 4 Active and Continuing members whose dues are current, as evidenced by the Treasurer's record, shall have the right to vote on Association matters, and may attend all Association Meetings. Continuing members may not hold Office or serve on the Board of Directors.

SECTION 5 Associate membership shall be open to persons that have a an active or retired professional relationship with medicolegal death investigations to include C/ME secretarial and support staff, as well as Funeral Directors, Law Enforcement Agents, Vital Records personnel, Physicians, Nurses, EMS/Paramedics, Sudden Infant Death Center personnel, Organ/Tissue Procurement agencies personnel and other individuals as determined by the Board. Dues for Associate members will be determined by the Board of Directors. Associate members may not hold office or serve on the Board of Directors.

SECTION 6 Eligibility for an election to Honorary Membership shall be determined by the Board of Directors. The qualifications shall consist of having performed notable service to the public or to this Association.

SECTION 7 Honorary members will pay no dues. Honorary members are encouraged to attend Association Meetings; however, they will

have no voting privileges. Honorary members may not hold office or serve on the Board of Directors.

SECTION 8 The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President will be charged with the responsibility of notifying all newly elected or appointed Coroners, all newly appointed Medical Examiners, and all newly hired death investigators of their eligibility for membership in the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association upon notification by the Vital Records office.

SECTION 9 There will be no initiation fee for membership in the Association.

SECTION 10 The annual dues for active membership shall be determined at the annual membership meeting by a majority vote of active members. Any changes in the amount of annual dues shall be included in the meeting notice.

SECTION 11 Membership dues are payable by June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and shall cover all membership rights and privileges from June 1<sup>st</sup> of that year to May 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.

SECTION 12 A member in good standing shall be defined as a qualified member of the Association whose membership dues are paid and who is not the subject of an active investigation by the ethics committee for ethics violations.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **ELECTIONS**

SECTION 1 All officer positions will be filled by Active members in good standing by the Membership of the Association. It is the intent of the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association to provide all Active members the opportunity to cast their votes on the leadership of the Association. In order to provide such an opportunity to the voting membership, the following procedure will be followed:

- A. At the quarterly Board of Directors meeting, which is held 2 quarters (6 months) prior to the election, the sitting President of the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association will announce his or her appointments to the 3-member Nominating Committee as well as all deadlines for the subsequent voting process.

- B. The Nominating Committee will meet in person, via teleconference, or via e-mail to discuss and decide upon the recommended nominations for the offices of President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Sergeant at Arms and the three-year trustee. The Nominating Committee will ensure the nominees' willingness to accept the nominations.
- C. Within 30 days of the Board of Directors meeting referred to in Article V, Section 1A, the Secretary will make notice to the general membership via website and Association-wide e-mail that nominations for the elected offices are open. A deadline set by the President at the aforementioned Board of Directors meeting will be included in this announcement and will stand as the date and time that the nomination process will close.
- D. All nominations from the general membership must be made in writing to the Secretary of the Association and must include the date, the name of the nominee, and the county from which that nominee works. Any member of the Association may nominate an Active member for an elected office.
- E. Prior to the next quarterly Board of Directors meeting (3 months prior to the annual business meeting), the Secretary will confirm the willingness of nominees to accept their nomination.
- F. Prior to 2 weeks before the next quarterly Board of Directors meeting (3 months before the annual business meeting), the Nominating Committee will submit their list of nominations to the Secretary of the Association.
- G. The Secretary of the Association will generate a list of all nominees for presentation at the Board of Directors meeting. At this Board of Directors meeting, the 2nd Vice President will confirm that all nominees are Active members, and the Association Treasurer will confirm that all nominees are members in good standing. The President of the Association will confirm that there are no ethics violations or active ethics investigations involving the nominees.
- H. Following the Board of Directors meeting, the Secretary will publish a ballot of all nominees, with the nominations of the Nominating Committee notated first in each category on the ballot. The announcement of the nominees will be made on the website and by Association-wide e-mail, as well as in the newsletter. In the same announcement, the deadline for receipt of absentee ballots will be clearly noted.

- I. In the Secretary's announcement, the process for submitting an absentee ballot will be clearly indicated and will consist of the following:
  1. Prior to the date and time of the deadline for submitting an absentee ballot, the voter must print off a copy of the ballot.
  2. The voter will fill out the ballot, indicating their votes with a check next to the name of their choices. Only 1 vote may be cast per office. Ballots in which more than 1 candidate has been chosen will result in no vote allowed for that office. Marks of any kind placed adjacent to more than 1 candidate will result in no vote being cast for that office.
  3. After filling out this ballot, the ballot will be folded and placed into a sealed envelope. No writing of any kind shall be placed on the outside of this envelope. Envelopes found with marks or writing of any kind on them will be discarded.
  4. The envelope containing the ballot shall then be placed within a mailing envelope, which is then sealed. The address of the Association's Secretary should be placed on the front with the words "Ballot Enclosed" written clearly in the lower left corner of the envelope.
- J. Instructions for filling out and submitting a ballot will be clearly indicated on the website and in the e-mail announcement to the Association.
- K. Upon receiving absentee ballots, the Secretary will compile a list of the voters from the return addresses, but will not open the mailing envelopes at that time.
- L. Immediately following the deadline for absentee voting, the Secretary will submit a list of the absentee voters to the 2nd Vice President to confirm that all are Active members, qualified to vote in the election. The Secretary will also submit a list of absentee voters to the Treasurer to determine that all are members in good standing. The Secretary will submit a list of absentee voters to the President to confirm that none of the voters are the subject of an ethics violation or investigation.
- M. When all of the absentee voters have been confirmed as qualified voters, the Secretary will publish a list of these names on the membership website.



- N. The announcement of absentee voters will clearly indicate that members who have submitted an absentee vote, but are not on the absentee voter list, must immediately contact the Secretary for an explanation as to why they were not allowed to submit an absentee vote. All absentee voters, to be qualified, must be Active members in good standing at the time the absentee vote is received and recorded by the secretary.
- O. The Secretary will secure all closed absentee ballots until the annual membership conference at which the annual business meeting is to take place.
- P. At the Board of Directors meeting immediately prior to the annual membership conference at which the annual business meeting is to take place, the Association's Secretary will announce the number of valid absentee ballots cast and present a list (for the permanent file), of all absentee voters in the upcoming election. In order to qualify as a registered voter in any election, a member must be an Active member in good standing. These qualifications must be met by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the elections at the annual membership conference.
- Q. After 5:00 p.m. on the evening prior to the general elections, the 2nd Vice President, Treasurer, and President will meet to compile the list of all Active members in good standing.
- R. After 5:00 p.m. on the evening prior to the general elections, the Secretary, Sergeant at Arms, and member-at-large will meet to remove the closed absentee ballots from the mailing envelopes. The ballots will then be secured by the Secretary until the election on the following morning. All 3 officers will initial the surface of each ballot envelope and will crosscheck the mailing envelopes against the list previously compiled by the Secretary.
- S. At 7:30 a.m. on the day of the general elections, the list of Active members in good standing, compiled by the President, 2nd Vice President, and Treasurer, the prior evening will be turned over to the Secretary and Sergeant at Arms. The Secretary and Sergeant at Arms will go through the list of absentee voters, indicating on the general voting register that they have already cast votes.
- T. Ballots may be cast by the general membership from 7:30 to 9:30 A.M.

- U. In order to vote, members must present themselves to the voting table where the Secretary and Sergeant at Arms will indicate that they have received the ballot on the general voting register. The ballot box will be secured precisely at 9:30 A.M.
- V. The Secretary, Sergeant at Arms, and member-at-large will then retire to a private room to count votes. The results of the election will be announced by the Secretary in his or her report to the membership at the annual business meeting.
- W. Elections will be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast by Active Members in good standing.
- X. In the event of a tie vote, a run-off election will immediately be held at the annual membership conference involving only the candidates involved in the tie. The Secretary of the Association will oversee this process and will have available pre-printed ballots for this purpose. A short recess will be called, at which time the Secretary and Sergeant-at-Arms will distribute ballots to the voting membership, keeping track of those receiving ballots on the general voting register. Ballots will be counted following rules under Article V Section 1(V). Valid absentee ballots cast for the candidates in questions shall be counted. Run-off voting shall continue until 1 candidate receives a majority vote.
- Y. In the event an election among greater than 2 candidates in which no candidate receives a simple majority of the votes a run-off election shall be held at the annual business meeting. The candidate receiving the fewest number of votes shall be removed from the ballot. The Secretary of the Association will oversee this process and will have available pre-printed ballots for this purpose. A short recess will be called, at which time the secretary and Sergeant-at-Arms will distribute ballots to the voting membership, keeping track of those receiving ballots on the general voting register. Ballots will be counted following rules under Article V Section 1(V). Valid absentee ballots cast for the candidates in questions shall be counted. Run-off voting shall continue until 1 candidate receives a majority vote. In each subsequent balloting the candidate receiving the fewest number of votes shall be eliminated from the ballot.

## **ARTICLE VI**

## AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1 The Association shall have power to amend or revise this Constitution and By-Laws by a two-thirds vote of the Active members of the Association in good standing who are present. Proposed amendments and revisions will be voted on during the annual business meeting.

The membership must be notified in writing at least 30 days in advance of the annual meeting of any proposed Constitution or By-Laws changes. This notification indicates the changes proposed and includes the identity of the member(s) sponsoring the changes.

All proposed amendments or revisions will be posted from the beginning of the conference and written copies of changes will be made available to all members. Reasonable time for discussion of Constitution and By-Laws changes will be scheduled at the annual meeting.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### DISSOLUTION

SECTION 1 In the event of the organization being dissolved, the amount that remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be transferred to any organization with similar purposes which is not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **ARTICLE I**

#### MEETINGS

SECTION 1 The Annual Meeting of the Association for training and business shall be held at a place decided on at the previous annual meeting by a majority vote of the Active members in good standing who are present.

SECTION 2 Special sessions of the Association may be called by the President. Special sessions may also be called by a majority vote of the entire Board of Directors or following a written petition signed by at least ten active members in good standing.

- SECTION 3 The membership of the Association shall be notified of the holding of the Annual Meeting and training seminar. All such notices shall be made at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. The notice must include notification of any proposed additions and revisions to the Constitution and By-Laws. A written notice will also be mailed to the Coroner or Medical Examiner office in each county.
- SECTION 4 Notices of special meetings shall indicate the matters to be discussed at the meeting. All such notices shall be made at least 7 days in advance of the meeting for a binding vote to take place. A written notice will also be mailed to the Coroner or Medical Examiner office in each county.
- SECTION 5 The Association reserves the right at any meeting to go into closed session following a majority vote of the active members in good standing who are present.
- SECTION 6 The conduct of all meetings shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order.
- SECTION 7 At times when the Annual Meeting is not in session, the Board may deem it necessary to solicit a vote of the general membership on matters of importance to the entire Association. If a binding vote is sought, a written ballot shall be mailed to all voting members of the Association in good standing. A method of verifying receipt of all ballots shall be instituted by the Board to ensure that all votes cast are counted. The ballots shall be returned to the Association Secretary, presented unopened to the Board, and shall have the same effect as a vote at the Annual Business Meeting. In order to count the votes cast, the Board must meet in person at a time and place designated by the President. In order to open and record the votes, a quorum of the Board must be present. The Board may also seek a non-binding advisory vote by use of the same process, or by use of electronic voting methods.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **COMMITTEES**

- SECTION 1 The President may create any committee or subcommittee deemed necessary for the performance of certain duties in the name of the Association.
- SECTION 2 The President shall appoint all committee chairpersons and members, unless otherwise provided for, as soon as possible after

assuming the office of the President, and shall have all committees and their members established by the first quarterly Board meeting.

SECTION 3 The Membership of the Association may, by majority vote, direct the President to appoint such committee or committees as its membership deems advisable or necessary to perform specified duties.

SECTION 4 The Membership of the Association may, at its discretion, vote to elect the members of a specific committee. Such an action requires a motion and majority approval by the Membership to elect a specific number of members for a specific committee or committees, followed by nominations and voting by the Membership. Members of the committee will be decided by the highest number of votes received.

SECTION 5 In addition to the Board of Directors, the WCMEA shall have standing committees as listed below:

A. ETHICS COMMITTEE: This committee shall serve as an investigative, hearing, and advisory committee and report such findings to the Board of Directors for consideration.

1. The Ethics Committee shall be composed as follows:

Initially, six active members of the WCMEA in good standing will be elected by a majority vote of the Board of Directors to progressive one, two, and three-year terms. Once established, elections shall be held at the autumn BOD meeting every year to replace the two three-year positions.. All members of this committee shall be actively employed Coroners, Medical Examiners, or Death Investigators working in the state of Wisconsin, who consent to serving on the committee.

a. In the event that a committee member(s) becomes voluntarily inactive (e.g., retirement) or involuntarily inactive (e.g., removal from office by election or termination) as Coroners, Medical Examiners, or practicing death investigators, they shall be replaced by a majority vote of the BOD, and the newly elected member(s) shall serve the remainder of the unfinished term(s).

- b. Members of the BOD who are under investigation by the Ethics Committee may not vote on the committee membership at any time during the investigation process.
2. The Ethics Committee shall annually elect its own Chair from among its members.
  3. No preliminary or formal inquiry or investigation will be made by the ethics committee if there are pending criminal charges related to the complaint.
  4. The Ethics Committee shall submit requests to the Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis for funds to conduct investigations and hearings.
  5. No person currently accused under the provisions stated in the Code of Ethics section of the bylaws shall serve on the Ethics Committee. In such an event, said member will be temporarily removed from the committee and be replaced by an appointed member, pending the results of his/her own investigation. This appointee will serve until the conclusion of the investigation, at which time the original member will either be reinstated or replaced by the BOD. The decision to reinstate or replace the accused member will depend on the conclusions and recommended punitive actions, if any, of the Ethics committee.
  6. All deliberations and voting by the ethics committee will be held in private, and will not be open to members not serving on the committee. Members called to testify before the committee with regards to allegations against another member will be sworn to secrecy in these deliberations.
  7. The conclusions of the Ethics committee shall be compiled into a written report which shall include a summary of the formal allegation made against the accused, the conclusions of the Ethics committee, and rationale for the conclusions rendered. The report will also include any recommended punitive actions against the accused. The signatures of all involved committee members must be included on the

report. Upon receipt of the report, the BOD will review, discuss, and vote on any necessary actions.

- B. **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:** The legislative committee addresses all issues with regards to state legislation as it pertains to Coroners, Medical Examiners, and the WCMEA. The legislative chairperson and committee members will be appointed annually by the President. The committee Chair will keep up-to-date records of the committee's activities and reports to the Board quarterly and to the membership at the annual meeting.
  
- C. **EDUCATION COMMITTEE:** The education committee oversees all educational and training functions of the WCMEA. This committee is responsible for planning the WCMEA conferences. The 1st V.P. will be the overall chair of the committee, and may delegate responsibilities as best benefits the Association. The chair shall have the primary responsibility for arranging the educational content for the conferences (including the speakers at the conferences). The committee members will be appointed annually by the President. The committee is responsible for identifying the educational and training needs of our members and developing materials and vehicles to meet those needs including: conferences and seminars, web-based learning, external training programs, and reading materials. The committee will continuously update the membership about the learning opportunities available. The committee Chair will keep up-to-date records of the committee's activities and reports to the Board quarterly and to the membership at the annual meeting.
  
- D. **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:** The membership committee will be responsible for keeping track of membership information, including names, affiliations, titles, addresses, Email addresses and phone numbers. The 2<sup>nd</sup> V.P. will be the overall chair of this committee and may delegate responsibilities as best benefits the Association. The committee members will be appointed annually by the President. An electronic membership directory will be updated annually and published on the members-only website, including all members' contact information. This committee is also responsible for recruiting new WCMEA members. The committee Chair will keep up-to-date records of the committee's activities and reports to the Board quarterly and to the membership at the annual meeting.

- E. **MERCHANDISE COMMITTEE:** The merchandise committee will be responsible for all ordering and sales of merchandise, including the coordination of members to man the merchandise tables during conferences. The Sergeant-At-Arms will be the overall chair of this committee and may delegate responsibilities as best benefits the Association. The committee members will be appointed annually by the President. The committee Chair will keep up-to-date records of the Association's merchandise and sales and reports this to the Board quarterly and to the membership at the annual meeting.
  
- F. **FINANCE COMMITTEE:** The finance committee handles all matters regarding the WCMEA finances, including the release of funds for merchandise purchases, conference expenses, etc., and the intake of revenue from dues, conference fees and merchandise. The Treasurer will be the overall chair of this committee and may delegate responsibilities as best benefits the Association. The committee members will be appointed annually by the President. The committee Chair will keep up-to-date records of the Association's financial health and reports this to the Board quarterly and to the membership at the annual meeting.
  
- G. **INFORMATION/TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE:** This committee will oversee the operation of the website and other IT needs of the Association. The IT committee chairperson and committee members will be appointed annually by the President. The chair will oversee the continual operations of the site, troubleshooting the problems that arise, and appoint others to review and provide the content to be published, ensuring that the information presented on the web is accurate and current. This committee will cooperate with the Education Committee to develop technology based educational and training opportunities. The committee Chair will keep up-to-date records of the Association's IT services, and reports this to the Board quarterly and to the membership at the annual meeting.
  
- H. **NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:** The newsletter committee will be responsible for gathering and reporting information related to the business of the association, educational topics, and items of interest to the members of the Association. The



newsletter committee chairperson and committee members will be appointed annually by the President. The Chair will act as the editor-in-chief of the publication. The committee Chair will keep up-to-date records of the committee's activities, and reports this to the Board quarterly and to the membership at the annual meeting.

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

SECTION 1 As a means to promote the highest quality of professional and personal conduct of its members, the following constitutes the Code of Ethics and Conduct which is endorsed and adhered to by all members of the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association.

- A. The members of the Association shall conform to the published ethics of their professional association and Local County, and the Constitution and Laws of the State of Wisconsin.
- B. Every member of the Association shall refrain from exercising professional or personal conduct adverse to the best interests and purposes of the Association.
- C. Every member of the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association shall refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of employment, education, training, experience or area of expertise.
- D. Every member of the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association shall refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of data upon which an expert opinion or conclusion is based.
- E. Except for the President, every member of the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association shall refrain from issuing public statements, which appear to represent the position of the Association without specific authority first obtained from the Board of Directors.
- F. All applicants for membership and annual renewal of membership shall affirm by their signatures that they have read, understood, and endorsed the Code of Ethics and Conduct.

- G. In the performance of his/her duties under WI s. 979, a coroner/ME shall respect the dignity, honor, reputation and privacy of the deceased person, and demonstrate professional confidentiality in respect of that person and their family, unless the disclosure thereof is authorized or mandated by law.
- H. A coroner/ME shall respect the religious beliefs and opinions of the deceased person and those of their relatives to the extent that the requirements imposed on him by state statute so permit.
- I. A coroner/ME shall not interfere in an investigation that is within the jurisdiction of another coroner/ME, unless requested to do so by that coroner/ME.
- J. In the performance of their duties, coroners/MEs shall not make immoderate use of psychotropic substances, including alcohol, or any substance producing similar effects. A coroner/ME shall not use illicit drugs of any kind, including prescription medications prescribed to other persons, nor shall they engage in the abuse of medications prescribed for their own use.
- K. A coroner/ME shall demonstrate reserve and moderation in any public comments concerning his investigations or activities and shall formulate such comments solely for educational or scientific purposes consequent to the performance of their duties.
- L. A coroner/ME shall clearly demonstrate objectivity, rigorousness and independence in the performance of their duties, and avoid any situation that may present a conflict of interest.
- M. A coroner/ME shall ascertain the probative value, the authenticity and the relevance of any fact on which he/she bases the identity of the decedent.
- N. A coroner/ME shall maintain custody of personal property to ensure its conservation and make a good faith effort to return it to the next of kin or appropriate person.

- O. A coroner/ME shall make themselves available to the relatives of the deceased person in order to provide them with information where the situation so requires.
- P. A coroner/ME shall not offer personal preferences regarding funeral arrangements, funeral businesses, tissue donation, cleaning services, or other such business.
- Q. A coroner/ME shall maintain his/her knowledge and abilities in the fields relevant to the performance of his/her duties, to include statutes, regulations and directives governing the performance of those duties, and shall ensure that any person to whom he/she delegates powers also maintains their knowledge and abilities relevant to the performance of their duties.
- R. A coroner/ME shall contribute to the advancement of Wisconsin death investigation by sharing assistance, knowledge, and experience.
- S. A coroner/ME shall respect the confidentiality of protected medical information or documents, unless the disclosure thereof is authorized or mandated by law.

SECTION 2 Any member of the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association who has violated any of the provisions of the Code of Ethics may be liable but not limited to censure, suspension, or expulsion by action of the Board of Directors, as provided below.

SECTION 3 The following are the principal forms by which the Ethics Committee may initiate investigative proceedings:

- A. A member of the Association may submit a formal written complaint or allegation of violation(s) concerning a member to the President of the Association or to the Chairman of the Ethics Committee. Such a complaint should be made in a timely manner.
- B. The Ethics Committee may institute an inquiry based on any evidence brought to its attention which in its opinion indicates the need for further query or action under the provisions of these Bylaws.

SECTION 4 The following procedures shall apply to any written complaint(s) or allegation(s) of unethical or wrongful conduct against a member of

the Association whether initiated by a member or resulting from an inquiry originated by the Ethics Committee.

- A. Written complaints or allegations against a member, if delivered to the Association President, shall promptly be transmitted to the Chairman of the Ethics Committee.
- B. The Ethics Committee shall determine whether the complaints or allegations fall(s) within its jurisdiction and whether there is probable cause to believe that the complaint(s) or allegation(s) may be well founded.
- C. If the Ethics Committee, in its preliminary determination, finds that it does not have jurisdiction or that there is a lack of probable cause to believe that the complaints or allegations may be well founded, it shall dismiss the complaints or allegation(s). It shall issue a report of such determination to the Board of Directors, setting forth the basic facts but omitting the names of the parties, and stating the reasons for its decision to dismiss. Notice of the filing of the complaint or allegation shall also be given to the accused.
- D. If the Ethics Committee finds that it has jurisdiction and that there is probable cause to believe that the complaint(s) or allegations may be well founded, it shall give notice of the filing of a complaint(s) or allegation(s) to the accused, and, in accordance with Rules and Regulations formulated by the Ethics Committee and approved by the Board of Directors, assemble such written data from both the accused and the accuser(s) which will permit the Ethics Committee to determine whether the complaints or allegation(s) requires further investigation.
- E. The Ethics Committee may appoint a Member to investigate the complaints or allegations and, if necessary, to present the charge(s) on behalf of the Association to the Committee.
- F. If, as a result of an investigation, the Ethics Committee decides to dismiss the charge(s) without a formal hearing, it may do so. It shall notify the accused and the accuser(s) of its decision and shall issue a report to the Board of Directors setting forth the basic facts but omitting the names of the parties and stating the reason(s) for its decision.

- G. If the Ethics Committee decides to formally hear the charge(s), it shall give both the accused and the accuser(s) a reasonable opportunity to be heard and to confront each other. The accused may have a representative present, at no expense to the Association. The Ethics Committee shall then make a decision and notify both parties of its decision. The Ethics Committee shall then make a report to the Board of Directors on its decision including reasons and any recommendation for further action.
- H. Following receipt of a report of the Ethics Committee and upon a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members of the Board of Directors present and voting, the party accused of unethical or wrongful conduct may be censured, suspended or expelled. No member of the Board of Directors who is the subject of a pending accusation under the provisions of this Article shall sit in deliberation on any matter concerning ethics. Suspension of the accused will be qualified by the permissible method of reinstatement.
- I. The accused has the right to appeal from the action of the Board of Directors to the membership of the Association. In effecting an appeal, the appellant must file a brief written notice of the appeal, together with any written statement he may wish to submit in his behalf, with the Association President not less than thirty days prior to the next Annual Meeting of the Association. The President shall immediately advise each member of the Board of Directors of the appeal and shall forward to each a copy of the supporting papers submitted by the appellant.
- J. The Board of Directors shall then prepare a written statement of the reasons for its actions and file the same with the Association President not less than fifteen days prior to the next Annual Meeting.
- K. At the Annual Meeting, the Association President shall give notice to each voting member of the Association a copy of the appellant's notice of appeal and his supporting statement, if any, and a copy of the Board of Director's statement.
- L. A vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and voting at the Annual Business Meeting shall be required to overrule the action of the Board of Directors in regard to

censure, suspension expulsion or other action taken against a member.

- M. The Ethics Committee shall formulate internal Rules and Procedures, designed to facilitate the expeditious, fair, discreet, and impartial handling of all complaints or matters brought before it. The Rules and Procedures, and any subsequent deletions, additions or amendments thereto, shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

SECTION 5 Members who have been suspended from membership may apply for reinstatement once the period of suspension is completed. A suspended member will not be required to pay dues during the period of suspension. If reinstated, the required dues payment will be the annual dues for one year.

SECTION 6 When a member is expelled, his/her name will be immediately removed from the membership list and Email list; they will lose all membership privileges including access to the website members-only section; and their membership dues will be forfeited.