



The Examiner

<http://www.wcmea.com>

Fall/Winter 2015



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The holidays are upon us once again. A wonderful time for reflection.

This last year has been a busy one for the WCMEA . . . The legislative committee and lobbyists have been hard at work making the necessary changes to the 979 legislation, some counties were presented with additional fiscal challenges with the implementation of Act 55, and another two training conferences have come and gone.

We have a new board of directors . . . A perfect blend of new and familiar faces for 2015-2016—a year that I hope will be both productive and exciting for the association.

Hoping you all have time to slow down and enjoy the holidays with close family and friends. Wishing you the very best for 2016.

-Jennifer

Jennifer.schroeter@kenoshacounty.org

new draft of 979 legislation and also have an author in the Assembly and are close to securing an author in the Senate. Rep. Schraa (R-Oshkosh) is going to be our author in the Assembly. Frank and I are excited to be working with him and his staff regarding our efforts. As we have had the opportunity to get to know him in the past six months he has become a true friend and will be a great leader for us. With Rep. Schraa's assistance we are contemplating some alternative funding mechanisms that may make our road a little easier in the future.

When we have a definitive path we will let the association members know. The time spent on this aspect will pay dividends when the legislation is introduced in January. If you have questions regarding our legislation please do not hesitate to call. As your voice in the Capital it is our job to make sure we have things in order politically and the message is clear. You, as members, ultimately will control the outcome of this legislation. It is imperative you contact your local legislator and let them know how important this issue is. A simple personal phone call from you delivers a powerful message.

Legislative Update

I hope all of you are having a wonderful holiday season. I would like to congratulate Jennifer Schroeter on becoming the association's president. I have really enjoyed getting to know Jennifer and am very confident she will do an extraordinary job for the association. As most know our association has been very active in the Capital for the previous several years. We have a

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WCMEA Fall Conference Highlights

The 2015 Fall Conference & Annual Meeting was held at the Holiday Inn & Convention Center in beautiful Stevens Point. There were 56 attendees who enjoyed presentations on topics ranging from wrongful convictions and death certification to atypical gunshot wounds and blood stain analysis.



Holiday Inn

DHS provided updates regarding SVRIS and future projects. WCMEA Lobbyist Chris Lenzendorf provided crucial information regarding Act 55 and the issues surrounding the 979 legislation.

Elections were held for the 2015-2016 WCMEA Board of Directors. Congratulations to the following people on their officer positions:

- President:** Jennifer Schroeter, Kenosha Co.
- 1st Vice President:** Amanda Thoma, Green Lake Co.
- 2nd Vice President:** Mary Ricci, Barron Co.
- Secretary:** Laurie Parisey, Oconto Co.
- Treasurer:** Rory Groessl, Kewaunee Co.
- Sergeant-at-arms:** Joe Morovits, Crawford Co.
- Three Year Trustee:** Jessica Blahnik, Marathon Co.
- Member-at-Large:** Dr. Agnieszka Rogalska, Dane Co.
- Past President:** Barry Irmien, Dane Co.

Two \$500 scholarships were awarded at the annual banquet. The intent of the scholarships is to provide active members in WCMEA the opportunity to receive training in a program, course or seminar related to medicolegal death investigation. The scholarship winners are Heather Schulz from Portage County, and David Leffin from Sheboygan County.

The WCMEA would like to thank our host Portage County, the Holiday Inn & Convention Center, as well as the many presenters and exhibitors for their time, hospitality and expertise.

The association would also like to acknowledge the following sponsors who generously supported the conference, making it a huge success: American Tissue Services Foundation, Blood Center of WI/ Wisconsin Tissue Bank, Lions Eye Bank, and RTI Donor Services.



The 2016 Spring Conference will be held April 25th - 27th at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Please mark your calendars!

Updates from the Wisconsin Violent Death Reporting System

Greetings! My name is Brittany Grogan, and I am the new coordinator for the Wisconsin Violent Death Reporting System (WVDRS) at the Department of Health Services (DHS). Since taking the position in May, I have been learning about the WVDRS system, the types of data collected and data collection challenges, and opportunities to provide reports and data to CMEs, public health departments, researchers, and the public. I look forward to meeting with each of you.

The WVDRS is a public health surveillance tool that collects comprehensive information on all incidents of violent death in Wisconsin, including: homicides, suicides, deaths due to legal intervention, unintentional firearm deaths, deaths of undetermined intent, and deaths due to terrorism. The system compiles data from death certificates, law enforcement records, and coroner and medical examiner reports, including toxicology results. WVDRS plays a critical role in translating the information obtained during the investigation of individual violent death incidents into the population-based knowledge used to develop, implement, and evaluate effective strategies for mitigating violence. As the new coordinator, I would like to understand all of your needs related to the WVDRS, potential barriers/facilitators to data provision, and to let you know what resources are available to you. One of my top priorities is ensuring that the data collected are useful for our partners. A few items that I will be preparing for MEs and coroners and the larger public include:

- Reports or fact sheets to county MEs and coroners with information specific to their county
- Analyses and publications of WVDRS data collected
- Updating the DHS Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) website with county-level WVDRS data from 2004-2013 (most recent year available) so the data are available to the public

I will be attending the WCMEA conference in Stevens Point October 26-28, and am excited to meeting you and your colleagues. Please direct any questions about data, requests for analyses, or other WVDRS-related needs to me. I look forward to hearing your feedback and making the WVDRS user-friendly for our partners and a great tool to address violent deaths in this Wisconsin.

Lastly, I wanted to make you aware of new efforts at DHS to conduct surveillance and control of the opioid drug poisoning epidemic. Because much of the key information on death certificates is based on a coroner's or ME's death scene investigation, autopsy, and toxicological testing and analysis, our understanding of the nature and circumstances of drug poisoning mortality relies heavily on the work of coroners and MEs. The majority of drug poisoning deaths in Wisconsin are deemed to be unintentional, so historically they have not been included in the WVDRS. However, we are currently in the process of conducting a pilot program to collect a small sample of unintentional drug poisoning deaths in 2014 and add them to the WVDRS, and we will assess the feasibility and utility of expanding this project to more Wisconsin counties in the future. If you have questions or comments about this new program, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting some of you at the conference! Please contact me anytime at 608-267-9008 or Brittany.Grogan@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

***Brittany Grogan, MPH, Program Coordinator for the Wisconsin Violent Death Reporting System
WI Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Injury & Violence Prevention Program***

Wisconsin Fatality Search & Recovery Team

Wisconsin is one of 26 states in the National Guard that has a Fatality Search & Recovery Team. This team is designed to provide fatality search and recovery and processing capabilities to the National Guard (NG) Homeland Response Force and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Enhanced Response Force Package (HRF/CERFP). The capabilities of FSRT are specifically tailored to augment and support existing local, tribal, state, and federal fatality recovery capabilities whether in a contaminated or non-contaminated environment.



The primary mission of the FSRT is search and recovery of fatalities from a contaminated environment to an on-scene Mortuary Affairs Collection Point (MACP). Fatality management includes, but is not limited to: documenting location, recovery, collection, temporary storage, Chain of Custody and transporting/accompanying fatalities to/from MACP.

The FSRT is not only associated with natural or man-made disasters, but may include military aircraft mishaps and military mass casualty operations. FSRT personnel are not trained to enter collapsed structures or confined spaces nor independently identify process or decontaminate human remains; however, they are authorized to recover from structurally sound buildings and open areas in a contaminated or non-contaminated environment.

FSRTs are typically used in "mass casualty responses" in either a contaminated or non-contaminated incident within the State. "Mass casualty" may vary depending on the counties resources. If the requirements (e.g., people, equipment, and resources) of the incident exceed the ability of the local response forces, follow on civil and military forces from the state may be activated and deployed in support of the Incident Command. State level forces include resources such as state hazardous materials teams, state police, state health department, and the National Guard, including CSTs. The Governor appoints a State Coordinating Officer (SCO) to oversee disaster operations for the State.

FSRTs interface with civilian entities of the Incident Command System (ICS) and more specifically with those within the Fatality Management Branch (FMB) in accordance with the National Incident Management System's Incident Command System (NIMS ICS). All fatality management operations, to include search and recovery operations, may vary as each jurisdiction may apply the ICS differently. ME/Cs have jurisdictional authority over the decedent and work closely with law enforcement agencies having jurisdictional authority over a crime scene, if applicable.

FSRT relies on the ME/C for establishing specific Rules Of Engagement (ROE) and effective transfer of remains and clearing of temporary storage capabilities based on operational environment and jurisdiction. This interaction is fundamental to the success of the FSRT operation by ensuring MACP's are not overwhelmed. Under concurrent missions of proprietary jurisdiction, where the FMB (usually local ME/C) retains jurisdiction, the FMB retains all decision-making authority when managing mass fatalities, signs all death certificates for cause and manner of death, identifies assets required to process remains, and coordinates, integrates, and manages arriving assets.

To learn more about the Wisconsin Air National Guard FSRT contact 2d Lt. Natalie Huschka natalie.k.huschka.mil@mail.mil

Submitted by 2d Lt. Natalie Huschka, WI Fatality Search & Recovery Team

New App makes it easier to register to be an Organ, Tissue and Eye Donor

Residents of Wisconsin are now able to register as Organ, Tissue and Eye donors with just the “swipe or scan” of their driver’s license or ID card. The app uses secure technology similar to when you swipe a credit or debit card to pay for a purchase.

If an individual does not have the ability to type “donatelifewisconsin.org” into a browser or are not scheduled to renew their driver’s license for a while; there is a new option for available! Wisconsin is only the seventh state to use this technology; it offers a fast, accurate and secure way for people to



add their name to the state Donor Registry. Swipe technology was made available to the representatives of organ, tissue and eye recovery agencies in partnership with the State of Wisconsin DHS and Donate Life Wisconsin, to enroll prospective donors when they interact at community and educational events.

How easy is it? “Swipe for Life Wisconsin” is a handheld scanner called a “sled” or using the camera on IOS device equipped with the app, by scanning or swiping the barcode on the back of the driver’s license or ID card; the donor screen is then populated with registrants demographic data and they will be asked to agree to a short consent statement and then hit submit. The whole process takes less than a minute and may be amended at any time by the newly registered donor!

What is the Donor Registry? The Wisconsin Donor Registry is list of individuals who have authorized the gift of organs, tissues and eyes upon their death. This is “first person authorization” and is meant to be a binding agreement. As the donation decision has already been made by the individual, this declaration is very powerful when approaching the family. Having the registry available is a fast and accurate way for recovery agencies to confirm donor status and share that information with you, the death investigator.

How does this affect you as a death investigator? Currently many of you are looking for a “Donor Dot” on a driver’s license or legal ID to determine donor status; this no longer provides the most up to date information. If the Wisconsin resident makes their donation wishes via “donatelifewisconsin.org” or the swipe technology; a donor dot will not appear on their license until they renew their license at the DMV. It is the responsibility of all death investigators to contact an Organ, Tissue or Eye bank donor coordinator to report a death and confirm eligibility status. The Wisconsin Donor Registry will be quickly accessed and the decedent’s donor status will be available in just a few minutes. Not making this referral means that you are deciding for them regardless of their wishes.

Thank you to the WCMEA membership for your longstanding and continued support of donation!

Submitted by Joyce Kratz, American Tissue Services Foundation, and Al Klimek, RTI Donor Services

*** Please review the map insert to see per county the percentage of residents that are registered donors.

Legislative Update Continued

If you have a good relationship with your sheriff or district attorney it would be extremely beneficial to have them call as well. The spring session is going to offer us our best chance at passing this long awaited bill so it is certainly an "All Hands on Deck" situation.

I also wanted to bring attention to another bill that is being circulated internally in the Capital. It has not been introduced yet so there is not a number to reference. The basis of the bill is to eliminate the visible cause of death on a death certificate and replace with a code. The idea is to protect the dignity and privacy of the deceased so bankers etc. would only be able to see the natural or accidental portion of the death certificate while the cause etc., would be in a code. This idea was brought to Rep. Taylor (D-Madison) by one of her constituents. The other author is Rep. August (R-Lake Geneva). The WMCEA will be asked to take a position on this issue, so if you would like more information on this or any other matter please e-mail me at chris@lwstrategy.com. I hope everyone has Happy Holidays!

Submitted by Chris Lenzendorf, Lenzendorf Winters & Associates

Interesting Deaths in Wisconsin

- In **Wood County**- A teenage boy fatally shot a 47-year old woman before shooting himself with the shotgun at a rural Wisconsin Rapids home. The shooting happened around 10 pm in the Town of Saratoga following a "brief disturbance." The 17-year old shooter was hospitalized in critical but stable condition. The motive for the shootings is unclear, but the individuals did know each other.
- In **Door County**- A 63-year old man, a well-respected physician, died as a result of suicide. The doctor was last seen June 29 leaving the Ephraim Yacht Marina following an argument with his wife. His body was found more than 3 weeks later on an uninhabited property in the Town of Liberty Grove following extensive searches by the Door County Sheriff's Department, the DNR, Headwaters Search and Rescue, local land owners and Fox Valley volunteers.
- In **Waushara County**- Authorities say the pilot of a crop-dusting plane has died after crashing near Hancock in central Wisconsin. The plane went down Wednesday in a wooded area while spraying a potato farm. The pilot was the only person in the single-engine plane.

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Training Opportunities

Spring WCMEA Conference
Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells
April 25-27, 2016

2016 WAHI Annual Conference
April 26-29, 2016
Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells
<http://wi-homicide.com/conference>

Medicolegal Death Investigator Training Course
January 4-8, 2016 at St. Louis, Missouri
www.medschool.slu.edu/mldi

Free Online Forensic Training
National Institute of Justice
www.nij.gov/training

Interesting Deaths Continued.....

- In **Brown County**- A 47-year old man was found dead in the East River. The man was reportedly homeless and had deposited his belongings at the bus station with plans to leave. People using the bike path near the intersection of Main Street and Monroe Avenue spotted the body lying face-down in shallow water near the shore. The death has been ruled a drowning.
- In **Rock County**- A 43-year old man was killed while riding his bicycle. The man was traveling eastbound on a bicycle and was struck by a vehicle. A witness stopped to give CPR to the victim was transported to Beloit Memorial Hospital where he later died. The victim did not have any lights on the bicycle and was riding in the roadway at the time of the crash. The 29-year old driver of the vehicle has been arrested for homicide by intoxicated use of a vehicle.
- In **Forest County**- A 23-year old man died in an ATV crash. Deputies received a report of an ATV crash in the Township of Wabeno. Upon arrival to the scene, deputies located a single vehicle ATV crash. The driver and sole occupant of the ATV was pronounced dead at the scene. The crash is being investigated by the DNR.
- In **St. Croix County**- A 30-year old woman and 10-year old girl were found dead inside a New Richmond home. The New Richmond Fire Department had initially been called to the house for what appeared to be a smoke alarm. Upon their arrival, they found the bodies- the woman in the upstairs area of the home and the young girl in the basement. The bodies were transferred to the Ramsey County Medical Examiner's Office for autopsy. A suspect had been tracked down in Texas, and has since been arrested.
- In **Milwaukee County**- Two children, ages 11 and 6, were killed in a Milwaukee house fire. Firefighters were called to the scene after getting reports of heavy fire showing from the first floor of a two-family, side-by-side duplex. Fireman arrived to find heavy fire coming from the windows and immediately began search and rescue operations as they worked to battle the fire. The two children were found unresponsive on the second floor. The children had been moved to medical units, but later died. A mother and infant were able to escape the fire.
- In **Racine County**- A 14 year old girl was shot and killed by a 14 year old boy with a short barreled rifle. The two were dating and allegedly seen arguing two hours before she was shot. However, it is said to be an accidental shooting.
- In **Kenosha County**- Two children, ages 1 and 3, were killed by their mother. Police arrived to find the two deceased children and the mother with self inflicted knife wounds to her wrists. The mother told police that initially she decided to kill only herself but later decided to kill the children as well. The deaths of the children were calculated and planned. They were given over-the-counter pain reliever before being suffocated. The mother also kept a journal of everything she did after the children's father left for work.

Jennifer Schroeter
Kenosha ME's Office
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(262) 653-3869

WISCONSIN INDIANHEAD TECHNICAL COLLEGE PRESENTS



An Online Medicolegal Death Investigator Training Course

Providing basic training for new investigators, and for those interested in working as a death investigator. The instructor for this class is Mary Ricci. She is a registered death investigator by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators since 2008 and is the medical examiner for Barron County. Ms. Ricci is the 2nd Vice President for the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association. She brings many years of EMS instruction and death investigation experience with her into the classroom. For further information contact Mary Ricci, D-ABMDI, at 715-822-4040 or email: mary.ricci@co.barron.wi.us.

Registration Deadline is February 1, 2016

Class size will be limited to 24 students

Register by calling 800-243-9482 or 715-234-7082, Ext. 5045.

Course number is 67105

Approved for 40 ABMDI credits