

**MEDICAL EXAMINERS COMMISSION MEETING**

Hilton Cocoa Beach Oceanfront  
1550 North Atlantic Avenue (A1A)  
Cocoa Beach, Florida  
June 5, 2014  
10:00 AM

Acting Chairman Stephen J. Nelson, M.A., M.D., called the meeting of the Medical Examiners Commission to order at **10:00 AM** at Hilton Cocoa Beach Oceanfront, in Cocoa Beach, Florida.

Ms. Edwards reminded the Commission that pursuant to § 406.03, F.S., the Commission shall annually elect a chair from among its own membership, and asked for nominations.

Commissioner Robin Giddens Sheppard nominated Stephen J. Nelson, M.A., M.D., and Commissioner Robert Krauss seconded the nomination.

**A MOTION WAS MADE, SECONDED AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO CLOSE THE FLOOR TO ADDITIONAL NOMINATIONS.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE, SECONDED AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ELECT STEPHEN J. NELSON, M.A., M.D. AS COMMISSION CHAIRMAN.**

Dr. Nelson thanked the Commission for their confidence in him, and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He then asked Commission members, staff, and audience members to introduce themselves.

**Commission members present:**

Stephen J. Nelson, M.A., M.D., District 10 Medical Examiner  
Robert J. Krauss, J.D., Chief Assistant Attorney General  
Hon. James S. Purdy, J.D., Public Defender, 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit  
Hon. Carol Whitmore, Manatee County Commissioner  
Robin Giddens Sheppard, L.F.D., Vice President/Funeral Director  
Hon. Rick Beseler, Sheriff, Clay County  
Hon. Angela B. Corey, J.D., State Attorney, 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit

**Commission members absent:**

Bruce A. Hyma, M.D., District 11 Medical Examiner  
Ken Jones, Deputy State Registrar, Department of Health

**Commission staff present:**

Margaret Edwards  
Danielle Santiago  
Debbie Turvaville

Doug Culbertson  
Jim Martin, J.D.  
Vickie Koenig

**District Medical Examiners present:**

Barbara C. Wolf, M.D. (District 5)  
Jon R. Thogmartin, M.D. (District 6)  
Roger E. Mittleman, M.D. (District 19)  
Mary Mainland, M.D. (District 13)

Craig Mallak, M.D. (District 17)  
Sajid S. Qaiser, M.D. (District 18)  
Russell S. Vega, M.D. (District 12)

**Other District personnel present:**

Jeff Martin (District 1)  
Bill Pellan (District 6)  
Cathy Weldon (District 8)  
Lindsey Crim (District 7 & 24)  
Brett Harding (District 5)

Kim Bynum (District 4)  
Clint Clark (District 23)  
Lindsey Bayer (District 5)  
Craig Engelson (District 18)

**Guests present:**

Jon Crisler (Lions Eye Institute)  
Chris Bronaugh (Medical Eye Bank)  
Bruce Goldberger, Ph.D. (University of Florida)  
Liz Heid (TransLife)  
Dan Schultz (LifeLink)  
Nancy Williams (Wuesthoff)  
William Respass (SAO, 18<sup>th</sup> Circuit)

Andrew Mullins (Lions Eye Institute)  
Rebecca Sayer (LifeLink)  
Ashleigh Story (TransLife)  
Beth Withrow (LEITR)  
Linda Sullivan (Wuesthoff)  
Nick Waite (RTI Donor Services)  
Chandler Brownlee (LifeNet)

At the request of Commissioner Robin Giddens Sheppard, the Commission added one item to the agenda — Domestic Partnerships.

**A MOTION WAS MADE, SECONDED, AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY FOR THE COMMISSION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.**

**A MOTION WAS MADE, SECONDED, AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY FOR THE COMMISSION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 18, 2014, MEDICAL EXAMINERS COMMISSION MEETING.**

**ISSUE NUMBER 1: INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

- **2013 Interim Drugs in Deceased Persons Report:** Ms. Danielle Santiago informed everyone that the 2013 Interim Drugs in Deceased Persons Report was released at a press conference on May 29, 2014. She also advised that the due date for all 2013 drug death data is June 30, 2014.
- **2013 Annual Workload Report:** Ms. Santiago reminded everyone that the deadline for submission of data for the 2013 Annual Workload Report is June 30, 2014.

- **Coverdell Grant:** Ms. Santiago reported that the 2012 Coverdell Grant period was closed, and that all reimbursements should have been made by now. She also reported that the 2013 Coverdell Grant funds were available, and that districts may begin purchasing items for the current period. Ms. Santiago said that last year four districts did not spend the money that was awarded to them, and reminded everyone of the importance of keeping up with the deadlines; this is important because if funds are not going to be used, they should be returned to FDLE for use by the FDLE laboratory system.

Dr. Nelson asked for a show of hands from those who would be interested in a workshop or telephone conference call on Coverdell rules, deadlines, etc., that would be presented by MEC staff. District 4 asked for a workshop to explain how grant funds are distributed to the districts and the process for requesting budget amendments.

Dr. Nelson informed everyone that the Justice For All Act, which has funds earmarked for the 2015 Coverdell Grant, was not moving through Congress. He encouraged everyone to contact their congressman and request that funds be released.

- **2014 Legislative Update:** Mr. Jim Martin reported that nothing passed in the 2014 legislative session that would have an impact on the medical examiners. He advised that HB 301, the bill affecting cremation approval fees, died in committee. Mr. Martin mentioned that with the passage of HB 697 and upon approval by the Governor, six additional synthetic drugs would be added to §893, F.S.

## **ISSUE NUMBER 2: STATUS UPDATE: DISTRICT 4 SEARCH COMMITTEE**

Ms. Corey stated that the District 4 Search Committee had completed its process. She was disappointed in the lack of clarity provided by staff regarding the search process. Ms. Corey said that she was unclear of the process even after researching Rule 11G, Administrative Code, and stated that she was disappointed in statements made to the media regarding the selection process, including statements that the committee was "lowballing" potential candidates by failing to provide travel vouchers and offering a lower than average salary. Ms. Corey said that she was given conflicting information as to what did and did not fall under the Sunshine Law, and she felt that, in the future, it would be helpful to receive better guidance from the Medical Examiners Commission and Commission staff.

Dr. Nelson thanked Ms. Cory for her comments, and asked her to provide an update to the process. Ms. Corey informed the Commission that during the process they received six applications for the District Medical Examiner position, including that of the incumbent, Valerie Rao, M.D. In addition to Dr. Rao, the committee received resumes from District 14 Medical Examiner Michael Hunter, M.D., Thomas Beaver, M.D., and Arthur Copeland, M.D. The other two applicants withdrew prior to interviews being conducted. Two interviews were conducted in person, one over the phone, and one was conducted via Skype.

Three names were forwarded to Commission staff for consideration: Dr. Rao, Dr. Hunter and Dr. Beaver. However, Dr. Beaver withdrew his name from consideration after being offered the position of Interim District 16 Medical Examiner.

Ms. Whitmore asked if the applicants were ranked by preference when sent to Commission staff. Ms. Corey said that it was her impression that a search committee does not typically rank the applicants according to preference, but that the search committee chose to do so. Dr. Nelson informed the Commission that the issue before the Commission was whether to approve forwarding all of the names to the Governor's Office, and what name(s) to recommend.

Ms. Whitmore said that she supports Dr. Rao's reappointment. Dr. Nelson informed her and the Commission that Dr. Rao's name was already at the Governor's Office for consideration. The issue now was whether the Commission agreed to submission of the additional names.

Sheriff Beseler said that more guidance from the Commission on the search committee process would have been appreciated, as he found it confusing. He agrees with Ms. Corey that more guidance is needed.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER SHEPPARD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WHITMORE, AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY FOR THE COMMISSION TO FORWARD DR. MICHAEL HUNTER'S NAME TO THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE ALONG WITH DR. RAO'S.**

Dr. Nelson reminded the Commission that Dr. Rao's name was already at the Governor's office for consideration, and that staff would forward Dr. Hunter's name.

Ms. Corey asked Dr. Nelson who should pay for travel for applicants in future search processes. Dr. Nelson said that all the search committees that he has served on in the past paid for travel. Ms. Corey asked who specifically paid for the travel and Dr. Nelson said that the counties paying the district medical examiner's salary paid for travel. Ms. Corey said that her county informed her that there was no budget to pay for applicants' travel, which is why interviews were held in the manner they were.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER COREY AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WHITMORE, FOR THE COMMISSION TO DIRECT STAFF TO DEVELOP A PROCEDURES MANUAL REGARDING PROPER PROCESSES TO BE FOLLOWED, INCLUDING FLORIDA STATUTE 406, RULE 11G, SUNSHINE LAW, BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS, TRAVEL, AND BUDGETARY CONCERNS FOR FUTURE SEARCH COMMITTEES. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YEAS AND ONE NAY.**

**ISSUE NUMBER 3: REAPPOINTMENT NOMINATIONS FOR DISTRICTS 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 AND ASSESSMENT FOR DISTRICTS 15 AND 17**

Ms. Edwards informed the Commission that surveys for districts awaiting reappointment and assessments for the home rule districts were completed, and that the results are in the meeting package. Ms. Edwards reminded the Commission that Districts 15 and 17 are home rule and, therefore, are not reappointed by the Governor. However, Commission staff has been directed by the Commission to conduct assessments on those districts for informational purposes. Ms. Edwards informed the Commission that only one district received an unfavorable comment from a constituent.

Mr. Purdy stated that as the Public Defender member of the Commission, he objected to the reappointment of Sajid Qaiser, M.D., as the District 18 Medical Examiner. Mr. Purdy then read the following document into the record:

**PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OBJECTION TO REAPPOINTMENT OF DR. SAJID S. QAISER AS  
18TH DISTRICT MEDICAL EXAMINER  
AND  
MOTION TO TABLE AND FOR APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE TO ADDRESS  
CONCERNS, PURSUANT TO RULE 11G-5.004, F.A.C**

In the Spring of 2011, the last time Dr. Qaiser was up for reappointment as Medical Examiner for the 18<sup>th</sup> District, Public Defender J.R. Russo of the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit filed an "unfavorable" review with the Medical Examiners Commission. This "unfavorable" review resulted in a meeting between Mr. Russo, his Capital Division attorneys and Dr. Qaiser. In this meeting, the parties discussed concerns the public defenders had with deposition and trial testimony given by Dr. Qaiser in reference to criminal cases. The Public Defender made known his displeasure with the fact that Dr. Qaiser's opinions about important medical matters would differ significantly between deposition and trial and his concern that this appears to be due to influence by the prosecution.

Following this meeting, Mr. Russo wrote a letter expressing his belief that Dr. Qaiser now understood the importance of his role in the prosecution of homicide cases. The Public Defender retracted his unfavorable evaluation and assented to Dr. Qaiser's reappointment as Medical Examiner for District 18.

That was 3 years ago and Dr. Qaiser is again up for reappointment. Since then, Public Defender J.R. Russo has retired from office and Blaise Trettis has been elected as the Public Defender of the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit. Unfortunately, not much has changed regarding Dr. Qaiser's testimony in homicide cases and Mr. Trettis has submitted an "unfavorable" recommendation for the reappointment of Dr. Qaiser.

Upon being notified by the Medical Examiners Commission staff of the unfavorable recommendation by the Public Defender, I contacted Mr. Trettis to learn the basis for his recommendation. I was provided examples of Dr. Qaiser's testimony in criminal cases. For the purpose of today's Commission meeting, I will summarize some examples here:

In the First Degree Murder case of State of Florida v. Patrick Whalen, Dr. Qaiser was called to testify during the penalty phase. The purpose of the penalty phase in a First Degree Murder case is for the jury to give a recommendation following conviction as to whether the judge should sentence the defendant to the death penalty or life in prison. During the penalty phase, the jury will hear testimony on statutorily enumerated "aggravating circumstances" justifying the imposition of the death penalty. One of those aggravating circumstances is that the murder was "especially heinous, atrocious or cruel." This aggravating circumstance is intended to take into account the pain suffered by the victim during the homicide. In the Whalen penalty phase, Dr. Qaiser testified that an unconscious person feels pain. This testimony, intended to establish the aggravating circumstance of "especially heinous, atrocious or cruel", came as a surprise to the public defender representing Mr. Whalen as it was not previously disclosed in discovery. I have made inquiry of the network of public defenders statewide who handle death penalty cases and to their institutional knowledge, this is the first time any medical examiner has ever testified in the penalty phase of a death penalty case in Florida that an unconscious person feels pain. Fortunately, the jury in the Whalen case recommended a life sentence which the judge then imposed.

However, Dr. Qaiser recently gave "unconscious pain" deposition testimony in the First Degree Murder case of State of Florida v. Robert Peek, a "cold case" prosecution from the 1980s before Dr. Qaiser became Medical Examiner. Dr. Qaiser testified at this deposition that he based his opinion solely upon a 2007 study out of Belgium regarding coma patients and an internet article regarding a 2005 coma study by neurologist Dr. Nicolas Schiff. He further testified that he knows of no other medical examiner who has testified on the subject. The Peek case is set for trial in August and a *Daubert* Hearing to determine the admissibility of this evidence is being scheduled.

In the case of State of Florida v. Andrew Harrell, Dr. Qaiser testified as an expert witness on behalf of the State in a sexual battery case wherein no death occurred. Dr. Qaiser examined photographs of the elderly female who was alleged to be the victim in that case and other discovery materials. Based on the materials provided, Dr. Qaiser gave expert testimony that forcible anal penetration occurred.

As there was not a death in this case, this was not a Medical Examiner case pursuant to Chapter 406. However, Dr. Qaiser testified that it was. After testifying that he had been an associate medical examiner in Charlotte County for 2 years and an associate and then District Medical Examiner in Brevard County for 12 years, the following exchange occurred between the prosecutor and Dr. Qaiser at pages 412-413 of trial transcript:

"Q Is there anything in your specialty that limits you to only looking at a dead body versus an injury that had occurred to someone that's living?

A No. No, I see both the dead and also the living people.

Q Okay. And is it the twelve years you've been here in Brevard County and two years prior in Charlotte County?

A Charlotte County, yes.

Q So, over all you've been doing -- specializing in this at least fourteen years?

A Fourteen years, yes, in Florida.

Q And then you're the head of the office in Brevard County; is that correct?

A That's true, yes."

At best, this testimony is intentionally misleading by inferring that as an Associate Medical Examiner in both Charlotte and Brevard Counties and then as the District 18 Medical Examiner, Dr. Qaiser's official duties include seeing both dead and living people, thereby bolstering his expert opinion on a matter outside the scope of his Chapter 406 Medical Examiner duties. Also, Dr. Qaiser's willingness to give expert testimony as "The District Medical Examiner" on behalf of the prosecution in a criminal matter outside the scope of his ME duties demonstrates a lack of impartiality essential to his position as Medical Examiner.

The attorneys in the Public Defender's Office have repeatedly complained that when Dr. Qaiser testifies as to possible scenarios surrounding a homicide, his testimony is always "consistent" with the scenario proposed by the prosecutor. However, when questioned by the defense about alternative scenarios consistent with innocence, his testimony is always that "anything is possible", with an emphasis on "anything". This inequity of treatment between State and defense has undermined the confidence the defense needs to have in the Medical Examiner of the 18<sup>th</sup> District.

A prime example of this occurred last June in State of Florida v. Jason Williams, where even Circuit Court Judge Charles Roberts got involved and, on more than one occasion, felt compelled to instruct Dr. Qaiser to answer the questions put to him by the public defender.

Jason Williams was charged with First Degree Murder in a stabbing death wherein Dr. Qaiser testified that there were stab wounds to the left side of the victim's throat that were upward, toward the rear and to the right. On cross examination, Dr. Qaiser was questioned about whether the wounds would be consistent with the victim straddling and choking a person laying on his back and stabbing upward toward the throat. Dr. Qaiser testified:

"No, I cannot say consistent, it could be possible." [p. 555 of trial transcript]

When pressed by the public defender about his response, Dr. Qaiser stated:

"I cannot say consistent with this. This is very specific term, I cannot use it. Everything is possible." [p. 558 of trial transcript]

The assistant public defender, Mr. Moore, sought further clarification. He asked Dr. Qaiser whether he was "ruling out" that scenario. The following then occurred:

[Answer by Dr. Qaiser]:

"A. I'm saying possible, everything is possible.

Q. Okay. And if the wounds are inflicted you're going to have at least -

THE COURT: Wait a minute. Hold on just a moment. Please take the jury in the back hallway for just a moment.

(Thereupon, the jury was escorted out of the courtroom by the court deputy and the proceedings were had as follows:)

THE COURT: Okay. Everybody have a seat and be comfortable.

Dr. Qaiser I feel the need to reinstruct you, sir, that you have to listen to the question and answer the question that's put to you. Mr. Moore didn't ask you if it's possible, he asked you a specific question which was *you're not ruling that out* and he gave you a scenario and said *if Mr. McIntosh is kneeling over Mr. Williams choking him* and he was asking you whether or not you're not- the question was *you're not ruling that out* and you said anything is possible. So, Mr. Moore, would you like to restate your question and I'm going to ask him to answer the question directly and then when the jury comes back in he'll have an opportunity to do so [and say] the same thing."

When the question was again asked, Dr. Qaiser stated "No, I'm not ruling out that, yes."

The judge then said, "Okay. That's a very direct response to the question. I'm going to ask you to please do that. Bring the jury back in, please." [pages 618- 620 of trial transcript].

If a scenario cannot be "ruled out", then it must by definition be consistent with the evidence. In the Williams case, intervention by the Court was required to get a direct answer out of Dr. Qaiser. Even so, Dr. Qaiser still would not agree that the defense scenario was "consistent".

These are but a few instances of cases that have led the Public Defender to have a good faith belief that Dr. Qaiser lacks the impartiality necessary to serve as District 18 Medical Examiner.

As a result, as a member of this commission, I am moving that the vote of the Medical Examiners Commission regarding the Recommendation for Reappointment of Dr. Sajid S. Qaiser as District 18 Medical Examiner be TABLED until the next meeting of the MEC and pursuant to Rule 11G-5.004(2)(c) of the Florida Administrative Code, I am requesting that the

Commission chairman establish a committee to address concerns regarding the incumbent medical examiner raised in the survey response of the Public Defender.

Respectfully submitted,  
James S. Purdy  
Public Defender Representative  
Florida Medical Examiners Commission

Dr. Nelson recommended bifurcating the reappointment process by separating the District 18 issue from the reappointments for districts 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER SHEPPARD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KRAUSS AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY FOR THE COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND TO THE GOVERNOR THE REAPPOINTMENT OF THE FOLLOWING DISTRICT MEDICAL EXAMINERS:**

**DR. ROGER E. MITTLEMAN AS THE DISTRICT 19 MEDICAL EXAMINER;  
DR. MARTA U. COBURN AS THE DISTRICT 20 MEDICAL EXAMINER;  
DR. REBECCA A. HAMILTON AS THE DISTRICT 21 MEDICAL EXAMINER;  
DR. RIAZUL H. IMAMI AS THE DISTRICT 22 MEDICAL EXAMINER;  
DR. PREDRAG BULIC AS THE DISTRICT 23 MEDICAL EXAMINER;  
DR. MARIE A. HERRMANN AS THE DISTRICT 24 MEDICAL EXAMINER**

**NOTE: No other names were submitted to the Commission for consideration.**

Mr. Purdy made a motion that the Commission table the reappointment of Dr. Sajid Qaiser as the District 18 Medical Examiner until the next meeting of the Medical Examiners Commission, and that the Commission appoint a committee to address concerns regarding Dr. Qaiser that were raised in the survey response of the public defender. There was no second to the motion, and it died on the table.

Dr. Nelson asked Dr. Qaiser if he would like to respond to the concerns raised by Mr. Purdy. Dr. Qaiser said that while he did not understand everything that Mr. Purdy said, he would like to respond. Dr. Nelson explained to Dr. Qaiser that the previous Public Defender changed his original survey from unfavorable to favorable based upon a conversation with Dr. Qaiser, but that the new Public Defender is claiming that nothing has changed since that time, so he is unwilling to change his unfavorable comment. Ms. Corey asked Dr. Qaiser if he had actually met with the Public Defender, and Dr. Qaiser said that he met in person, and also sent an email to follow up on the conversation, and that a copy of the email was included in the Commission meeting package.

William Respass, J.D., chief trial attorney from the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office, spoke on Dr. Qaiser's behalf, and recommended that the Commission reappoint Dr. Qaiser.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER WHITMORE AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER COREY, FOR THE COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND TO THE GOVERNOR THE REAPPOINTMENT OF DR. SAJID S. QAISER AS THE DISTRICT 18 MEDICAL EXAMINER. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YEAS AND ONE NAY.**

**NOTE: No other names were submitted to the Commission for consideration.**



#### **ISSUE NUMBER 4: DISTRICT 16 VACANCY**

Dr. Nelson informed the Commission that E. Hunt Scheuerman, M.D. had tendered his resignation as the District 16 Medical Examiner effective June 20, 2014. State Attorney Katherine Vogel, 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, had appointed Thomas Beaver, M.D. as Interim District 16 Medical Examiner effective June 21, 2014. Ms. Edwards said that Ms. Vogel was in the process of appointing a search committee to fill the position.

Dr. Nelson advised that Dr. Beaver must update his Florida medical license prior to his assuming the duties of the Interim District 16 Medical Examiner. Dr. Beaver's medical license lapsed on January 31, 2014, and Dr. Beaver was in the process of fulfilling his continuing education requirements to activate his Florida medical license.

#### **ISSUE NUMBER 5: UNIDENTIFIED DECEASED INITIATIVE**

Mr. Culbertson informed the Commission that the Unidentified Deceased Initiative training video that was developed by FDLE's Bureau of Professional Development and Missing and Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) is complete and undergoing final edits. He said that he had hoped to have the video for this meeting, but MEPIC wants to show it at the next meeting of the MEC. He also complimented District 20 Medical Examiner Marta Coburn, M.D., for her presentation in the video.

Mr. Culbertson reported that there were two unidentified deceased success stories for this period — one from District 10 and one from District 6.

Dr. Nelson informed the Commission and those in attendance that, in the District 10 case, skeletal remains were found and DNA was sent to the University of North Texas (UNT) for analysis. In addition, a forensic artist was able to use the remains to render a facial image. With the DNA and the sketch, the remains were identified and the next of kin notified.

Mr. Bill Pellán informed the Commission that the District 6 case involved fingerprints from a 1981 case that were matched in the IAFIS for a positive identification because the victim had been arrested in Las Vegas just before he came to Florida.

He also discussed a case from the District 13 medical examiner's office in Tampa. In that case, skeletal remains were found. In February, the District 6 office assisted by extracting DNA from the remains and searching those remains through CODIS. This led to an identification of a former convicted offender, and allowed the District 13 office to identify the remains in one week.

Mr. Pellán went on to say that when Dr. Thogmartin took over the District 6 office in 2000, there were 32 unidentified cases. Since then, thirteen have been identified using the tools available to all medical examiners. He reminded everyone that they should be checking their unidentified deceased cases against the IAFIS list of known offenders. The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) recently added backlogged prints to the system. Additionally, enhanced software has been provided that identifies poor quality prints for possible matches.

**ISSUE NUMBER 6: 2014 EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE, JULY 16-18, 2014, ORLANDO, FLORIDA**

Dr. Bruce Goldberger informed the Commission that District 5 Medical Examiner Barbara Wolf, M.D., will be hosting the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Florida Association of Medical Examiner Educational Conference. The conference will be held July 16-18, 2014 in Orlando at the Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress. The room rate will be \$137.00 per night with the resort fee waived, and reduced self-parking fees. There is a great agenda set for this conference.

**ISSUE NUMBER 7: OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Robin Giddens Sheppard informed the Commission that Orlando and Punta Gorda have both passed resolutions and joined Sarasota County in recognizing domestic partnerships. This has the potential to cause confusion for the funeral home directors should a domestic partner have a different opinion from the legal next of kin, as defined by §497.005, Florida Statute, regarding the manner in which the decedent's remains should be disposed.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER WHITMORE AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SHEPPARD, FOR THE COMMISSION TO SEEK AN ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OPINION REGARDING THE DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP ORDINANCES. THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE YEAS, AND COMMISSIONER KRAUSS ABSTAINING.**

Dr. Nelson informed the Commission that District 2 Associate Medical Examiner Anthony Clark, M.D., had been recommended to replace Dr. Barbara Wolf on the statewide Child Abuse Death Review Team.

**With no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 A.M.**