

Medical Examiners Commission Meeting

October 31, 2023

Barbara C. Wolf, M.D. • Kenneth T. Jones • Nick Cox, J.D. • Charlie Cofer, J.D.

Robin Giddens Sheppard, L.F.D. • Sheriff Robert “Bob” Johnson

Joshua Stephany, M.D. • Michael A. Barnett, J.D. • Amira Fox, J.D.

MEDICAL EXAMINERS COMMISSION

Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.

Chairman

District 5/24 Medical Examiner
809 Pine Street
Leesburg, Florida 34748
(352) 326-5961
email: barbara.wolf@marioncountyfl.org
First Term: 8/7/2015-7/1/2019
Second Term: 2/10/2023 - 6/30/2023

Robin Giddens Sheppard, L.F.D.

Funeral Director/Vice President
Hardage-Giddens Funeral Homes
4801 San Jose Boulevard
Jacksonville, Florida 32207
(904) 737-7171
email: Robin.Sheppard@dignitymemorial.com
First Term: 8/15/2013-7/1/2016
Second Term: 08/29/2018-07/01/2020
Third Term: 2/10/2023 - 6/30/2024

Mr. Kenneth T. Jones

State Registrar
Florida Department of Health
Bureau of Vital Statistics
Post Office Box 210
Jacksonville, Florida 32231
(904) 359-6900 ext. 1001
email: Ken.Jones@flhealth.gov
Term: Not Applicable

Honorable Amira Fox, J.D.

State Attorney
20th Judicial Circuit
PO Box 399
Fort Myers, Florida 33902
(239) 533-1100
email: afox@sao20.org
First Term: 2/10/2023 - 6/30/2023

Joshua Stephany, M.D.

District 9/25 Medical Examiner
2350 East Michigan Street
Orlando, Florida 32806
(407) 836-9400
email: joshua.stephany@ocfl.net
First Term: 2/10/2023 - 6/30/2024

Honorable Charlie Cofer, J.D.

Public Defender, 4th Judicial Circuit
407 N. Laura Street
Jacksonville, Florida 32202
(904) 255-4673
email: ccofer@pd4.coj.net
First Term: 08/29/2018-07/01/2021
Second Term: 2/10/2023 - 6/30/2025

Nick Cox, J.D.

Statewide Prosecutor
Office of the Attorney General
3507 E. Frontage Road, Suite 325
Tampa, Florida 33607
813-287-7960
email: nick.cox@myfloridalegal.com
Term: Not Applicable

Honorable Michael A. Barnett

Palm Beach County Commissioner
301 North Olive Ave. Suite 1201
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401
(561) 355-2203
email: mbarnett@pbcgov.org
First Term: 2/10/2023 - 6/30/2025

Honorable Robert "Bob" Johnson

Sheriff
Santa Rosa County
5755 East Milton Road
Milton, Florida 32583
(850) 983-1100
email: rjohnson@srsso.net
First Term: 2/10/2023 - 6/30/2025

STAFF

Medical Examiners Commission
Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Post Office Box 1489
Tallahassee, Florida 32302
(850) 410-8600

Bureau Chief Brett Kirkland, Ph. D.
(850) 410-8600
brettkirkland@fdle.state.fl.us

Government Analyst II Megan Neel
(850) 410-8664
meganneel@fdle.state.fl.us

Government Analyst II Ashley Williams
(850) 410-8609
ashleywilliams@fdle.state.fl.us

General Counsel James Martin, J.D.
(850) 410-7676
jamesmartin@fdle.state.fl.us

FLORIDA DISTRICT MEDICAL EXAMINERS

District 1

Deanna Oleske, M.D.

Interim Medical Examiner
2114 Airport Blvd. Suite 1450
Pensacola, Florida 32504
Director of Operations Dan Schebler
(850) 332-7300
FAX: (850) 285-0774
e-mail: contactus@d1meo.org

District 2

Jon R. Thogmartin, M.D.

Interim Medical Examiner
560 Leonard Gray Way
Tallahassee, Florida 32304
Operations Manager Tiffany Poston
(850) 606-6600
FAX: (850) 606-6601
e-mail: Info@Dist2ME.org

District 3

Dixie Co.

ME Services Provided by District 3
Lafayette, Madison & Suwannee Co.

ME Services Provided by District 2
Columbia & Hamilton Co.

ME Services Provided by District 4

District 4

B. Robert Pietak, M.D.

Interim Medical Examiner
2100 Jefferson Street
Jacksonville, Florida 32206
Director of Operations Tim Crutchfield
(904) 255-4000
FAX: (904) 630-0964
e-mail: tcrutchfield@coj.net

District 5

Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.

809 Pine Street
Leesburg, Florida 34748
Director of Operations Lindsey Bayer
(352) 326-5961
FAX: (352) 365-6438
e-mail: Lindsey.Bayer@marioncounty.fl.org

District 6

Jon R. Thogmartin, M.D.

10900 Ulmerton Road
Largo, Florida 33778
Chief Investigator Damon Breton
(727) 582-6800
FAX: (727) 582-6820
e-mail: dbreton@co.pinellas.fl.us

District 7 (Home Rule)

James W. Fulcher, M.D.

1360 Indian Lake Road
Daytona Beach, FL 32124-1001
Director of Operations Karla Orozco
(386) 258-4060
FAX: (386) 258-4061
e-mail: korozco@volusia.org

District 8

Thomas M. Coyne, M.D., Ph.D

Medical Examiner
3217 SW 47th Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32608
Operations Manager Ricardo Camacho
(352) 273-9292
FAX: (352) 273-9288
e-mail: ricardocamacho@ufl.edu

District 9 (Home Rule)

Joshua D. Stephany, M.D.

2350 East Michigan Street
Orlando, Florida 32806
Program Manager Sheri Blanton
(407) 836-9400
FAX: (407) 836-9450
e-mail: Sheri.Blanton@ocfl.net

District 10

Stephen J. Nelson, M.A., M.D., F.C.A.P.

1021 Jim Keene Boulevard
Winter Haven, Florida 33880
Office Manager Sheli Wilson
(863) 298-4600
FAX: (863) 298-5264
e-mail: StephenNelson@polk-county.net

District 11 (Home Rule)

Kenneth Hutchins, M.D.

Medical Examiner
Number One on Bob Hope Road
Miami, Florida 33136-1133
Director of Operations Sandra Boyd
(305) 545-2400
FAX: (305) 545-2412
e-mail: sandra.boyd@miamidade.gov

District 12

Russell S. Vega, M.D.

4510 Fruitville Road
Sarasota, Florida 34232
Director of Operations David Winterhalter
(941) 361-6909
FAX: (941) 361-6914
email: rvega@fldist12me.com

District 13 (Home Rule)

Kelly G. Devers, M.D.

11025 North 46th Street
Tampa, Florida 33617
Manager of Operations Harrison Cowan
(813) 914-4500
FAX: (813) 914-4594
email: DeversK@hillsboroughcounty.org

District 14

Jay Radtke, M.D.

3737 Frankford Avenue
Panama City, Florida 32405
Director of Operations Whit Majors
(850) 747-5740
FAX: (850) 747-5745
e-mail: wmajors@baycountyfl.gov

District 15 (Home Rule)

Catherine R. Miller, M.D.

Medical Examiner
3126 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406
Forensic Supervisor Ralph Saccone
(561) 688-4575
FAX: (561) 688-4588
e-mail: rsaccone@pbcgov.org

District 16

Michael Steckbauer, M.D.

Interim Medical Examiner
56639 Overseas Hwy
Marathon, Florida 33050
(305) 743-9011
FAX: (305) 743-9013
e-mail: meo@monroecounty-fl.gov

District 17 (Home Rule)

Rebecca MacDougall, M.D.

Medical Examiner
5301 S.W. 31st Avenue
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33312
Division Admin Assistant Heather Galvez
(954) 357-5200
FAX: (954) 327-6580
e-mail: rmacdougall@broward.org

District 18

Sajid S. Qaiser, M.D.

1750 Cedar Street
Rockledge, Florida 32955
Program Manager Michael Szczepanski
(321) 633-1981
FAX: (321) 633-1986
e-mail: michael.szczepanski@brevardfl.gov

District 19

Patricia A. Aronica, M.D.

Interim Medical Examiner
2500 South 35th Street
Ft. Pierce, Florida 34981
Operations Manager Kimberly Carroll
(772) 464-7378
FAX: (772) 464-2409
e-mail: carrollk@stlucieco.org

District 20

Marta U. Coburn, M.D.

3838 Domestic Avenue
Naples, Florida 34104
Administrative Coordinator Michelle Correia
(239) 434-5020
FAX: (239) 434-5027
e-mail: naplesme@d20me.net

District 21

Rebecca A. Hamilton, M.D.

70 South Danley Drive
Ft. Myers, Florida 33907
Director of Operations Patti Wheaton
(239) 533-6339
FAX: (239) 277-5017
e-mail: pwheaton@leegov.com

District 22

Russell S. Vega, M.D.

Interim Medical Examiner
18130 Paulson Drive
Pt. Charlotte, Florida 33954
Director of Operations Penny Fulton
(941) 625-1111
FAX: (941) 627-0995
e-mail: pfulton@district22me.com

District 23

Wendolyn Sneed, M.D.

Medical Examiner
4501 Avenue A
St. Augustine, Florida 32095
Forensic Operations Coordinator Kelly Boulos
(904) 209-0820
FAX: (800) 255-8617
e-mail: kboulos@sjcfl.us

District 24

Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.

ME Services Provided by District 5

District 25 (Home Rule)

Joshua D. Stephany, M.D.

ME Services Provided by District 9

FLORIDA ASSOCIATE MEDICAL EXAMINERS

District 1

Lorraine Lopez-Morell, M.D.
Michael Pagacz, M.D.
(Danielle R. Armstrong, D.O.)
(Wilson A. Broussard, M.D.)
(Thomas M. Coyne, M.D., Ph.D.)
(Jennifer Dierksen, M.D.)
(Lisa Flannagan, M.D.)
(Ami Murphy, D.O.)
(Maneesha Pandey, M.D.)
(Jay M. Radtke, M.D.)

District 2

Lisa M. Flannagan, M.D.
Jan M. Gorniak, D.O.
(Noel R. Agudo, M.D.)
(Thomas M. Coyne, M.D., Ph.D.)
(Susan S. Ignacio, M.D.)
(Kailee Imperatore, M.D.)
(Andrew Koopmeiners, M.D.)
(Wayne D. Kurz, M.D.)
(Noel A. Palma, M.D.)
(Heidi Reinhard, M.D.)
(Jason R. Van Roo, M.D.)

District 3

Dixie Co.
ME Services Provided by District 8
Lafayette, Madison, & Suwannee Co.
ME Services Provided by District 2
Columbia & Hamilton Co.
ME Services Provided by District 4

District 4

Robert Buchsbaum, M.D., J.D.
Peter Gillespie, M.D.
Brittany L. Glad, D.O.
Aurelian Nicolaescu, M.D.
Robert R. Pfalzgraf, M.D.
Sandra A. Siller, M.D.
(Leszek Chrostowski, M.D.)
(William F. Hamilton, M.D.)
(Iana Lesnikova, M.D.)
(Deanna A. Oleske, M.D.)
(Valerie J. Rao, M.D.)
(Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.)

District 5

Tracey S. Corey, M.D.
Wendy A. Lavezzi, M.D.
Shanedelle S. Norford, M.D.
(Noel R. Agudo, M.D.)
(Michael Bell, M.D.)
(Thomas M. Coyne, M.D., Ph.D.)
(James W. Fulcher, M.D.)
(William F. Hamilton, M.D.)
(Susan S. Ignacio, M.D.)
(Kailee Imperatore, M.D.)
(Wayne D. Kurz, M.D.)
(Andrew Koopmeiners, M.D.)
(Rachel A. Lange, M.D.)
(Aurelian Nicolaescu, M.D.)
(Chantel Njiwaji, M.D.)
(Noel A. Palma, M.D.)
(Joshua D. Stephany, M.D.)
(Jon Thogmartin, M.D.)
(Gary L. Utz, M.D.)
(Jason R. Van Roo, M.D.)

District 6

Noel R. Agudo, M.D.
Susan S. Ignacio, M.D.
Kailee Imperatore, M.D.
Wayne D. Kurz, M.D.
Andrew Koopmeiners, M.D.
Noel A. Palma, M.D.
Jason R. Van Roo, M.D.
(Wilson A. Broussard, M.D.)
(Marcela Chiste, M.D.)
(Tracey S. Corey, M.D.)
(Thomas M. Coyne, M.D., Ph.D.)
(Rebecca A. Hamilton, M.D.)
(Tera A. Jones, M.D.)
(Wendy A. Lavezzi, M.D.)
(Rebecca MacDougall, M.D.)
(Stephen J. Nelson, M.D.)
(Shanedelle S. Norford, M.D.)
(Mark J. Shuman, M.D.)
(Phouthasone Thirakul, M.D.)
(Suzanne R. Utley-Bobak, M.D.)
(Russell S. Vega, M.D.)
(Vera V. Volnikh, M.D.)
(Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.)

District 7

Mary G. Ripple, M.D.
(Noel R. Agudo, M.D.)
(Marcela Chiste, M.D.)
(Susan S. Ignacio, M.D.)
(Kailee Imperatore, M.D.)
(Wayne D. Kurz, M.D.)
(Rebecca MacDougall, M.D.)
(Shanedelle S. Norford, M.D.)
(Noel A. Palma, M.D.)
(Jon R. Thogmartin, M.D.)
(Lee Tormos, M.D.)

District 8

(Robert Buchsbaum, M.D., J.D.)
(Leszek Chrostowski, M.D.)
(Tracey S. Corey, M.D.)
(Peter Gillespie, M.D.)
(Tera A. Jones, M.D.)
(Wendy A. Lavezzi, M.D.)
(Stephen J. Nelson, M.D.)
(Aurelian Nicolaescu, M.D.)
(Deanna A. Oleske, M.D.)
(Jon R. Thogmartin, M.D.)
(Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.)

District 9

Joy Edegbe, M.D.
Jesse C. Giles, M.D.
Marie H. Hansen, M.D.
Rachel A. Lange, M.D.
Chantel Njiwaji, M.D.
Sara H. Zydowicz, D.O.
(Cassie Boggs, M.D.)
(Tracy S. Corey, M.D.)
(James Fulcher, M.D.)
(Heather M. Gage, M.D.)
(D. Fintan Garavan, M.D., Ph.D.)
(Julia V. Hegert, M.D.)
(Tera A. Jones, M.D.)
(Wendy Lavezzi, M.D.)
(Shanedelle S. Norford, M.D.)
(Stephen J. Nelson, M.D.)
(Mary G. Ripple, M.D.)
(Sajid S. Qaiser, M.D.)
(Vera V. Volnikh, M.D.)
(Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.)

District 10

D. Fintan Garavan, M.D., Ph.D.
Vera V. Volnikh, M.D.
(Kelly G. Devers, M.D.)
(Susan S. Ignacio, M.D.)
(Wayne D. Kurz, M.D.)
(Wendy Lavezzi, M.D.)
(Ryan D. McCormick, M.D.)
(Daissy C. McEnnan, M.D.)
(Noel A. Palma, M.D.)
(Ashley R. Perkins, D.O.)
(Jon R. Thogmartin, M.D.)
(Milad Webb, M.D.)
(Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.)

District 11

Nicholas Barna, M.D.
Alexander Blank, M.D.
Chelsea Cornell, M.D.
Katherine Kenerson, M.D.
Thomas Koster, M.D.
Benjamin Mathis, M.D.
Yanel De Los Santos, M.D.
Calvin Streeter, M.D.
Tuyet Tran, M.D.
(Michael D. Bell, M.D.)
(Iouri G. Boiko, M.D., Ph.D.)
(Manfred Borges, M.D.)
(Marcela Chiste, M.D.)
(Marta Coburn, M.D.)
(Gertrude M. Juste, M.D.)
(Rebecca MacDougall, M.D.)
(Craig Mallak, M.D.)
(Linda R. O'Neil, M.D.)
(Marlon S. Osbourne, M.D.)
(Stephen Robinson, M.D.)
(Stacey A. Simons, M.D.)
(Terrill Tops, M.D.)
(Lee Marie Tormos, M.D.)

District 12

Wilson A. Broussard, M.D.
Timothy J. Gallagher, M.D.
Phouthasone Thirakul, M.D.
Suzanne R. Utley-Bobak, M.D.
(Leszek Chrostowski, M.D.)
(Laura S. Hair, M.D.)
(William F. Hamilton, M.D.)
(Stephen J. Nelson, M.D.)
(Robert R. Pfalzgraf, M.D.)
(Valerie J. Rao, M.D.)
(Daniel L. Schultz, M.D.)
(Wendolyn Sneed, M.D.)

District 13

Ryan D. McCormick, M.D.
Daissy C. McEnnan, M.D.
Paul F. McGowan, D.O.
Ashley R. Perkins, D.O.
Noah D. Reilly, D.O.
Milad Webb, M.D.
(Leszek Chrostowski, M.D.)
(Thomas M. Coyne, M.D.)
(D. Fintan Garavan, M.D., Ph.D.)
(Mary K. Mainland, M.D.)
(Stephen J. Nelson, M.D.)
(Phouthasone Thirakul, M.D.)
(Vera V. Volnikh, M.D.)
(Sara H. Zydowicz, D.O.)

District 14

(Michael D. Bell, M.D.)
(Phouthasone Thirakul, M.D.)
(Tim J. Gallagher, M.D., M.H.S.A.)
(Katherine L. Kenerson, M.D.)
(Andrea N. Minyard, M.D.)
(Mark J. Shuman, M.D.)

District 15

Natalia Belova, M.D.
Marlon S. Osbourne, M.D.
Heidi Reinhard, M.D.
Terrill Tops, M.D.
Lee Marie Tormos, M.D.
Anthony Vinson, DO
(Michael Bell, M.D.)
(Kenneth D. Hutchins, M.D.)
(Stacey A. Simons, M.D.)
(Mark J. Shuman, M.D.)
(Michael Steckbauer, M.D.)
(Jon Thogmartin, M.D.)

District 16

(Iouri G. Boiko, M.D. Ph.D.)
(Marlon S. Osbourne, M.D.)
(Mark J. Shuman, M.D.)

District 17

Omar Ansari, M.D.
Abigail Alexander, M.D.
Iouri G. Boiko, M.D., Ph.D.
Marcela Chiste, M.D.
Erin Ely, M.D.
Alexis Jelinek, M.D.
Gertrude M. Juste, M.D.
Stephen Robinson, M.D.
Darin Trelka, M.D., Ph.D.
(Joseph M. Curran, M.D.)
(Kenneth Hutchins, M.D.)
(Katherine L. Kenerson, M.D.)
(Emma O. Lew, M.D.)
(Benjamin Mathis, M.D.)
(Wendolyn Sneed, M.D.)

District 18

Matrina J. Schmidt, M.D.

District 19

Raman Baldizhar, M.D.
Barbara Bollinger, M.D.
Adrienne Sauder, M.D.
(Michael D. Bell, M.D.)
(Joseph M. Curran, M.D.)
(Marie H. Hansen, M.D.)
(Gertrude M. Juste, M.D.)
(Wendy A. Lavezzi, M.D.)
(Rebecca M. MacDougall, M.D.)
(Stephen J. Nelson, M.D.)
(Joshua D. Stephany, M.D.)
(Sajid S. Qaiser, M.D.)
(Mark J. Shuman, M.D.)
(Vera V. Volnikh, M.D.)
(Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.)
(Sara H. Zydowicz, D.O.)

District 20

Manfred Borges, Jr., M.D.
Andrea N. Minyard, M.D.
(Michael D. Bell, M.D.)
(Rebecca A. Hamilton, M.D.)
(Emma O. Lew, M.D.)

District 21

Colin D. Appleford, D.O.
Noelia Alemar Hernandez, M.D.
Tracy L. Shipe, D.O.
Sarah C. Thomas, M.D.
(Michael D. Bell, M.D.)
(Manfred C. Borges, M.D.)
(Wilson A. Broussard, Jr., M.D.)
(Leszek Chrostowski, M.D.)
(Marta U. Coburn, M.D.)
(Riazul H. Imami, M.D., Ph.D.)
(Katherine L. Kenerson, M.D.)
(Rachel A. Lange, M.D.)
(Stephen J. Nelson, M.D.)
(Valerie J. Rao, M.D.)
(Mark J. Shuman, M.D.)
(Phouthasone Thirakul, M.D.)
(Vera V. Volnikh, M.D.)

District 22

Leszek Chrostowski, M.D.
Timothy J. Gallagher, M.D.
Valerie J. Rao, M.D.
(Wilson A. Broussard, Jr., M.D.)
(Phouthasone Thirakul, M.D.)
(Suzanne R. Utley-Bobak, M.D.)

District 23

Iana Lesnikova, M.D.
(Cassie L. Boggs, M.D.)
(James W. Fulcher, M.D.)
(Mary G. Ripple, M.D.)

District 24

ME Services Provided by District 5

District 25

ME Services Provided by District 9

Coverage Map

Florida Medical Examiner Districts

District 1

Escambia
Okaloosa
Santa Rosa
Walton

District 2

Franklin
Gadsden
Jefferson
Leon
Liberty
Taylor
Wakulla

District 3 *Covered by

Columbia *4
Dixie *8
Hamilton *4
Lafayette *2
Madison *2
Suwannee *2

District 4

Clay
Duval
Nassau

District 5

Citrus
Hernando
Lake
Marion
Sumter

District 6

Pasco
Pinellas

District 7

Volusia

District 8

Alachua
Baker
Bradford
Gilchrist
Levy
Union

District 9

Orange

District 10

Hardee
Highlands
Polk

District 11

Miami-Dade

District 12

DeSoto
Manatee
Sarasota

District 13

Hillsborough

District 14

Bay
Calhoun
Gulf
Holmes
Jackson
Washington

District 15

Palm Beach

District 16

Monroe

District 17

Broward

District 18

Brevard

District 19

Indian River
Martin
Okeechobee
St. Lucie

District 20

Collier

District 21

Glades
Hendry
Lee

District 22

Charlotte

District 23

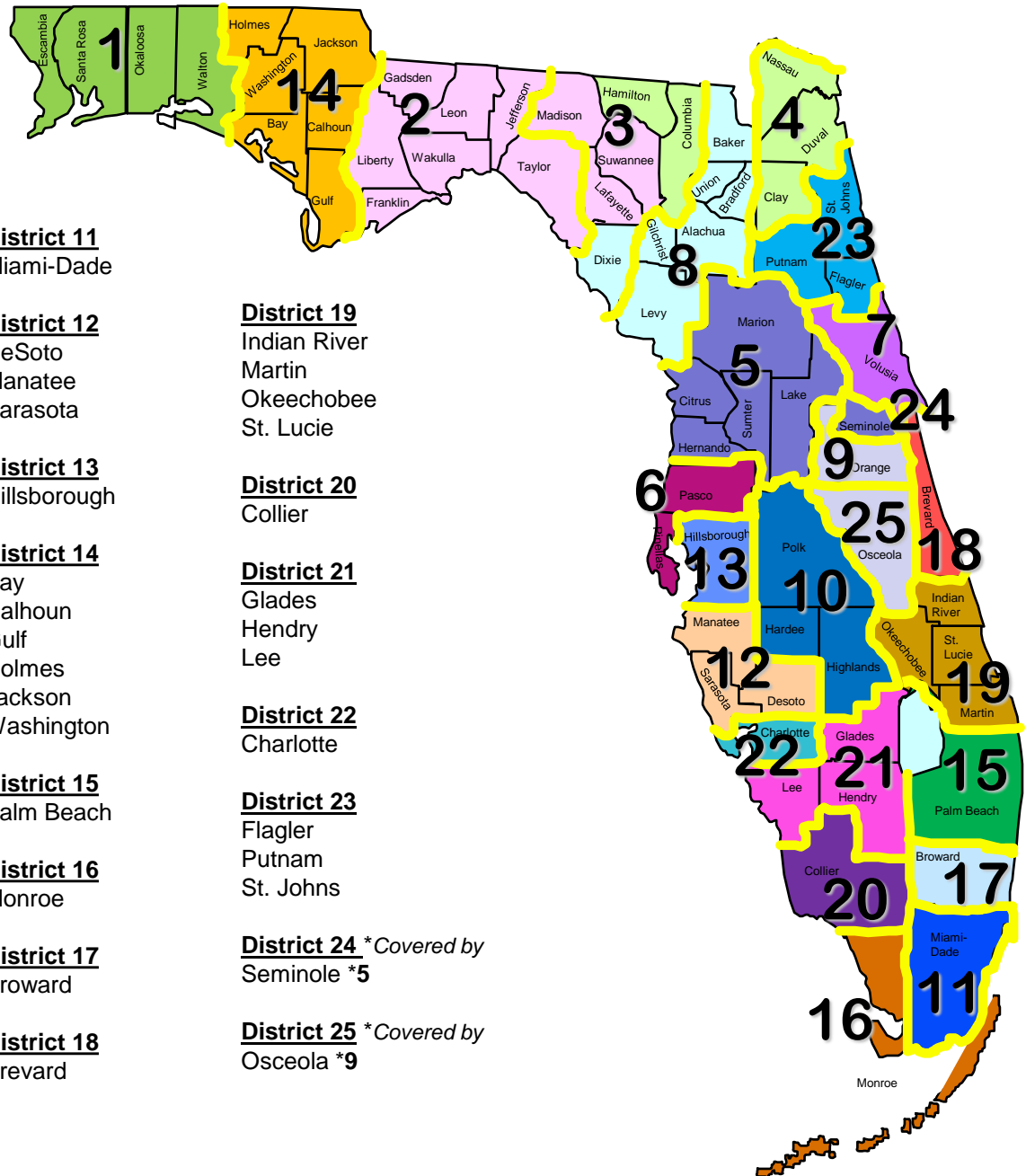
Flagler
Putnam
St. Johns

District 24 *Covered by

Seminole *5

District 25 *Covered by

Osceola *9



MEDICAL EXAMINERS COMMISSION MEETING
Embassy Suites by Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista South
4955 Kyngs Heath Road
Kissimmee, FL 34746
October 31, 2023, 10:00 AM

Opening Remarks

Introduction of Commission Members and Staff

Approval of Meeting Agenda and Minutes from previous Commission Meeting of July 19, 2023

<u>ISSUE NUMBER</u>	<u>PRESENTER</u>
1. Informational Items:	
• Status Update: MEC Appointments and Reappointments	Brett Kirkland, Ph.D.
○ Dr. Barbara C. Wolf	
○ Amira Fox	
• Status Update: DME Appointments and Reappointments	Brett Kirkland, Ph.D.
• District 2 Medical Examiner Vacancy	Joshua Stephany, M.D.
• 2022 Interim Drugs in Deceased Persons Report	Megan Neel
• 2022 Annual Drugs in Deceased Persons Report	Megan Neel
• 2022 Annual Workload Report	Megan Neel
• 2022 Coverdell Status Update	Ashley Williams
• 2023 Coverdell Status Update	Ashley Williams
2. Unidentified Deceased Initiative	Ashley Williams
3. Emerging Drugs	Brett Kirkland, Ph.D.
4. Other Business	Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.
• Resolution – Vickie Koenig	
• CONRAD 30 response from Dept. of Health	

The next MEC Meeting will be February 18th at the Orlando Lake Marriot in Lake Mary.

MEDICAL EXAMINERS COMMISSION MEETING

Omni Orlando at ChampionsGate
1500 Masters Boulevard
ChampionsGate, Florida 33896
July 19, 2023 10:00 AM EDT

Commission Chairman Barbara C. Wolf, M.D., called the meeting of the Medical Examiners Commission to order at **10:06 AM**. She advised those in the audience that the meetings of the Medical Examiners Commission are open to the public and that members of the public will be allowed five minutes to speak. She then welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Commission members, staff, and audience members to introduce themselves.

Commission members present:

Barbara C. Wolf, M.D., Districts 5 & 24 Medical Examiner
Nick Cox, J.D., Statewide Prosecutor, Office of the Attorney General
Robin Giddens Sheppard, L.F.D., Funeral Director
Kenneth T. Jones, State Registrar, Department of Health
Hon. Charlie Cofer, J.D., Public Defender, 4th Judicial Circuit
Joshua Stephany, M.D., Districts 9 & 25 Medical Examiner
Hon. Amira Fox, J.D., State Attorney, 20th Judicial Circuit
Hon. Robert "Bob" Johnson, Santa Rosa County Sheriff

Commission staff present:

Brett Kirkland, Ph.D.	Megan Neel
Chris Bufano, J.D.	Ashley Williams

District Medical Examiners present:

Jon R. Thogmartin, M.D. (District 2, 6, & 23)	Patricia A. Aronica, M.D. (District 19)
Russell S. Vega, M.D. (District 12)	Deanna Oleske, M.D. (District 1)
Thomas M. Coyne, M.D., Ph.D. (District 8)	Sajid S. Qaiser, M.D. (District 18)

Other District personnel present:

Bruce Goldberger, Ph. D. (District 8)	Lindsey Bayer (District 5 & 24)
Karla Orozco (District 7)	Penny Fulton (District 22)
Thomas Steinkamp (District 17)	Kailee Imperatore, M.D. (District 6)
Wendy Lavezzi, M.D. (District 5 & 24)	Kelly Root (District 1)
Natalia Belova, M.D. (District 15)	Brittany L. Glad, D.O. (District 4)
Erin Ely, M.D. (District 17)	Damon Breton (District 6)

Guests present:

Tinene Alter (NMS Labs)	Alexis DiBlanda (FDOH)
James Rosa (Lions Eye Institute)	Diana Prieto (FDOH)
Merredith Touns (LifeNet)	Chris Boden (Citizen)
Teresa Matthew (FDOH)	Sherry Groover (Citizen)
Christina During (FDOH)	

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 MAY 19, 2023 MEDICAL EXAMINERS COMMISSION MEETING.

ISSUE NUMBER 1: INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- Status Report: DME Appointment Ratifications: Bureau Chief Brett Kirkland, Ph.D., advised that a letter was sent to the Governor's Appointment Office confirming the ratifications of all appointments and reappointments of District Medical Examiners by the Commission. Dr. Kirkland advised that we are currently awaiting appointments from the Governor's Appointment Office. Mr. Cox inquired if the hiring of new pathologists has improved since the Commission has voted to appoint and reappoint all of the District Medical Examiners. Dr. Wolf advised the real issue with the medical examiner vacancies is the national shortage of forensic pathologists and the fact that many offices are not able to offer competitive salaries to compete with nationwide offices.
- District 2 Medical Examiner Vacancy: Dr. Joshua Stephany informed the Commission that there were 3 candidates who have applied but 1 candidate had withdrawn. The District 2 search committee decided to reconvene in the fall to allow more time for candidates to apply. Dr. Stephany advised that Dr. Jon Thogmartin will continue to provide assistance until the vacancy is filled.
- 2022 Interim Drug Report: Mrs. Megan Neel informed the Commission that the 2022 Interim Drug Report was published to the MEC website on July 10, 2023. Mrs. Neel advised that if you like a copy, to contact her and she will email a copy.
- 2022 Annual Drug Report: Mrs. Megan Neel informed the Commission that all data has been received and sent to QAC for review.
- 2022 Annual Workload Report: Mrs. Megan Neel advised that she has received data from all but one district. Once received, all data will be complied and published.
- 2022 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant Program Status Update: Mrs. Ashley Williams informed the Commission that Bureau of Justice Assistance has released the funding for the 2022 Coverdell Grant and the award packages were sent out electronically on April 22, 2023. Mrs. Williams advised that districts cannot be reimbursed until the completed MOUs have been signed and returned to the grant manager.
- 2023 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant Program Status Update: Mrs. Ashley Williams informed the Commission that eleven districts have sent proposals for the 2023 Coverdell Grant. The M. E. allotment total is \$51,440. Mrs. Williams advised that the funds are not expected to be released until 2024.

ISSUE NUMBER 2: NOMINATION FOR DISTRICT 22 MEDICAL EXAMINER

- New District 22 Medical Examiner: Honorable Amira Fox informed the Commission that the District 22 search committee has completed the search and will recommending Dr. Russell Vega as the District Medical Examiner.

WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, MR. COX MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATION OF DR. RUSSELL VEGA TO THE GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENT OFFICE FOR THE DISTRICT 22 MEDICAL EXAMINER. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO RECOMMEND DR. RUSSELL VEGA TO THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE AS THE DISTRICT 22 MEDICAL EXAMINER.

ISSUE NUMBER 3: "DEATH, DIGNITY AND JEWISH CULTURE" PRESENTED BY RABBI MARK ROSENBERG

- Dr. Barbara Wolf advised that unfortunately Rabbi Mark Rosenberg was unable to attend, therefore the presentation will be rescheduled at a later date.

ISSUE NUMBER 4: UNIDENTIFIED DECEASED INITIATIVE

Mrs. Williams reported the following success stories from District 17.

- On February 18, 1984, an unidentified white female was found decomposed in a canal in Davie, Florida. Her death was ruled a homicide and fingerprints were searched with negative results. In 2006, DNA was submitted and entered into CODIS. In 2022, genetic genealogy was performed which led law enforcement to a possible family member. Detectives collected DNA from a possible daughter of the unidentified decedent. In May of 2023, the DNA comparison identified the decedent as a 1984 missing 23-year-old female. The decedent's family was notified of the positive identification and law enforcement is actively investigating the case.
- On December 19, 1998, an unidentified female was found in the Everglades in Western Broward County. Her death was ruled a homicide and fingerprints were searched with negative results. In 2007, DNA was submitted and in 2013 fingerprints were resent to FDLE with negative results. In 2022, genetic genealogy was performed which led law enforcement to a possible family member. Detectives collected DNA from a possible son of the unidentified decedent. In March 2023, the DNA comparison identified the decedent as a 1998 missing 41-year-old female. The decedent's family was notified of the positive identification and law enforcement is actively investigating the case.
- On March 25, 2023, an unidentified male was found partially skeletonized wrapped in a sheet off a dirt road in a remote area of the Miccosukee Indian Reservation in western Broward County. At the time of **discovery**, the decedent was unknown and there were no leads on his identification. On March 26, 2023, Broward Medical Examiner staff received a phone call from a concerned citizen looking for her friend who went missing around suspicious circumstances. Medical Examiner staff obtained the physical description details of the missing person and compared them to our unidentified cases. The information provided by the caller had similarities to the unidentified remains found on March 25, 2023. Medical Examiner staff notified the lead law enforcement agency of the call and started to gather further information to confirm the identification. On March 28, 2023, positive identification was made by antemortem radiographs and matching serial numbers on implanted hardware. The decedent's family was notified of the death and law enforcement is actively investigating the case.

Mrs. Williams reported the following success story from District 19.

- On January 20, 2023, fully skeletonized, incomplete remains were discovered in a wooded area adjacent to a retention pond in Fort Pierce Florida. The remains were examined at the District 19 Medical Examiner's Office by Dr. Patricia Aronica and subsequently evaluated by Forensic Odontologist Dr. Walter Zoller and the C.A. Pound Human Identification Laboratory. Initial evaluation determined the remains to be those of a male individual, that likely identified as White/Caucasian, in his 40's to 50's by anthropological assessment and average age of 25.67 by odontologic assessment. There was no perimortem trauma. Evidence of healed right shoulder stabilization surgery was noted. Time since death was estimated to be at least a year to a few years. No cause of death could be established. The case report was finalized pending DNA profile establishment on April 26, 2023, and the individual was entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database. Two molar teeth were sent to the Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory in order to establish a DNA profile for CODIS. On June 2, 2023, a Type I association was made between this case and a convicted offender database out of Pennsylvania. He was positively identified as a White/Caucasian male with a

birthdate of 09/01/1991. Notification was made by Fort Pierce Police Department to his mother who reported that she had not heard from her son in two years. His last known residence an extended stay motel in Fort Pierce, Florida. He was incarcerated in Pennsylvania for 8 years. During that time, he was known to have had shoulder surgery. He was reported to have been suicidal for much of his life and known to use illicit substances. The cause and manner of death both remain undetermined at this time.

ISSUE NUMBER 5: EMERGING DRUGS

Bruce Goldberger, Ph.D., provided the Commission with an update on current drug trends. Illicitly manufactured fentanyl continues to be frequently identified in decedents. Polysubstance use with fentanyl is common and includes cocaine and/or methamphetamine along with other substances associated with ingestion such as xylazine. Dr. Goldberger advise that in the northeast region of the United States, there is a strong connection between xylazine and skin lesions. Alpha- PiHP, a cathinone, has become prevalent in Broward County. There was also an increasing prevalence of N,N-Dimethylpentylone in decedents as well as reports of the designer benzodiazepine, flualprazolam, in decedents in the Gainesville area. Dr. Goldberger advised that he does not have an update on data from the OD2A (Overdose Data to Action), he was hoping to have a report regarding the funding for labs but advised all offices were given the opportunity to participate in receiving funding for months of May and June, and June and July. Dr. Goldberger encouraged districts to participate in the program to receive those funds. Dr. Goldberger also noted that FROST (Florida drug-related outcomes surveillance and tracking system) will be updated shortly with the interim drug data. Furthermore, Dr. Goldberger informed the Commission that the toxicology laboratory directors meeting has expanded to include directors from DUI labs, the Poison Control Center of Jacksonville, and representatives from the Department of Health. Directors and representatives met on Monday, July 10, 2023, and continue to provide valuable information on emerging drug trends. Mr. Ken Jones advised that looking at the OD2A grant he noticed that there were still some districts not utilizing the funds and asked if the Florida Department of Health can assist the districts with utilizing the funding. Mr. Jones advised the districts that if they are encountering issues with the city or county budgets in utilizing the OD2A funds, to contact him and he will work with them on rectifying the issues. Dr. Wolf recommended that districts be contacted to inquire why the OD2A funds are not being utilized.

ISSUE NUMBER 6: OTHER BUSSINESS

- Fatality Management Response Plan Update: Dr. Brett Kirkland informed the Commission of an update made to the State of Florida Fatality Management Response Plan of the Florida Medical Examiners Commission. Dr. Kirkland advised that on page 22, section K, Progress Reports and Public Information, states that daily reporting to the Medical Examiners Commission during a disaster event involves reporting all confirmed disaster-related deaths to include name, age, race, sex, and a brief synopsis. However, the Medical Examiners Commission has never asked for the names of decedents as this may compromise next-of-kin notification. Mr. Cox inquired if it was inadvertently put into the Florida Fatality Management Response Plan or if the Medical Examiners Commission has ever acquired the name of decedents of fatality. Dr. Kirkland advised that as far as record shows, the Medical Examiners Commission has never asked for the names of decedents to be reported. Mr. Charlie Cofer inquired how the Medical Examiners Commission can assure that there is not a duplicate. Dr. Wolf advised that at the time the fatality is submitted, other identifying factors are included, such as age, race, sex, county in which it occurred, a brief synopsis and a Medical Examiner's case number. Mr. Ken Jones also advised that the data received from the Medical Examiners Commission is crossed referenced with the data received to the Florida Department of Health Vital Statistics.

WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, MR. COX MADE A MOTION TO AMEND THE FATALITY MANAGEMENT RESPONSE PLAN TO REPLACE "NAME" WITH "ME CASE NUMBER". THE

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY THAT THE FATALITY MANAGEMENT RESPONSE PLAN WILL BE AMENDED TO REPLACE “NAME” WITH “ME CASE NUMBER”.

- Medical Examiner LIMS Surveillance Survey: Dr. Brett Kirkland informed the Commission of potential grant funding through the Department of Health in regards to modernizing the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) software within the medical examiner offices to establish a centralized reporting system. Dr. Kirkland advised that this is in the informational stage and he will be coordinating with the Department of Health to send out a survey to the medical examiner offices inquiring about the LIMS software that they use, the scope in which it is used, and if they would be interested in adopting a statewide LIMS software for centralized reporting.
- 2024 FAME Educational Conference: Dr. Goldberger announced that FAME will be celebrating its 50th year at the 2024 FAME Educational Conference. Dr. Goldberger reported that it is scheduled to be held July 17-19, 2024 at the Westin Sarasota in Sarasota, Florida. The event will be hosted by the District 22 Medical Examiner Dr. Russell Vega.
- A member of the audience spoke to the Commission regarding their experience with a transport company following the death of their child. While transport companies are outside the authority of the Commission, Commission members reiterated the importance of communicating with contractors who support operations to better serve the religious needs of families.

With no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 10:54 A.M.

Resolution

WHEREAS, the Medical Examiners Commission was created in 1970 by the passage of Chapter 406, Part I, Florida Statutes, also known as the Medical Examiners Act; and,

WHEREAS, this Commission plays a vital role in support of Florida's criminal justice system, to the families of the deceased in determining the cause and manner of death of their loved ones whose deaths come under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner, and by contributing to the protection of the public health of the citizens of Florida; and,

WHEREAS, the staff which serves the Medical Examiners Commission is housed within and supported by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement; and,

WHEREAS, Mrs. Vickie Koenig has served the citizens of Florida since 1992, and joined the staff of the Medical Examiners Commission in 2001; and,

WHEREAS, Mrs. Koenig's dedication to the Medical Examiners Commission has contributed greatly to the policies and rules that govern the medical examiners of this State, and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Koenig's insightful and thorough oversight of investigations has served to maintain the quality and integrity of the Florida medical examiner system and,

WHEREAS, Mrs. Koenig has not only earned the reputation as being an invaluable resource for the Medical Examiners Commission, but she has, above all, earned the reputation as being considerate, intelligent, and meticulous,

NOW THEREFORE, let it be resolved that this Commission on behalf of Florida's medical examiners, the medical-legal community, and all of the citizens of Florida whom she has served so well, does hereby recognize and commend Mrs. Vickie Koenig for the dedication and valuable service she has offered to the Florida medical examiners system and hopes that she maintains her success in future endeavors.

PASSED AND RECORDED, in the official minutes of the Medical Examiners Commission meeting on this Tuesday, the 31st day of October, 2023, in Kissimmee, Osceola County, Florida.

Medical Examiners Commission Chair

Barbara C. Wolf, M.D., *District 5/24 Medical Examiner*

Honorable Charlie Cofer, J.D., *Public Defender, 4th Judicial Circuit*

Robin Giddens Sheppard, *L.F.D.*

Kenneth T. Jones, *State Registrar*

Nick Cox, J.D., *Statewide Prosecutor, Office of the Attorney General*

Joshua Stephany, M.D., *District 9 Medical Examiner*

Honorable Amira Fox, J.D., *State Attorney, 20th Judicial Circuit*

Honorable Robert "Bob" Johnson, *Sheriff, Santa Rosa County*

Honorable Michael Barnett, *Palm Beach County Commission*



State of Florida Medical Examiners Commission

P.O. Box 1489 | Tallahassee, FL 32302-1489 | (850) 410-8600

September 5, 2023

Dr. Joseph Ladapo, M.D., Ph.D.
State Surgeon General
Florida Department of Health
4052 Bald Cypress Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Dr. Ladapo:

The Medical Examiners Commission requests that forensic pathologists be given top priority when determining sponsorship priorities for applications to the Conrad 30 program as per Rule 64W-1.005 F.A.C. Forensic pathologists are of vital importance and qualify as specialists under Rule 64W-1.002 F.A.C. Several other states have already recognized forensic pathology as a J-1 waiver specialty.

According to the workload report produced by the Florida Medical Examiners Commission, there has been a steady increase in the caseload for forensic pathologists in Florida (<http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MEC/Publications-and-Forms>). However, there remains a critical shortage of forensic pathologists throughout Florida and the country as recognized by the Florida Association of Medical Examiners (FAME) and the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME). Furthermore, the nature of the work in forensic pathology is challenging. Forensic pathology involves long working hours, exposure to distressing and graphic situations, and significant emotional demands. These factors, combined with limited resources and high caseloads, contribute to burnout and can deter medical professionals from pursuing or continuing a career in forensic pathology.

Florida has numerous forensic pathologist vacancies throughout the twenty-five medical examiner districts and international medical graduates can help fill these voids. The Conrad 30 program and other J-1 visa waiver programs provide an excellent avenue to improve access to the shortage of qualified forensic pathologists. Your support in this request would greatly assist in strengthening the workforce capacity of the medical examiner districts who serve the citizens of Florida.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.".

Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.
Chairman, Medical Examiners Commission

BCW/bk

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

September 27, 2023

Barbara C. Wolf, MD
Chairman, Medical Examiners Commission
P.O. Box 1489
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1489

Dear Dr. Wolf:

Thank you for your recent letter to State Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo, MD, PhD regarding the Conrad 30 program. Since the Conrad 30 program is administered by the Primary Care Office, please allow this correspondence to serve as a response on behalf of the Department of Health.

The Conrad 30 and other J-1 visa waiver programs provide an excellent avenue for states, including Florida, to improve access to primary care physicians and specialists, e.g., forensic pathologists. Recognizing the shortage of qualified medical examiners nationally, Florida is among the few states that provide waiver sponsorship for qualified forensic pathologists. Since 2021, the Department has provided waivers for Medical Examiners in Districts 1 and 19.

One of the most significant challenges in administering limited-participation programs, such as the Conrad 30 program, is achieving an effective balance in meeting the needs of our local and professional communities. Since 2016, Florida's Conrad 30 program sponsorships have featured a unique blend of professions. Over this period, primary care physicians represent an estimated 26 percent of Conrad 30 program sponsorships, and nearly three-quarters of sponsorships have supported various specialty types including forensic pathologists.

With the limited number of annual sponsorships available through the Department's Conrad 30 program, it is important to note that another J1 Visa program is available to support sponsorships across all of Florida's 67 counties. The J1 Visa waiver program, administered by the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) (<https://scrc.gov/>), could provide the most effective and immediate opportunity to address the vacancies across the medical examiner district network. For more information regarding the SCRC J1 Visa program, please contact Bevin Hunter by email at bhunter@scrc.gov.

We would welcome the opportunity to explore potential collaborative efforts with the Medical Examiners Commission and SCRC to strengthen the workforce capacity of the medical examiner districts serving Florida's citizens.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Johnson
Director, Primary Care Office