

Medical Examiners Commission

2003

ANNUAL REPORT

Published June 2004

Stephen J. Nelson, M.A., M.D.
Chairman

Jon R. Thogmartin, M.D. Honorable Bruce Colton, J.D. Sheriff Harrell Reid Mariana Caballero, L.F.D.
Ken Jones Honorable Lane Rees Honorable Robert H. Dillinger, J.D. Robert J. Krauss, J.D.

From the Chairman of the Medical Examiners Commission

On behalf of the Medical Examiners Commission, as its Chairman, I am pleased to submit this annual report to Governor Bush and to the Florida Legislature, “...*setting forth the activities and findings of the several district medical examiners*” as required by law. A copy of this annual report is also provided to each Board of County Commissioners, as it is county government that is the sole source of funding for Florida’s 24 medical examiner districts.

The Medical Examiners Commission welcomed two new members in 2003. Jon R. Thogmartin, M.D. from District 6 (Pinellas and Pasco Counties) replaced Valerie J. Rao, M.D. on the Commission as one of its two medical examiners. Dr. Rao failed to be reappointed as the District 5 Medical Examiner in 2003 and therefore lost her eligibility to serve on the Commission. Additionally, Mrs. Robin Giddens Sheppard retired from the Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics, after twenty years of service. Mrs. Sheppard had served on the Commission for the past eleven years. The Deputy State Registrar, Mr. Ken Jones, replaced her on the Commission.

The Commission continued its collaboration with FEMORS (Florida Emergency Mortuary Operations Response System) in creating contingency plans for mutual assistance among the 24 Medical Examiner Offices in the event of mass fatality situations, either man-made or natural. This group has been focusing on attempts to eventually provide trained personnel as well as supplying emergency equipment and supplies. Their services will ultimately be directed through the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

The Medical Examiners Commission continues to issue the Report of Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons. This report is the culmination of many hours of effort by District personnel as well as Commission staff to illuminate the tragic and continuing problem of both prescription and illicit drugs and has gained nationwide prominence as a model indicator for the problem of deaths caused by drug overdoses. This report is highlighted at Florida’s Annual Drug Summit as one of the indicators as to where to allocate law enforcement, education, and treatment resources in Florida.

Stephen J. Nelson, M.A., M.D., F.C.A.P.
Chairman, Medical Examiners Commission

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Table of Contents	1
Introduction.....	2
Commission Appointments and Reappointments.....	2
Commission Resignation ..	2
District Medical Examiner Reappointments of Districts 1, 2, 4, and 6.....	2
District Medical Examiner Appointments of Districts 5, 12, and 14.....	3
Probable Cause Panel.....	3
MEC Statute and Administrative Rule Changes.....	3
National Forensic Science Improvement Act.	3
Florida Emergency Mortuary Operations Response System (FEMORS) ..	4
Violent Crime and Drug Control Council.....	4
Florida Crime Laboratory Council ...	4
State Child Fatality Review Committee	5
Organ and Tissue Procurement and Transplantation Advisory Board.....	5
Annual Educational Conference	5
Attorney General Opinions	5
Executive Summary.....	7
Methodology.....	7
Table I 2003 District Demographics and Annual Workload Activity Reports	8
Table I-A Workload by Depth of Examination	9
Table II Cases Accepted Related to Total Population ..	10
Table III Autopsies Related to Total Deaths and to Population... ..	10
Table IV Percent of Medical Cases Autopsied	11
Table V Ranking Violent Death Rates.....	12
Table VI Ranking by Numbers of Violent Deaths.....	13
Table VII District Death Rates as Related to Autopsy Rates.....	13
Table VIII Fifteen Year Comparison of SIDS Deaths.....	14
Table IX Fifteen Year Comparison of Violent Death Rates.....	15
Chart Ia Medical Examiner Jurisdiction.....	16
Chart Ib Cases Reviewed by Medical Examiners.....	16
Chart IIa Violent vs. Non-Violent Deaths	17
Chart IIIb Violent Death Workload... ..	17
Chart IIIa Autopsy Workload as Percent of Total Population.....	18
Chart IIIb Autopsy Workload as Percent of Total Deaths	18
Chart IIIc Autopsy Workload as Percent of Deaths Referred	18
Chart IIId Autopsy Workload as Percent of Deaths Accepted.....	18
Chart IVa Workload by Depth of Examination - Homicide.....	19
Chart IVb Workload by Depth of Examination - Suicide	19
Chart IVc Workload by Depth of Examination - Undetermined... ..	19
Chart IVd Workload by Depth of Examination - Accident Motor Vehicle ..	19
Chart IVe Workload by Depth of Examination - Non-Motor Vehicle.....	19
Chart IVf Workload by Depth of Examination - Natural	19
Chart V Historical Workload – Cases Referred to Medical Examiners	20
Appendix 1 Medical Examiners Commission.....	21
Appendix 2 District Medical Examiners.....	22
Appendix 3 Associate Medical Examiners	23
Appendix 4 Map of Florida Depicting Medical Examiners Districts	24
Appendix 5 Florida Attorney General Advisory Legal Opinion 2003-25.....	25
Appendix 6 2003 Report of Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons.. ..	28

INTRODUCTION

The Medical Examiners Act, Chapter 406 Part I, Florida Statutes, was enacted by the 1970 Legislature in order to establish minimum and uniform standards of excellence in statewide medical examiner services. Section 406.02(4)(a), Florida Statutes, requires a report to the Governor and to the Legislature correlating and setting forth the activities and findings of the several district medical examiners. This report is submitted in compliance with the requirement cited above and illustrates the direction taken by the Medical Examiners Commission during 2003 to assure the maintenance of an effective and viable program of medical examiner services throughout Florida.

COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS AND REAPPOINTMENTS

Since Dr. Valerie J. Rao was not reappointed to her position as District 5 Medical Examiner, she was no longer eligible to serve as one of the Medical Examiner Representatives on the Medical Examiners Commission. In August of 2003 Governor Jeb Bush appointed Dr. Jon R. Thogmartin, the District 6 Medical Examiner, to serve a four year term as a District Medical Examiner on the Commission. Before being appointed the District 6 Medical Examiner in 2000, Dr. Thogmartin was the District 15 Medical Examiner in Palm Beach County.

State Attorney Bruce Colton was reappointed for another four year term by Governor Jeb Bush as the State Attorneys' Representative on the Medical Examiners Commission.

COMMISSION RESIGNATION

Mrs. Robin Giddens Sheppard announced her retirement from the Department of Health in December of 2003 and as a result the resignation from her position as the Vital Statistics Representative on the Commission. She planned to return to work at her family business of Hardage-Giddens Funeral Homes in Jacksonville. Mrs. Sheppard had served on the Commission since 1992.

Department of Health Secretary, Dr. John O. Agwunobi, appointed Mr. Ken Jones to represent the Department of Health (DOH) on the Commission. Mr. Jones has been the Deputy State Registrar for the Office of Vital Statistics for twenty years and also serves on the Child Fatality Review Team. Before coming to the Office of Vital Statistics Mr. Jones worked with Blue Cross/Blue Shield for ten years.

DISTRICT MEDICAL EXAMINER REAPPOINTMENTS

In 2003 the District Medical Examiners from Districts 1, 2, 4, and 6 were reappointed by the Governor for additional three year terms:

District 1:	Dr. Gary D. Cumberland
District 2:	Dr. David T. Stewart
District 4:	Dr. Margarita Arruza
District 6:	Dr. Jon R. Thogmartin

DISTRICT 5

Since Dr. Valerie Rao was not reappointed as the District Medical Examiner in District 5, a vacancy was created as of June 30, 2003. While a search committee was being formed, Dr. Steven C. Cogswell, who had been an Associate Medical Examiner in District 5, was appointed Interim Medical Examiner.

DISTRICT 12

Dr. Russell S. Vega was appointed District 12 Medical Examiner in October of 2003 by Governor Jeb Bush, filling the vacancy created by the resignation of Dr. W. Pearson Clack. Dr. Vega was previously an Associate Medical Examiner in District 13 (Hillsborough County).

DISTRICT 14

In August of 2003 Dr. Charles F. Siebert was appointed as the Interim Medical Examiner for District 14, replacing Dr. Thomas R. Beaver who had previously been appointed Interim Medical Examiner. Dr. Hunt Scheurman resigned from the position of District 14 Medical Examiner at the end of November 2002.

PROBABLE CAUSE PANEL

At the May Commission meeting, a Probable Cause Panel reported to the Commission that it had found probable cause against District 1 Associate Medical Examiner Dr. Michael E. Berkland for repeatedly failing to complete the documentation from his casework in a timely manner. The Commission accepted these findings and an Administrative Complaint was issued to Dr. Berkland by the Commission in which the recommended sanction was his removal as an Associate Medical Examiner in District 1. However, these administrative proceedings ended when Dr. Berkland was terminated as an Associate Medical Examiner by the District 1 Medical Examiner and accordingly he no longer fell under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiners Commission.

Included in this Panel's findings was a recommendation to the Commission that probable cause be found against District 1 Medical Examiner Dr. Gary Cumberland for his lack of adequate supervision over Dr. Berkland. The Commission filed an Administrative Complaint against Dr. Cumberland with the recommended sanction being a Letter of Reprimand. Dr. Cumberland did not challenge this action and the Commission issued him a Letter of Reprimand.

MEDICAL EXAMINERS COMMISSION STATUTE AND RULE CHANGES

After being discussed extensively at several meetings, the Commission voted to propose a change to the MEC Administrative Rule which would delete any reference to a medical examiner's "designee" in certain situations when medical examiners are to certify deaths. The new language in Paragraph 11G-2.003(2) now reads: *A medical examiner shall not sign a death certificate unless he or she has made such investigation as needed to assure the accuracy of the findings.*

Section 406.135(1), F.S., was amended to allow the appropriate next of kin, who has authority to obtain photographic records, to designate in writing an agent to obtain such for them.

NATIONAL FORENSIC SCIENCE IMPROVEMENT ACT

The U.S. Department of Justice awarded grant money to several medical examiner districts in Florida through the National Forensic Science Improvement Act (NFSIA) - Paul Coverdell Grant. For Federal Fiscal Year 2002-2003, three (3) medical examiner districts were awarded funds. An additional six (6)

medical examiner districts applied for funding for Federal Fiscal Year 2003-2004 and have received approval from the Department of Justice. This funding is on a reimbursement basis and is designed to assist medical examiner offices throughout the country achieve accreditation standards.

FLORIDA EMERGENCY MORTUARY OPERATIONS RESPONSE SYSTEM (FEMORS)

Inaugurated in July 2002, FEMORS is a state-sponsored disaster response asset designed to assist medical examiners if the number of victims exceeds the resources of the district. The Department of Health, through a contract with the William R. Maples Center for Forensic Medicine at the University of Florida, established the FEMORS program under a federal bioterrorism preparedness grant from the Center for Disease Control.

During 2003, FEMORS held its first annual training session in Kissimmee which was attended by 124 of its charter members. Continued recruitment efforts resulted in growth to approximately 200 members by year end. Funding for Fiscal Year 2003-2004 was secured to provide continued development of Phase I (personnel assets) of the program and involvement in disaster preparedness activities throughout the State.

Phase II will focus on securing computer equipment and various victim identification programs to assist in events resulting in mass fatalities. Phase III will focus on procuring equipment necessary to provide a portable temporary morgue for response within Florida.

VIOLENT CRIME AND DRUG CONTROL COUNCIL (VCDCC)

The Violent Crime and Drug Control Council is composed of fourteen members, one of whom is the medical examiner representative, Dr. Margarita Arruza (District 4). During 2003, the Council continued to redefine its role in aiding the law enforcement community in combating violent crime, drug control, and money laundering in the State of Florida. In an effort to assist agencies and task forces with the investigations of unsolved crimes, the Council unanimously decided to amend the funding rules to allow for violent crime incidents that occurred before 1993 to become eligible for Violent Crime Investigative funding.

The funding provided to agencies during 2003 proved to be more critical than ever to the success of Florida law enforcement agencies investigating those organizations and individuals that are most dangerous to our citizens and visitors. During this year, the Council provided nearly \$2 million in drug control funding to 26 cases involving partnerships among over 70 local, state and federal agencies. These cases resulted in the dismantling of over a dozen major drug trafficking organizations, hundreds of arrests, significant seizures of weapons and drugs including cocaine, marijuana, heroin, MDMA, methamphetamine and prescription drugs. Furthermore, nearly \$300,000 was expended on 14 major violent crime investigations.

FLORIDA CRIME LABORATORY COUNCIL

The final year for the functioning of the Florida Crime Laboratory Council was 2003. Legislation passed by the Florida Legislature disbanded the Council as of July 1, 2004. Members of the Council were asked by FDLE Commissioner Guy Tunnell to participate in an informal Forensic Advisory Board in matters dealing with training and allocation of trust funds. Dr. Thomas R. Beaver (District 7) was the Commission's gubernatorially appointed representative on this Council. Also, by virtue of his status as the Executive Director of the Pinellas County Crime Laboratory, Dr. Jon R. Thogmartin (District 6) also sat on this Council.

STATE CHILD FATALITY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Dr. Jon R. Thogmartin became the Commission's representative on the Florida Child Abuse Death Review Program in 2003. This Committee was established by Section 383.402, Florida Statute, in 1999 and is administered by the Florida Department of Health. It utilizes state and local multidisciplinary teams to conduct detailed reviews of the facts and circumstances surrounding child abuse and neglect deaths highlighting major issues and trends in an effort to reduce preventable child abuse and neglect deaths.

Child death reviews by this Committee had been limited to only those deaths which had a previous report of abuse or neglect. In their report issued in 2003, only twenty-nine (29) child deaths met this criterion and came under review. However, due to a statute change, this committee now reviews all confirmed abuse or neglect related child deaths, thus expanding its mission to reviewing a much larger number of deaths.

ORGAN AND TISSUE PROCUREMENT AND TRANSPLANTATION ADVISORY BOARD

Dr. Marta Coburn (District 20) was the Commission's representative on the Organ and Tissue Procurement and Transplantation Advisory Board which is housed in Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA). This board did not meet in 2003.

ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 31st Annual Medical Examiners Educational Conference was held in August of 2003 in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. The conference was hosted by Dr. Terrence Steiner and the staff of the District 23 Medical Examiner's Office and by The William R. Maples Center for Forensic Medicine. The conference lectures and program were very interesting and informative and this meeting was one of the most highly attended conferences in recent years.

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

AGO 2003-25

At the February MEC meeting, the Commission voted to formally request an Attorney General's opinion on certain aspects of the what is known as *The Dale Earnhardt Law*, and how this part of the statute may apply to medical examiners desiring to share selected autopsy photographs during certain teaching or training activities. Attorney General Crist's reply to the Commission was contained in AGO 2003-25 which is contained in its entirety on Appendix 5.

The plain language of the statute [Section 406.135(1), Florida Statutes] allows a local governmental entity or a state agency, in furtherance of its official duties and upon written request, to have access to autopsy photographs or videos with the identity of the deceased remaining confidential and exempt unless such is required in the performance of the entity's official duties.

...autopsy photographs or videotapes may be shown for training purposes to non-public agencies or associations when a court has made the appropriate finding of good cause and the family of the deceased has been provided notice and the opportunity to attend and be heard at any hearing on the matter, as prescribed in section 406.135, Florida Statutes. In allowing the release of autopsy photographs or videotapes, the court may impose any restrictions or stipulations that it deems appropriate.

AGO 2003-57

Another Attorney General opinion was issued in 2003 which dealt with other medical examiner activities. The opinion had been requested by the Clerk of Courts of Lee County posing several questions concerning the County's employment arrangements with the District 21 Medical Examiner. In AGO 2003-57 much of the opinion dealt with these local concerns, however, at least one section had state-wide implications in that it was determined that medical examiner offices may not charge funeral homes or families for cremation approvals unless there is a local government provision which bestows the authority to assess such a fee.

Medical examiners, like other public officers, have no legal claim for official services rendered, except when, and to the extent that, compensation is provided by law, and when no compensation is so provided rendition of such services is deemed to be gratuitous.

I am aware of no authority in Chapter 406, or elsewhere in the statutes, for the medical examiner to charge a cremation authorization fee. In the absence of any such statutory authorization, it is my opinion that this service is to be provided without charge to the public as a service of the office.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Medical examiners in Florida continue to have oversight over approximately two-thirds of the deaths in Florida (See Charts 1a and 1b). Of the almost 170,000 deaths in the State of Florida in 2003, 102,588 Florida deaths came under medical examiner jurisdiction. While most of these (81,374 deaths or approximately 80%) were for the review of cremation requests, medical examiners accepted jurisdiction pursuant to Florida Statutes of 21,214 deaths. 15,964 of these deaths had forensic autopsies performed on the bodies before the death certificate was signed by the medical examiner.

The manner of death (See Table 1A) is one of the most important determinations that is made by the medical examiner. Natural deaths accounted for 42% of the caseload of medical examiners, followed by 24% for non-motor vehicular accidents and 16% for motor vehicular accidents. Suicides, homicides, and undetermined/pending accounted for the remainder at 11%, 5%, and 2% respectively of the cases accepted by medical examiners.

The workload of medical examiner offices continues its increase in Florida in recent years as can be seen in Chart V. Increasingly, cremation has become a more frequent means of final disposition for bodies in Florida and, accordingly, their review and approval by medical examiners have increased. Although the percentage of medical examiner jurisdiction cases accepted as related to Florida's increasing population has decreased, the actual numbers have increased, leading to an ever increasing number of autopsies in recent years.

METHODOLOGY

Death numbers in Florida reflect the total number of Certificates of Death recorded in 2003 by local county registrars of vital statistics. These include both resident and non-resident deaths. This data was obtained from the Office of Vital Statistics in the Department of Health. Rates related to deaths in this report are medical examiner cases per every one thousand recorded deaths.

Population estimates (as of April 1, 2003) for the State of Florida were provided by the Finance & Economic Analysis Section of the Executive Office of the Governor. Unless otherwise noted, rates related to population in this report are deaths for every one thousand residents.

Information concerning autopsy numbers and other workload distribution figures are supplied by the twenty-four medical examiner districts in their Annual Report Workload Data Forms. These forms are filed annually with the Medical Examiners Commission staff in April or May of each year. (See Tables I and I-A).

TABLE I
2003 District Demographics and Annual Workload Activity Reports

District	Population	Total District Deaths	Natural	Accident: Motor Vehicle	Accident: Non-Motor Vehicle	Suicide	Homicide	Undetermined	Pending	Total Violent Deaths	Fetal Deaths	Human Archaeological Remains	Non-Human Remains	Total Cremation Approvals (CA)	Total Cases Referred to ME	Total Cases Accepted (incl CA)	Cases Referred Minus CA	Cases Accepted Minus CA	Jurisdiction Declined	SIDS	Police Custody or Penal Inst.
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
1	660,367	6,008	356	132	201	102	20	10	39	504	2	1	3	1,971	4,389	2,831	2,418	860	1,558	6	4
2	378,834	2,804	71	33	41	25	5	2	30	136	0	0	0	340	820	547	480	207	273	2	7
3	151,293	1,448	59	49	43	15	6	3	1	117	1	0	3	496	737	672	241	176	65	1	1
4	1,045,352	9,230	392	192	280	163	119	23	0	777	2	1	32	3,586	5,102	4,755	1,516	1,169	347	9	50
5	852,157	11,369	559	192	275	136	30	7	3	643	1	1	3	6,710	8,380	7,912	1,670	1,202	468	2	6
6	1,315,182	17,690	478	231	503	231	72	22	0	1,059	4	1	21	11,309	13,487	12,846	2,178	1,537	641	0	14
7	470,770	5,887	192	102	114	95	22	6	23	362	0	1	4	3,281	4,188	3,835	907	554	353	2	1
8	347,558	3,714	213	89	131	62	22	21	4	329	0	0	1	1,563	2,379	2,105	816	542	274	8	86
9	1,193,603	9,106	568	270	232	126	92	15	1	736	3	2	0	4,291	6,638	5,595	2,347	1,304	1,043	11	13
10	629,722	6,515	382	142	176	62	30	9	0	419	1	1	8	3,149	4,303	3,950	1,154	801	353	7	7
11	2,345,932	19,162	1,648	370	549	223	224	0	9	1,375	3	8	15	6,325	9,555	9,348	3,230	3,023	207	2	56
12	669,358	8,209	370	121	207	99	31	3	0	461	0	0	0	5,540	6,829	6,371	1,289	831	458	0	3
13	1,079,587	9,574	878	282	411	154	89	13	0	949	1	3	25	4,648	7,190	6,475	2,542	1,827	715	4	14
14	273,725	2,721	150	87	97	38	17	5	0	244	0	0	2	748	1,574	1,142	826	394	432	0	0
15	1,211,448	14,044	400	225	478	158	64	29	2	956	1	1	13	5,875	8,280	7,231	2,405	1,356	1,049	2	16
16	80,537	645	87	20	48	25	6	0	1	100	0	1	6	664	874	851	210	187	23	0	0
17	1,698,425	15,157	706	206	470	218	72	47	75	1,088	1	1	16	5,915	9,329	7,709	3,414	1,794	1,620	8	9
18	507,810	5,246	259	107	191	106	28	11	0	443	2	0	8	2,678	4,652	3,380	1,974	702	1,272	1	4
19	504,799	5,956	373	128	216	80	28	1	0	453	1	1	9	3,291	4,686	4,117	1,395	826	569	0	13
20	292,466	2,630	113	70	130	32	11	2	0	245	1	4	5	1,710	2,298	2,068	588	358	230	2	0
21	542,328	5,691	338	145	236	80	38	4	1	504	1	1	6	3,571	6,463	4,413	2,892	842	2,050	3	5
22	151,994	2,169	85	20	25	27	4	1	0	77	0	0	0	1,402	1,865	1,564	463	162	301	1	4
23	273,361	2,275	128	80	44	50	12	0	0	186	1	0	4	1,244	1,815	1,558	571	314	257	2	1
24	394,900	2,429	94	17	58	47	11	3	16	152	0	4	4	1,067	1,563	1,313	496	246	250	0	0
State	17,071,508	169,679	8,899	3,310	5,156	2,354	1,053	237	205	12,315	26	32	188	81,374	117,396	102,588	36,022	21,214	14,808	73	314

Note: Columns are labeled for easy reference to other tables in report.

TABLE I-A
2003 Workload by Depth of Examination

District	Natural				Acc: Motor Veh				Acc: Non Motor Veh				Suicide				Homicide				Undetermined				Pending				Totals for Year		
	Autopsied	Body Inspected	Case Investigated only	Total	Autopsied	Body Inspected	Case Investigated only	Total	Autopsied	Body Inspected	Case Investigated only	Total	Autopsied	Body Inspected	Case Investigated only	Total	Autopsied	Body Inspected	Case Investigated only	Total	Autopsied	Body Inspected	Case Investigated only	Total	Autopsied	Body Inspected	Case Investigated only	Total	Autopsied	Body Inspected	Case Investigated only
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z	aa	bb	cc	dd	ee
1	156	100	100	356	127	2	3	132	158	33	10	201	101	1	0	102	20	0	0	20	10	0	0	10	35	1	3	39	607	137	116
2	31	20	20	71	27	4	2	33	26	5	10	41	24	1	0	25	5	0	0	5	1	1	0	2	29	1	0	30	143	32	32
3	32	27	0	59	49	0	0	49	34	6	3	43	15	0	0	15	6	0	0	6	3	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	140	33	3
4	288	104	0	392	143	45	4	192	239	35	6	280	162	1	0	163	119	0	0	119	23	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	974	185	10
5	395	164	0	559	190	1	1	192	246	29	0	275	136	0	0	136	30	0	0	30	7	0	0	7	3	0	0	3	1,007	194	1
6	241	237	0	478	174	52	5	231	319	177	7	503	230	0	1	231	72	0	0	72	22	0	0	22	0	0	0	0	1,058	466	13
7	163	28	1	192	97	5	0	102	104	8	2	114	95	0	0	95	22	0	0	22	6	0	0	6	22	1	0	23	509	42	3
8	144	67	2	213	78	11	0	89	58	70	3	131	56	6	0	62	22	0	0	22	19	2	0	21	4	0	0	4	381	156	5
9	223	345	0	568	257	13	0	270	198	34	0	232	126	0	0	126	92	0	0	92	13	2	0	15	1	0	0	1	910	394	0
10	216	166	0	382	134	8	0	142	112	64	0	176	62	0	0	62	30	0	0	30	9	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	563	238	0
11	924	713	11	1,648	366	4	0	370	449	38	62	549	220	2	1	223	224	0	0	224	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	9	2,192	757	74
12	181	187	2	370	117	4	0	121	153	49	5	207	99	0	0	99	31	0	0	31	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	584	240	7
13	543	333	2	878	272	9	1	282	263	141	7	411	153	1	0	154	89	0	0	89	13	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	1,333	484	10
14	96	54	0	150	79	8	0	87	82	13	2	97	38	0	0	38	17	0	0	17	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	317	75	2
15	272	128	0	400	199	24	2	225	341	126	11	478	155	3	0	158	64	0	0	64	24	5	0	29	2	0	0	2	1,057	286	13
16	48	38	1	87	20	0	0	20	43	1	4	48	25	0	0	25	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	143	39	5
17	512	191	3	706	200	4	2	206	409	48	13	470	217	1	0	218	72	0	0	72	31	13	3	47	75	0	0	75	1,516	257	21
18	182	77	0	259	106	1	0	107	150	41	0	191	106	0	0	106	28	0	0	28	11	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	583	119	0
19	243	127	3	373	122	4	2	128	137	49	30	216	80	0	0	80	28	0	0	28	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	611	180	35
20	47	66	0	113	64	6	0	70	67	63	0	130	32	0	0	32	11	0	0	11	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	223	135	0
21	151	183	4	338	140	5	0	145	156	78	2	236	79	1	0	80	38	0	0	38	3	1	0	4	1	0	0	1	568	268	6
22	34	51	0	85	15	5	0	20	24	0	1	25	27	0	0	27	4	0	0	4	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	105	56	1
23	36	48	44	128	72	0	8	80	41	1	2	44	50	0	0	50	12	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	211	49	54
24	81	13	0	94	16	1	0	17	55	2	1	58	47	0	0	47	11	0	0	11	3	0	0	3	16	0	0	16	229	16	1
State	5,239	3,467	193	8,899	3,064	216	30	3,310	3,864	1,111	181	5,156	2,335	17	2	2,354	1,053	0	0	1,053	210	24	3	237	199	3	3	205	15,964	4,838	412

Note: *Cases Investigated Only* means the body was not viewed by a medical examiner (ME), although the case was certified by an ME.

Columns are labeled for easy reference to other tables in report.

TABLE II

**Cases Accepted by Medical Examiners
Related to District Population**

(R/.001A)			(N/.001A)		
Rank	Dist	Autopsies and Other Investigations	Rank	Dist	Cremation Approvals
1	16	2.322	1	22	9.224
2	13	1.692	2	6	8.599
3	19	1.636	3	12	8.277
4	8	1.559	4	16	8.245
5	21	1.553	5	5	7.874
6	14	1.439	6	7	6.969
7	5	1.411	7	21	6.585
8	18	1.382	8	19	6.519
9	1	1.302	9	20	5.847
10	11	1.289	10	18	5.274
11	10	1.272	11	10	5.001
12	12	1.241	12	15	4.850
13	20	1.224	13	23	4.551
14	7	1.177	14	8	4.497
15	6	1.169	15	13	4.305
16	3	1.163	16	9	3.595
17	23	1.149	17	17	3.483
18	15	1.119	18	4	3.430
19	4	1.118	19	3	3.278
20	9	1.092	20	1	2.985
21	22	1.066	21	14	2.733
22	17	1.056	22	24	2.702
23	24	0.623	23	11	2.696
24	2	0.546	24	2	0.897

TABLE III

**Autopsies Related to
Population, Total Deaths and Violent Deaths**

(cc/B)			(cc/.001A)			(cc/J)		
Rank	Dist	Autopsies/ Total Deaths	Rank	Dist	Autopsies/ Population	Rank	Dist	Autopsies/ Violent Deaths
1	16	0.222	1	16	1.776	1	11	1.594
2	13	0.139	2	13	1.235	2	5	1.566
3	14	0.117	3	19	1.210	3	24	1.507
4	11	0.114	4	5	1.182	4	16	1.430
5	18	0.111	5	14	1.158	5	7	1.406
6	4	0.106	6	18	1.148	6	13	1.405
7	19	0.103	7	8	1.096	7	17	1.393
8	8	0.103	8	7	1.081	8	22	1.364
9	1	0.101	9	21	1.047	9	19	1.349
10	17	0.100	10	11	0.934	10	10	1.344
11	9	0.100	11	4	0.932	11	18	1.316
12	21	0.100	12	3	0.925	12	14	1.299
13	3	0.097	13	1	0.919	13	12	1.267
14	23	0.093	14	10	0.894	14	4	1.254
15	5	0.089	15	17	0.893	15	9	1.236
16	7	0.086	16	15	0.873	16	1	1.204
17	10	0.086	17	12	0.872	17	3	1.197
18	20	0.085	18	6	0.804	18	8	1.158
19	15	0.075	19	23	0.772	19	23	1.134
20	12	0.071	20	20	0.762	20	21	1.127
21	6	0.060	21	9	0.762	21	15	1.106
22	2	0.051	22	22	0.691	22	2	1.051
23	22	0.048	23	24	0.580	23	6	0.999
24	24	0.094	24	2	0.377	24	20	0.910

TABLE IV

Percent of Medical Examiner Cases Autopsied

	(a/d)	(e/h)	(i/l)	(m/p)	(q/t)	(u/x)
District	Natural	Accident: Motor Vehicle	Accident: Non-Motor Vehicle	Suicide	Homicide	Undetermined
1	43.8%	96.2%	78.6%	99.0%	100.0%	100.0%
2	43.7%	81.8%	63.4%	96.0%	100.0%	50.0%
3	54.2%	100.0%	79.1%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
4	73.5%	74.5%	85.4%	99.4%	100.0%	100.0%
5	70.7%	99.0%	89.5%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
6	50.4%	75.3%	63.4%	99.6%	100.0%	100.0%
7	84.9%	95.1%	91.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
8	67.6%	87.6%	44.3%	90.3%	100.0%	90.5%
9	39.3%	95.2%	85.3%	100.0%	100.0%	86.7%
10	56.5%	94.4%	63.6%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
11	56.1%	98.9%	81.8%	98.7%	100.0%	N/A
12	48.9%	96.7%	73.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
13	61.8%	96.5%	64.0%	99.4%	100.0%	100.0%
14	64.0%	90.8%	84.5%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
15	68.0%	88.4%	71.3%	98.1%	100.0%	82.8%
16	55.2%	100.0%	89.6%	100.0%	100.0%	N/A
17	72.5%	97.1%	87.0%	99.5%	100.0%	66.0%
18	70.3%	99.1%	78.5%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
19	65.1%	95.3%	63.4%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
20	41.6%	91.4%	51.5%	100.0%	100.0%	N/A
21	44.7%	96.6%	66.1%	98.8%	100.0%	75.0%
22	40.0%	75.0%	96.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
23	28.1%	90.0%	93.2%	100.0%	100.0%	N/A
24	86.2%	94.1%	94.8%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
State	58.9%	92.6%	74.9%	99.2%	100.0%	88.6%

TABLE V
Ranking of Violent Death Rates
(Per Population / 1000)

Ranking	Dist	(D/.001A)	Dist	(E/.001A)	Dist	(G/.001A)	Dist	(F/.001A)	Dist	(J/.001A)
		Mot Veh Acc/ Population		Non M-V Acc/ Population		Homicides/ Population		Suicides/ Population		Total Violent/ Population
1	3	0.324	16	0.596	4	0.114	16	0.310	16	1.242
2	14	0.318	20	0.444	11	0.095	18	0.209	8	0.947
3	23	0.293	21	0.435	13	0.082	7	0.202	21	0.929
4	21	0.267	19	0.428	9	0.077	23	0.183	19	0.897
5	13	0.261	15	0.395	16	0.074	8	0.178	14	0.891
6	8	0.256	6	0.382	21	0.070	22	0.178	13	0.879
7	19	0.254	13	0.381	8	0.063	6	0.176	18	0.872
8	16	0.248	8	0.377	14	0.062	5	0.160	20	0.838
9	20	0.239	18	0.376	19	0.055	19	0.158	6	0.805
10	9	0.226	14	0.354	18	0.055	4	0.156	15	0.789
11	10	0.225	5	0.323	6	0.055	1	0.154	3	0.773
12	5	0.225	12	0.309	15	0.053	12	0.148	7	0.769
13	7	0.217	1	0.304	10	0.048	21	0.148	1	0.763
14	18	0.211	3	0.284	7	0.047	13	0.143	5	0.755
15	1	0.200	10	0.279	12	0.046	14	0.139	4	0.743
16	15	0.186	17	0.277	23	0.044	15	0.130	12	0.689
17	4	0.184	4	0.268	17	0.042	17	0.128	23	0.680
18	12	0.181	7	0.242	3	0.040	24	0.119	10	0.665
19	6	0.176	11	0.234	20	0.038	20	0.109	17	0.641
20	11	0.158	9	0.194	5	0.035	9	0.106	9	0.617
21	22	0.132	22	0.164	1	0.030	3	0.099	11	0.586
22	17	0.121	23	0.161	24	0.028	10	0.098	22	0.507
23	2	0.087	24	0.147	22	0.026	11	0.095	24	0.385
24	24	0.043	2	0.108	2	0.013	2	0.066	2	0.359

TABLE VI			
Ranking of Districts by Number of Violent Deaths			
(J)			
Rank	Violent Deaths	District	Geographical Area of Florida with Population Ranking (#)
1	1,375	11	Miami (# 1)
2	1,088	17	Ft. Lauderdale (# 2)
3	1,059	6	St. Petersburg (# 3)
4	956	15	Palm Beach (# 4)
5	949	13	Tampa (# 6)
6	777	4	Jacksonville (# 7)
7	736	9	Orlando (# 5)
8	643	5	Leesburg (# 8)
9	504	1	Pensacola (# 10)
10	504	21	Ft. Myers (# 12)
11	461	12	Sarasota (# 9)
12	453	19	Ft. Pierce (# 14)
13	443	18	Melbourne (# 13)
14	419	10	Lakeland (# 11)
15	362	7	Daytona Beach (# 15)
16	329	8	Gainesville (# 18)
17	245	20	Naples (# 19)
18	244	14	Panama City (# 20)
19	186	23	St. Augustine (# 21)
20	152	24	Sanford (# 16)
21	136	2	Tallahassee (# 17)
22	117	3	Live Oak (# 23)
23	100	16	Florida Keys (# 24)
24	77	22	Port Charlotte (# 22)
State	12,315		

TABLE VII			
District Death Rates as Related to Autopsy Rates			
(B/A)% (cc/B) (cc/.001A)			
Dist	Deaths/Population	Autopsies/Total Deaths	Autopsies/Population
1	0.91%	0.101	0.919
2	0.74%	0.051	0.377
3	0.96%	0.097	0.925
4	0.88%	0.106	0.932
5	1.33%	0.089	1.182
6	1.35%	0.060	0.804
7	1.25%	0.086	1.081
8	1.07%	0.103	1.096
9	0.76%	0.100	0.762
10	1.03%	0.086	0.894
11	0.82%	0.114	0.934
12	1.23%	0.071	0.872
13	0.89%	0.139	1.235
14	0.99%	0.117	1.158
15	1.16%	0.075	0.873
16	0.80%	0.222	1.776
17	0.89%	0.100	0.893
18	1.03%	0.111	1.148
19	1.18%	0.103	1.210
20	0.90%	0.085	0.762
21	1.05%	0.100	1.047
22	1.43%	0.048	0.691
23	0.83%	0.093	0.772
24	0.62%	0.094	0.580
State	0.99%	0.094	0.935

TABLE VIII

Fourteen Year Comparison of SIDS Deaths

(T)

Dist	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1	10	12	11	13	11	11	3	9	7	6	8	2	5	2	6
2	6	8	12	8	1	8	5	2	6	3	6	2	1	0	2
3	3	6	1	2	4	4	2	1	2	3	1	3	1	0	1
4	18	15	24	12	19	10	13	12	10	11	8	15	7	6	9
5	13	10	4	3	10	6	5	6	7	1	9	1	6	3	2
6	15	11	9	8	14	11	6	14	16	6	7	7	0	0	0
7	3	3	3	2	5	4	1	7	2	4	4	6	4	2	2
8	5	3	9	7	8	5	5	5	4	6	5	3	3	6	8
9	13	20	18	12	11	18	9	12	13	9	13	3	11	17	11
10	14	25	12	12	22	10	11	10	14	8	15	10	3	5	7
11	36	32	29	27	24	18	19	18	8	11	9	8	0	4	2
12	4	6	9	10	4	5	4	0	3	1	0	1	1	1	0
13	21	16	11	18	10	10	13	12	10	16	13	10	13	10	4
14	4	6	4	4	1	1	1	7	1	1	2	0	0	1	0
15	17	11	12	3	9	5	7	10	3	2	2	1	1	3	2
16	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
17	15	18	19	9	19	10	13	2	7	10	4	10	9	2	8
18	3	6	2	4	5	10	5	4	3	1	0	5	1	1	1
19	5	4	7	5	5	5	5	7	3	3	2	2	2	4	0
20	0	2	2	1	3	3	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	2
21	7	8	7	5	6	1	6	3	8	6	2	5	2	1	3
22	2	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	1
23	3	3	6	6	7	2	3	6	7	2	0	3	1	0	2
24	10	13	5	6	1	3	4	2	3	2	7	2	6	3	0
State	227	241	217	179	200	160	144	151	137	115	118	102	80	73	73

TABLE IX

Fifteen Year Comparison of Violent Death Rates

(J.001A)

Dist	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1	0.589	0.573	0.580	0.577	0.592	0.581	0.564	0.597	0.583	0.574	0.517	0.576	0.664	0.714	0.763
2	0.667	0.604	0.705	0.651	0.666	0.615	0.634	0.615	0.541	0.572	0.554	0.688	0.530	0.621	0.359
3	0.909	1.110	1.152	0.662	0.832	0.802	0.689	0.670	0.723	0.681	0.660	0.749	0.690	0.976	0.773
4	0.774	0.767	0.683	0.659	0.628	0.638	0.613	0.609	0.589	0.598	0.620	0.634	0.703	0.740	0.743
5	0.798	0.813	0.692	0.672	0.739	0.676	0.685	0.618	0.648	0.702	0.587	0.702	0.784	0.796	0.755
6	0.622	0.618	0.581	0.590	0.574	0.565	0.644	0.582	0.615	0.597	0.642	0.647	0.721	0.766	0.805
7	0.658	0.645	0.725	0.594	0.728	0.673	0.663	0.626	0.716	0.705	0.724	0.652	0.670	0.814	0.769
8	0.711	0.844	0.788	0.764	0.780	0.694	0.743	0.698	0.696	0.718	0.672	0.733	0.705	0.802	0.947
9	0.750	0.750	0.629	0.601	0.584	0.639	0.669	0.657	0.582	0.691	0.664	0.621	0.655	0.615	0.617
10	0.744	0.624	0.548	0.638	0.645	0.538	0.626	0.578	0.604	0.590	0.614	0.622	0.641	0.669	0.665
11	0.920	0.826	0.787	0.741	0.811	0.705	0.730	0.720	0.684	0.670	0.648	0.598	0.585	0.615	0.586
12	0.636	0.633	0.461	0.497	0.523	0.500	0.584	0.599	0.547	0.557	0.559	0.627	0.634	0.554	0.689
13	0.712	0.765	0.752	0.710	0.738	0.776	0.783	0.729	0.743	0.793	0.818	0.795	0.797	0.896	0.879
14	0.696	0.536	0.774	0.563	0.694	0.658	0.748	0.744	0.603	0.767	0.669	0.847	0.884	0.863	0.891
15	0.706	0.683	0.651	0.631	0.610	0.651	0.614	0.641	0.623	0.651	0.659	0.660	0.700	0.691	0.789
16	1.127	0.817	1.132	0.840	0.881	0.960	0.815	0.943	1.003	0.909	1.126	0.741	1.464	1.085	1.242
17	0.607	0.369	0.541	0.534	0.628	0.597	0.613	0.636	0.638	0.596	0.625	0.544	0.609	0.649	0.641
18	0.682	0.598	0.559	0.563	0.597	0.527	0.640	0.618	0.576	0.595	0.583	0.701	0.750	0.888	0.872
19	0.875	0.754	0.706	0.635	0.622	0.686	0.677	0.604	0.575	0.650	0.622	0.675	0.858	0.867	0.897
20	1.188	0.878	0.885	0.837	0.802	0.731	0.815	0.736	0.890	0.787	0.797	0.704	0.756	0.836	0.838
21	0.890	0.875	0.752	0.910	0.782	0.868	0.772	0.822	0.834	0.874	0.927	0.912	0.956	0.941	0.929
22	0.574	0.715	0.476	0.590	0.559	0.368	0.556	0.518	0.442	0.394	0.497	0.551	0.505	0.485	0.507
23	0.947	0.957	0.739	0.686	0.717	0.653	0.723	0.625	0.759	0.738	0.735	0.723	0.630	0.694	0.680
24	0.327	0.311	0.278	0.301	0.289	0.284	0.278	0.334	0.370	0.459	0.342	0.318	0.299	0.335	0.385
State	0.755	0.711	0.691	0.644	0.668	0.635	0.657	0.643	0.636	0.652	0.647	0.647	0.682	0.715	0.721

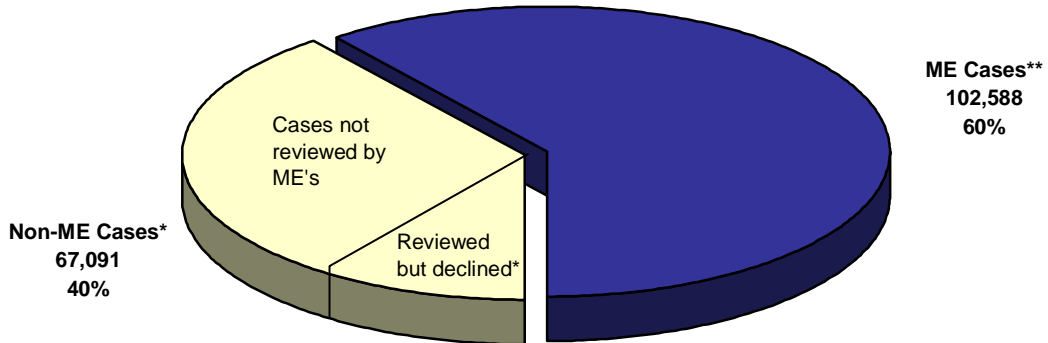
Chart Ia

2003

Medical Examiner Jurisdiction

Total Florida Deaths:

169,679



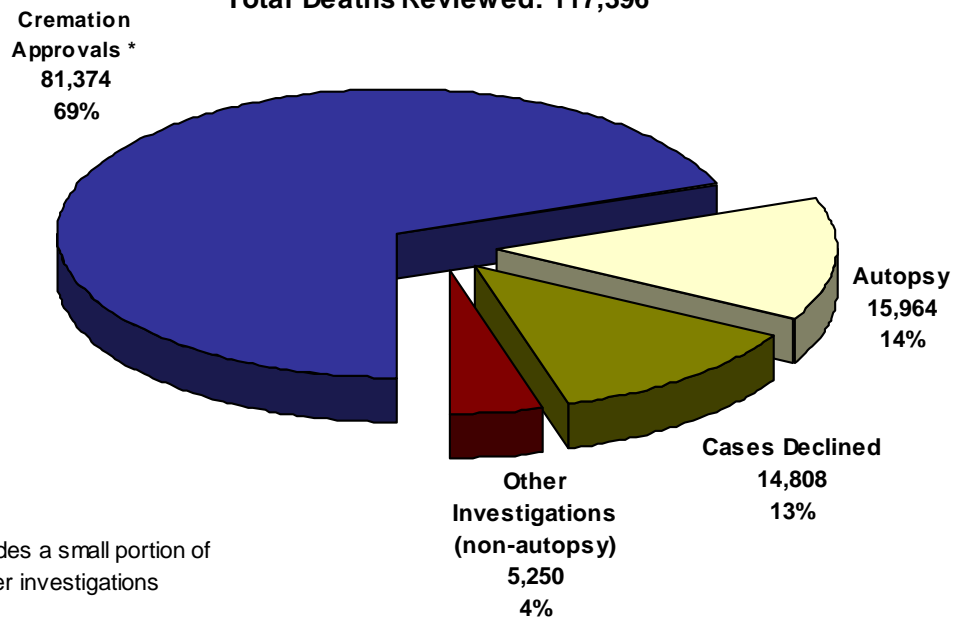
* Includes Cases Reviewed but Jurisdiction Declined
** Includes Cases Accepted and Cremation Approvals

Chart Ib

Medical Examiner Workload

2003

Total Deaths Reviewed: 117,396



* Includes a small portion of all other investigations

Chart IIa

2003

Violent vs. Non-Violent Deaths

Total Florida Deaths 169,679

Non-Violent

Deaths

157,364

93%

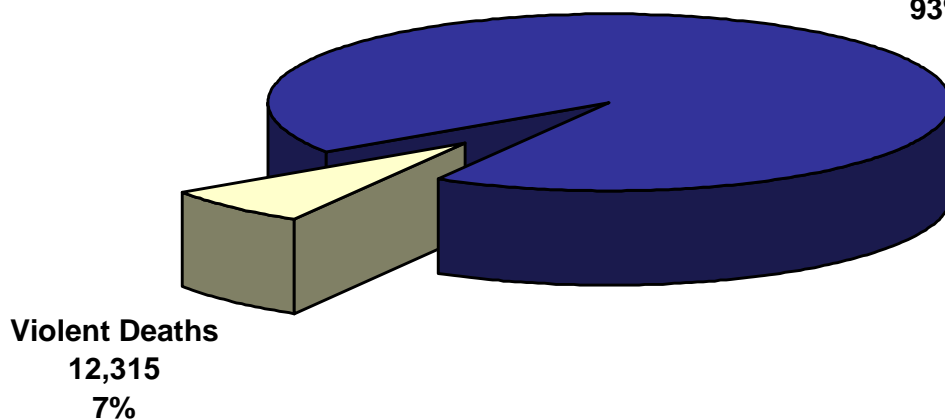


Chart IIb

2003

Violent Death Workload

Total Violent Deaths - 12,315

Accident- Non-

Motor Vehicle

5,156

42%

Accident-Motor

Vehicle

3,310

27%

Pending

205

2%

Homicide

1,053

8%

Undetermined

237

2%

Suicide

2,354

19%

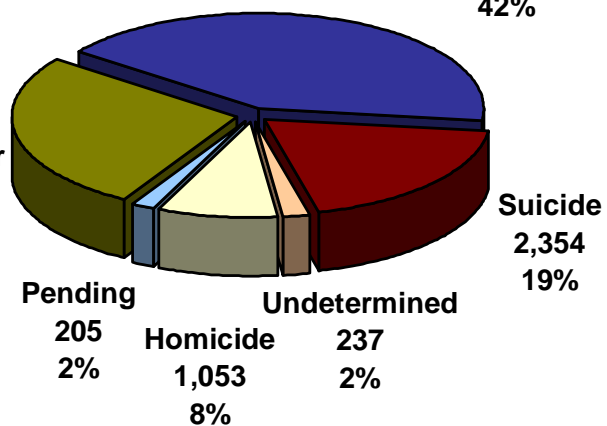


Chart IIIa

2003 Autopsy Workload as
Percent of Florida Population
Total Florida Population: 17,071,508

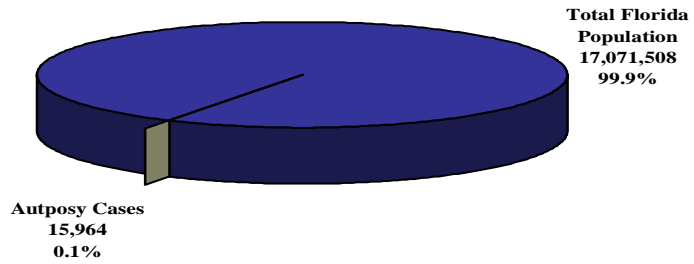


Chart IIIb

2003 Autopsy Workload as
Percent of Florida Deaths
Total Florida Deaths: 169,679

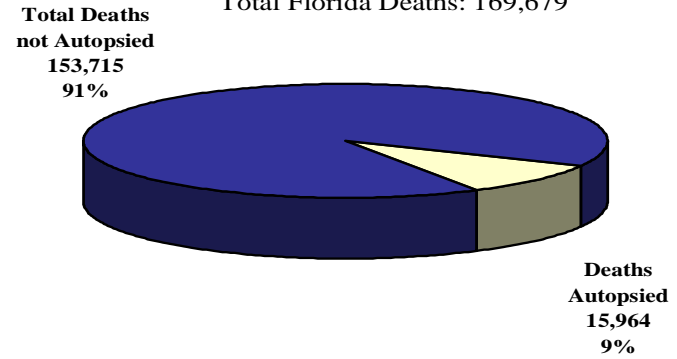


Chart IIIc

2003 Autopsy Workload as Percent of
Deaths Referred to Medical Examiners

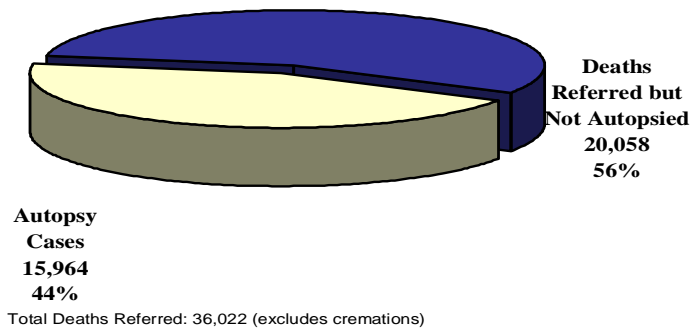


Chart III d

2003 Autopsy Workload as
Percent of Deaths Accepted
Total Deaths Accepted: 21,214

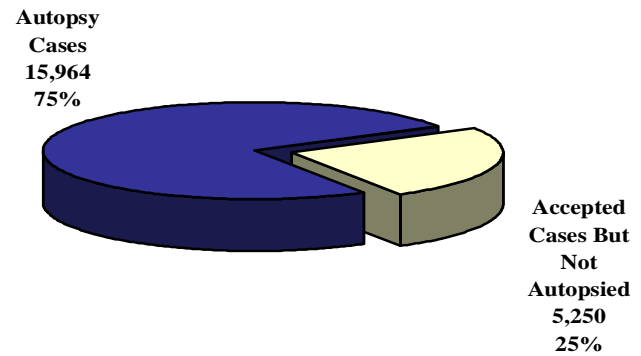


Chart IVa
Workload by Depth of
Examinations -
Homicide

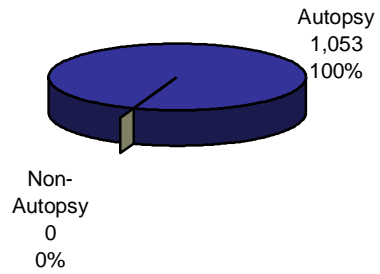


Chart IVb
Workload by Depth of
Examinations -
Suicide

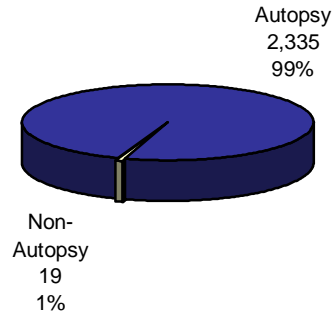


Chart IVc
Workload by Depth of
Examinations -
Undetermined

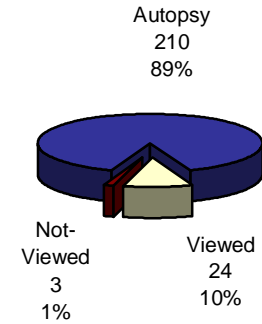


Chart IVd
Workload by Depth of
Examinations -
Accident: Motor Vehicle

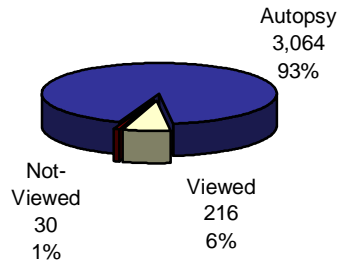


Chart IVe
Workload by Depth of
Examinations -
Accident: Non-Motor Vehicle

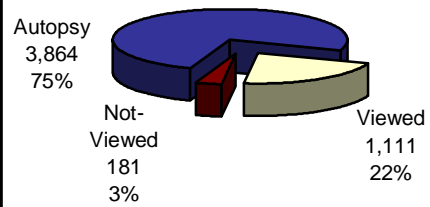


Chart IVf
Workload by Depth of
Examinations -
Natural

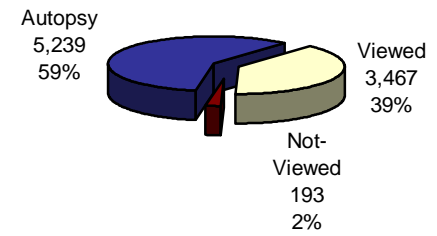
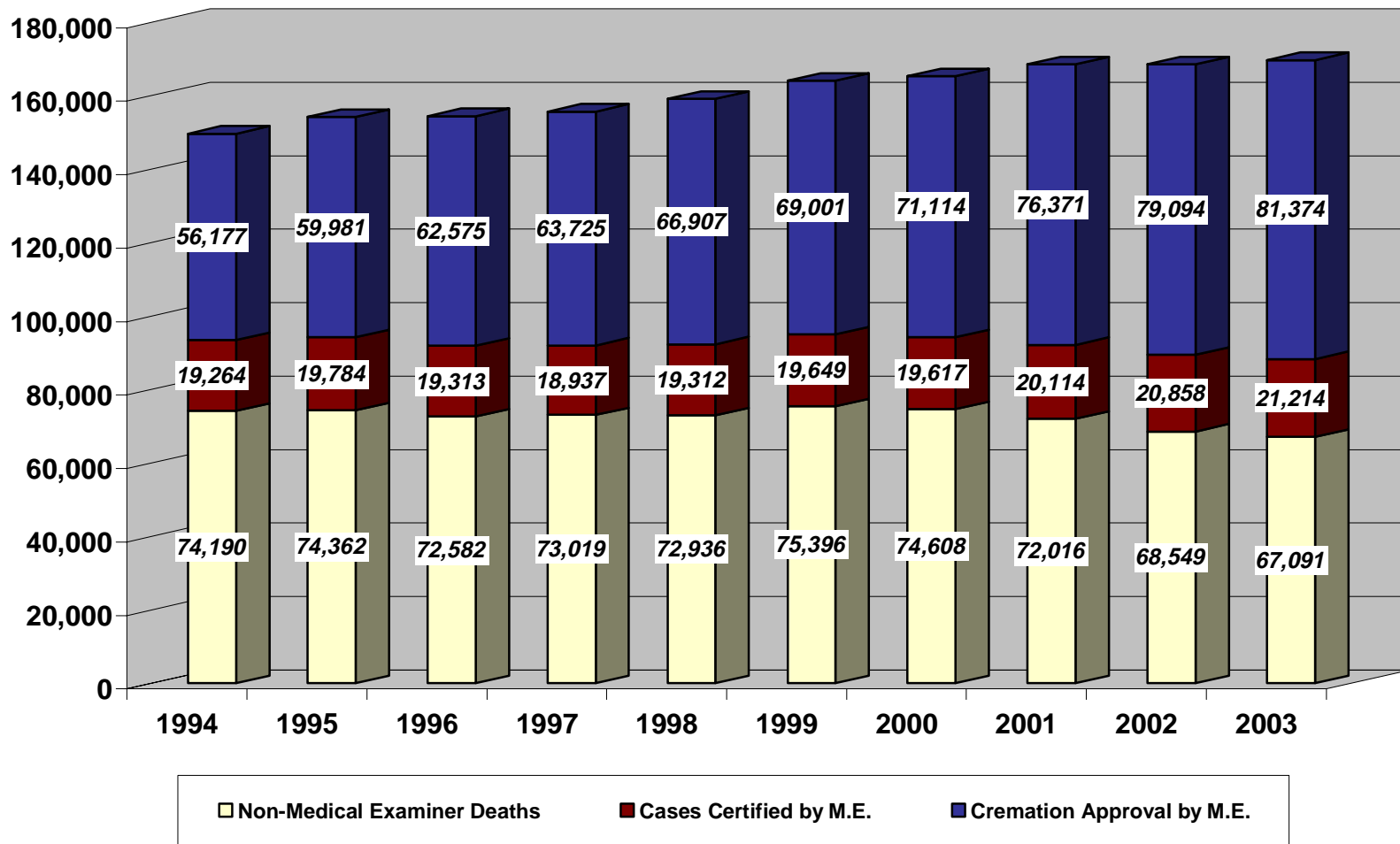


CHART V
Historical Workload
Medical Examiner Cases
Compared to All Florida Deaths
1994 - 2003



MEDICAL EXAMINERS COMMISSION

Stephen J. Nelson, M.A., M.D.

Chairman

District Ten Medical Examiner

1021 Jim Keene Boulevard

Winter Haven, Florida 33880

(863) 298-4600

FAX: (863) 298-5264

e-mail: StephenNelson@polk-county.net

Jon R. Thogmartin, M.D.

District Six Medical Examiner

10900 Ulmerton Road

Largo, Florida 33778

(727) 582-6800

FAX: (727) 582-6844

e-mail: dbreton@co.pinellas.fl.us

Honorable Harrell Reid

Sheriff, Hamilton County

Post Office Drawer A

Jasper, Florida 32052-0541

(386) 792-2004

FAX: (386) 792-3133

e-mail: reidh@flcjn.net

Mariana Caballero

Funeral Director

Stewart Enterprises

Post Office Box 141418

Miami, Florida 33114

(305) 221-8282

FAX: (305) 551-8608

e-mail: mcaballero@stewartenterprises.com

Ken Jones

Deputy State Registrar

Office of Vital Statistics Representative

Post Office Box 210

Jacksonville, Florida 32231

(904) 359-6900 xt. 1001

FAX: (904) 359-6931

e-mail: Ken_Jones@doh.state.fl.us

Honorable Robert H. Dillinger, J.D.

Public Defender, Sixth Judicial Circuit

Criminal Justice Center

14250 49th Street North

Clearwater, Florida 33762-2800

(727) 464-6866

FAX: (727) 464-6900

e-mail: pd6@wearethethehope.org

Honorable Bruce H. Colton, J.D.

State Attorney, Nineteenth Judicial Circuit

411 South Second Street

Ft. Pierce, Florida 34950

(772) 465-3000

FAX: (772) 462-1214

e-mail: Bruce@StLucieco.gov

Robert J. Krauss, J.D.

Chief - Assistant Attorney General

Bureau Chief, Tampa Criminal Appeals

3507 East Frontage Road, Suite 200

Tampa, Florida 33607-7013

(813) 287-7900

FAX: (813) 281-5500

e-mail: bob_krauss@oag.state.fl.us

Honorable Lane C. Rees

County Commissioner Representative

Walton County Commission

31 Coastal Centre Blvd., Suite 250

Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

(850) 622-3081

FAX: (850) 622-3087

e-mail: reelane@co.walton.fl.us

STAFF

Medical Examiners Commission

Florida Department of Law Enforcement

2331 Phillips Road (32308)

Post Office Box 1489

Tallahassee, Florida 32302

(850) 410-8600

FAX: (850) 410-8621

Bureau Chief Vickie Marsey (410-8660)

vickiemarsey@fdle.state.fl.us

Gov't Analyst II Jim Luten (410-8609)

jimluten@fdle.state.fl.us

Administrative Assistant Debbie Turvaville (410-8610)

debbieturvaville@fdle.state.fl.us

FLORIDA DISTRICT MEDICAL EXAMINERS

District 1

Andrea N. Minyard, M.D.
Interim Medical Examiner
5151 North 9th Avenue
Pensacola, Florida 32504
Admin Director Rose Hall
(850) 416-7200
FAX: (850) 416-6475
e-mail: anminyard@aol.com

District 2

David T. Stewart, M.D.
Post Office Box 14389
Tallahassee, Florida 32317
ME Sec Susan Merritt
(850) 942-7473
FAX: (850) 942-6622
e-mail: mahoneybooks@violinsandbows.com

District 3

ME Services provided by Dist. 4

District 4

Margarita Arruza, M.D.
2100 Jefferson Street
Jacksonville, Florida 32206
Forensic Adminis Terri McCrackin
(904) 630-0977
FAX: (904) 630-0964
e-mail: MArruza@coj.net

District 5

Steven C. Cogswell, M.D.
Interim Medical Examiner
809 Pine Street
Leesburg, Florida 34748
Dir of Ops Allison Thall
(352) 326-5961
FAX: (352) 365-6438
email: athall@co.lake.fl.us

District 6

Jon R. Thogmartin, M.D.
10900 Ulmerton Road
Largo, Florida 33778
Chief Inv Damon Breton
(727) 582-6800
FAX: (727) 582-6844
e-mail: dbreton@co.pinellas.fl.us

District 7

Thomas R. Beaver, M.D.
1360 Indian Lake Road
Daytona Beach, FL 32124-1001
Dir of Ops Dr. Jason H. Byrd
(386) 258-4060
FAX: (386) 258-4061
e-mail: jbyrd@co.volusia.fl.us

District 8

William F. Hamilton, M.D.
606 S.W. 3rd Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32601
Ofc Ops Coord Albert Isaac
(352) 338-2191
FAX: (352) 371-3291
e-mail: isaacal@shands.ufl.edu

District 9

Shashi Gore, M.D., M.P.H.
1401 Lucerne Terrace
Orlando, Florida 32806
Forensic Coord. Sheri Blanton
(407) 836-9400
FAX:(407) 836-9450
e-mail: Sheri.Blanton@ocfl.net

District 10

Stephen J. Nelson, M.A., M.D.
1021 Jim Keene Boulevard
Winter Haven, Florida 33880
Ofc Mgr Sheli Wilson
(863) 298-4600
FAX:(863) 298-5264
e-mail: StephenNelson@polk-county.net

District 11

Bruce A. Hyma, M.D.
Number One on Bob Hope Road
Miami, Florida 33136-1133
Dir of Ops Larry Cameron
(305) 545-2400
FAX: (305) 545-2412
e-mail: BAHyma@MiamiDade.gov

District 12

Russell S. Vega, M.D.
1762 Hawthorne Street, Suite 5
Sarasota, Florida 34239
Dir of Ops Pamela Simpson
(941) 361-6909
FAX: (941) 361-6914
email: rvega@fldist12me.com

District 13

Vernard I. Adams, M.D.
401 South Morgan Street
Tampa, Florida 33602
Dir of Ops Richard L. Bailey
(813) 272-5342
FAX: (813) 272-6268
e-mail: adamsv@hillsboroughcounty.org

District 14

Charles F. Siebert, Jr., M.D.
3737 Frankford Avenue
Panama City, Florida 32405
Dir of Inv Lesa Forehand
(850) 747-5740
FAX: (850) 747-5745
e-mail: Invforehandmeo@knology.net

District 15

Lisa M. Flannagan, M.D.
3126 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406
Mgr MEO Ops. Anthony Mead
(561) 688-4575
FAX: (561) 688-4588
e-mail: LFlannag@co.palm-beach.fl.us

District 16

Michael Hunter, M.D.
Post Office Box 522380
Marathon Shores, FL 33052
ME Secretary June Williams
(305) 289-5410
FAX: (305) 289-5519
e-mail: medex1@bellsouth.net

District 17

Joshua A. Perper, M.D., LL.B.
5301 S.W. 31st Avenue
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33312
Chief Inv Edwina Johnson
(954) 327-6500
FAX: (954) 327-6580
e-mail: jperper@broward.org

District 18

Paulino O. Vasallo, M.D.
1750 Cedar Street
Rockledge, Florida 32955
Chief Inv Charles T. Levi, Sr.
(321) 633-1981
FAX: (321) 633-1986
e-mail: paul.vasallo@brevardcounty.us

District 19

Roger E. Mittleman, M.D.
2500 South 35th Street
Ft. Pierce, Florida 34981
Inv Merve Waldron
(772) 464-7378
FAX: (772) 464-2409
e-mail: Lcason@ircc.edu

District 20

Marta U. Coburn, M.D.
3838 Domestic Avenue
Naples, Florida 34104
Spvr of Inv Michael Britt
(239) 434-5020
FAX:(239) 434-5027
e-mail: naplesme@colliergov.net

District 21

Rebecca A. Hamilton, M.D.
70 Danley Drive
Ft. Myers, Florida 33907
Admin Mgr Carolyn Major
(239) 277-5020
FAX: (239) 277-5017
e-mail: me21@earthlink.net

District 22

Riazul H. Imami, M.D., Ph.D.
18130 Paulson Drive
Pt. Charlotte, Florida 33954
Dir of Ops Paula Alexander
(941) 625-1111
FAX: (941) 627-0995
e-mail: palex@gl3c.com

District 23

Terrence R. Steiner, M.D.
4075 Lewis Speedway
St. Augustine, Florida 32084
Office Mgr Koni Rogers
(904) 829-5736
FAX: (800) 255-8617
e-mail: medex23@co.st-johns.fl.us

District 24

ME Services provided by District 7

FLORIDA ASSOCIATE MEDICAL EXAMINERS

(Sajid Qaiser, M.D.)
(Paulino Vasallo, M.D.)

District 1

Robert E. Brierty, M.D.
(Frederick P. Hobin, M.D.)

District 2

David E. Craig, M.D.
David J. Dolson, M.D.
Lynn H. Dolson, M.D.
Jerry L. Harris, M.D.
John P. Mahoney, M.D.
Charles F. Manning, M.D.
Margaret Havens Neal, M.D.
L. Stephen Sarbeck, M.D.
Gregory V. Scott, M.D., M.B.A.
Stephen L. Sgan, M.D.
Benjamin M. Turner, M.D.
Thomas P. Wood, M.D.
(Stephen J. Nelson)

District 3

(ME Services Covered by District 4)

District 4

Jessie C. Giles, M.D.
Aurelian Nicolaescu, M.D.
E. Hunt Scheuerman, M.D.

District 5

Julia V. Martin, M.D.
(Laura S. Hair, M.D.)
(Susan S. Ignacio, M.D.)
(Thomas R. Parsons, M.D.)
(Christopher I. Wilson, M.D.)

District 6

Susan S. Ignacio, M.D.
Noel A. Palma, M.D.
Christopher I. Wilson, M.D.

District 7

Thomas R. Parsons, M.D.
(Steven C. Cogswell, M.D.)
(Frederick P. Hobin, M.D.)
(Paulino O. Vasallo, M.D.)

District 8

Herman Baer, M.D.
James M. Crawford, M.D., Ph.D.
William H. Donnelly, M.D.
Carolyn M. Hopkins, M.D.
Melissa K. Li, M.D.
(Stephen J. Nelson, M.D.)

District 9

Jan C. Garavaglia, M.D.
Marie H. Hansen, M.D.
Sara H. Irrgang, M.D.
(Thomas R. Beaver, M.D.)
(Steven C. Cogswell, M.D.)
(Julia V. Martin, M.D.)
(Thomas R. Parsons, M.D.)

District 10

Susan S. Ignacio, M.D.
George D. Leidel, M.D.
Noel A. Palma, M.D.
Vera Volnikh, M.D.
(Jay S. Barnhart, M.D.)
(Charles A. Diggs, M.D.)
(Roger E. Mittleman, M.D.)

District 11

Matthew J. Bowes, M.D.
Martha J. Burt, M.D.
Joseph H. Davis, M.D.
D'Michelle P. Dupre, M.D.
Eva Gyori, M.D.
Kenneth D. Hutchins, M.D.
Emma O. Lew, M.D.
Erik K. Mont, M.D.
Reinhard W. Motte, M.D.
Jacqueline Nembhard, M.D.
Melissa A. Pasquale, M.D.
Mark J. Shuman, M.D.
(Michael D. Bell, M.D.)
(Manfred Borges, M.D.)
(Marta Coburn, M.D.)
(Lance G. Davis, M.D.)
(Peter Gillespie, M.D.)
(Michael D. Hunter, M.D.)
(Linda Rush O'Neil, M.D.)
(Joshua A. Perper, M.D.)
(Eroston A. Price, M.D.)

District 12

Laura S. Hair, M.D.
(Daniel J. Spitz, M.D.)

District 13

Sam P. Gulino, M.D.
Laura S. Hair, M.D.
Jacqueline A. Lee, M.D.
Cecilia M. Rosales, M.D.
Daniel Spitz, M.D.

District 14

(Susan S. Ignacio, M.D.)
(Noel A. Palma, M.D.)

District 15

Peter A. Gillespie, M.D.
Stuart M. Graham, M.D.
Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.
(Charles A. Diggs, M.D.)
(Roger E. Mittleman, M.D.)

District 16

Mark J. Shuman, M.D.

District 17

Michael D. Bell, M.D.
Lance G. Davis, M.D.
Linda R. O'Neil, M.D.
Eroston A. Price, M.D.
(Ray Fernandez, M.D.)
(Bruce A. Hyma, M.D.)
(Emma O. Lew, M.D.)
(Roger E. Mittleman, M.D.)
(Reinhard W. Motte, M.D.)

District 18

Sajid S. Qaiser, M.D.
(Charles A. Diggs, M.D.)

District 19

Jay S. Barnhart, M.D.
Charles A. Diggs, M.D.
(Lisa Flannagan, M.D.)
(George Leidel, M.D.)
(Stephen J. Nelson, M.D.)
(Noel Palma, M.D.)
(Sajid Qaiser, M.D.)
(Paulino Vasallo, M.D.)

District 20

Manfred Borges, Jr., M.D.
(Rebecca A. Hamilton, M.D.)

District 21

Wilson A. Broussard, Jr., M.D.
(Manfred Borges, Jr., M.D.)
(Marta U. Coburn, M.D.)
(Laura S. Hair, M.D.)

District 22

Bonifacio T. Floro, M.D.
Peter H. K. Tan, M.D.
James Weiner, M.D.
(Manfred Borges, Jr., M.D.)

District 23

(Thomas R. Beaver, M.D.)
(Frederick P. Hobin, M.D.)
(Thomas R. Parsons, M.D.)

District 24

(ME Services Covered by District 7)

Florida Medical Examiner Districts



District One

Escambia
Okaloosa
Santa Rosa
Walton

District Two

Franklin
Gadsden
Leon
Liberty
Jefferson
Taylor
Wakulla

District Three

Columbia
Dixie
Hamilton
Lafayette
Madison
Suwannee

District Four

Duval
Nassau
Clay

District Five

Citrus
Hernando
Lake
Marion
Sumter

District Six

Pinellas
Pasco

District Seven

Volusia

District Eight

Alachua
Baker
Bradford
Gilchrist
Levy
Union

District Nine

Orange
Osceola

District Ten

Hardee
Highlands
Polk

District Eleven

Dade

District Twelve

DeSoto
Manatee
Sarasota

District Thirteen

Hillsborough

District Fourteen

Bay
Calhoun
Gulf
Jackson
Washington
Holmes

District Fifteen

Palm Beach

District Sixteen

Monroe

District Seventeen

Broward

District Eighteen

Brevard

District Nineteen

Indian River
Martin
Okeechobee
St. Lucie

District Twenty

Collier

District Twenty-one

Glades
Hendry
Lee

District Twenty-two

Charlotte

District Twenty-three

Flagler
Putnam
St. Johns

District Twenty-four

Seminole

APPENDIX 5

Florida Attorney General
Advisory Legal Opinion

Number: AGO 2003-25

Date: June 6, 2003

Subject: Disclosure of autopsy photos/videotapes

Dr. Stephen J. Nelson, M.A., M.D., F.C.A.P.
Chairman
Medical Examiners Commission
Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Post Office Box 1489
Tallahassee, Florida 32302

RE: AUTOPSIES--PUBLIC RECORDS--disclosure of autopsy photographs or videotapes to non-public agencies. s. 406.135, Fla. Stat.

Dear Dr. Nelson:

You ask substantially the following questions:

1. May a Florida public agency use autopsy photographs in which identifying information has been redacted for training purposes in a class with non-public agency members, if the medical examiner has obtained a court order allowing the use of such photographs?
2. If so, may a public agency outside of Florida use autopsy photographs under the same circumstances where a court has so ordered?
3. May autopsy photographs be used for training purposes by a national association of medical examiners, if a court order has been obtained allowing such use?

Due to the interrelated nature of your questions, they will be discussed together.

Section 406.135(1), Florida Statutes, states:

"A photograph or video or audio recording of an autopsy in the custody of a medical examiner is confidential and exempt from the requirements of s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution, except that a surviving spouse may view and copy a photograph or video or listen to or copy an audio recording of the deceased spouse's autopsy. . . . A local governmental entity, or a state or federal agency, in furtherance of its official duties, pursuant to a written request, may view or copy a photograph or video or may listen to or copy an audio recording of an autopsy, and unless otherwise required in the performance of their duties, the identity of the deceased shall remain confidential and exempt. The custodian of the record, or his or her designee, may not permit any other person to view or copy such photograph or video recording or listen to or copy an audio recording without a court order." (e.s.)

The plain language of the statute allows a local governmental entity or a state agency, in furtherance of its official duties and upon written request, to have access to autopsy photographs or videos with the identity of the deceased remaining confidential and exempt unless such is required in the performance of the entity's official duties.

In Attorney General Opinion 01-47, this office concluded that a medical examiner may show autopsy photographs or videotapes in the context of professional training or education efforts for public agencies, provided that the identity of the deceased is shielded^[1] (unless "otherwise required in the performance of [the agency's] duties") and there is a written request for such disclosure from the public agency. The opinion warns, however, that access to such photographs or videotapes by making a written request to the medical examiner is clearly limited to public agencies, making it impermissible to use them to provide training to private entities unless a court order has been obtained as provided in the statute.

Section 406.135(2)(a), establishes a procedure whereby a court may allow access to autopsy photographs or videotapes by any person upon a showing of good cause. The statute provides:

"The court, upon a showing of good cause, may issue an order authorizing any person to view or copy a photograph or video recording of an autopsy or to listen to or copy an audio recording of an autopsy and may prescribe any restrictions or stipulations that the court deems appropriate. In determining good cause, the court shall consider whether such disclosure is necessary for the public evaluation of governmental performance; the seriousness of the intrusion into the family's right to privacy and whether such disclosure is the least intrusive means available; and the availability of similar information in other public records, regardless of form. In all cases, the viewing, copying, listening to or other handling of a photograph or video or audio recording of an autopsy must be under the direct supervision of the custodian of the record or his or her designee."

This procedure applies in those situations where a private non-governmental entity seeks access to autopsy photographs or recordings. In instances where a petition for such access has been filed, notification of next of kin and an opportunity for such kin to be present and heard at any hearings on the subject are required.^[2]

In *Campus Communications, Inc., v. Earnhardt*,^[3] a newspaper publishing company sought access to view and copy autopsy photographs under the public records law. The trial court denied access based upon the exemption created by section 406.135, Florida Statutes, and the company's failure to establish good cause to allow it to inspect and copy the photographs. On appeal, *Campus Communications* argued, among other things,^[4] that the Legislature had failed to define the term "good cause" for purposes of the statute. Citing to the specific criteria set forth in the statute for the court to consider in determining the existence of "good cause" and the long-standing role of the judiciary in applying "good cause" provisions in a variety of situations, the district court rejected this argument. The court analyzed whether release of the photographs was necessary to ensure that the government, in this instance the medical examiner, was carrying out its duties in a responsible fashion. Based upon uncontroverted evidence that the photographs had no diagnostic weight and that nothing could be discerned from the photographs that was not contained in the autopsy report and other materials made available, the court concluded that the photographs had no value to aid in assuring that the government was performing up to a required standard. Moreover, the court found that due to the gruesome nature of the images, publication of the photographs would be an intolerable invasion of the family's privacy and that such disclosure was not the least intrusive means available.^[5]

It is clear, therefore, that a court may allow the inspection and copying of autopsy photographs or videotapes by any person when good cause is found, based upon whether such disclosure is necessary to evaluate governmental performance; the seriousness of the intrusion on the deceased's family's right to privacy and whether such disclosure is the least intrusive means available; and the availability of similar information in other public records. In the particular situations that you have posed, the court, upon its finding of good cause in each case, may allow the disclosure of autopsy photographs or videotapes under any restrictions or stipulations that the court deems appropriate.

Accordingly, it is my opinion that autopsy photographs or videotapes may be shown for training purposes to non-public agencies or associations when a court has made the appropriate finding of good cause and the family of the deceased has been provided notice and the opportunity to attend and be heard at any hearing on the matter, as prescribed in section 406.135, Florida Statutes. In allowing the release of autopsy photographs or videotapes, the court may impose any restrictions or stipulations that it deems appropriate.

Sincerely,

Charlie Crist
Attorney General

CC/tls

[1] In re Matter of Bruce A. Hyma, M.D., Medical Examiner, Miami-Dade County, Florida, No. 01-7873CA01 (Fla. 11th Cir. Ct. April 2, 2001), the court allowed the use of autopsy photographs at a law enforcement training seminar "provided that the identity of all deceased shall remain confidential." The medical examiner's office in subsequent conversations with this office indicated that the identity of the deceased was shielded by placing a black strip over the decedent's eyes and maintaining the confidentiality of the deceased's name.

[2] Section 406.135(2)(b), Fla. Stat.

[3] 821 So. 2d 388 (Fla. 5th DCA 2002), pet. for review granted; case pending SCO2-1635.

[4] In *Campus Communications*, the plaintiff primarily attacked the constitutionality of section 406.135, Fla. Stat., stating that the exemption was overly broad and had been retroactively applied to impair a vested right of access. Both of these arguments were considered and rejected by the court.

[5] 821 So. 2d at 402