

Strengthening the Medical Examiner and Coroner System Act of 2024

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Medicolegal death investigations conducted by medical examiners and coroners are a crucial part of our health ecosystem.

They are necessary to understand causes of death, monitor evolving health challenges, and save lives. Shortages delay autopsies by months, preventing families from gaining closure and hamstringing our ability to fight the opioid epidemic and future health crisis.

The Problem: There is a severe shortage of medicolegal death investigators and forensic pathologists that is only getting worse.

Currently, there are only 400-500 full-time practicing forensic pathologists in the US. There is a need for 1200-1500 full-time forensic pathologists to provide full national coverage. Without the ability to determine cause of death quickly, criminal investigations and public health are both harmed.

Increasing the number and quality of Board-Certified Forensic Pathologists is an emergency. They play a critical role in support of this nation's public health, public safety, and criminal justice systems. They also provide critical information to the families of decedents and their attending physicians. Recruiting and retaining forensic pathologists is very challenging because of the training required and the burdensome workload.

The Solution: Strengthening the Medical Examiner and Coroner System Act

This legislation will:

- Encourage and incentivize qualified medical graduates to enter the practice of forensic pathology by funding forensic pathology fellowship slots.
- Provide support to accredited medical schools and forensic medicine service provider offices that operate forensic pathology fellowship programs.
- Encourage and incentivize qualified individuals to enter the field of medicolegal death investigation
- Fund forensic medicine service providers and toxicology laboratories who support forensic medicine service providers
- Expand pathways to train, educate and certify medicolegal death investigators.