

The Role of the Medical Examiner

Where Does the Office Come From?

- The Coroner
- Death Taxes
- The Sheriff

Coroners

- Elected
- In many states are not physicians
- Voters qualify a coroner
- They do what they want
 - Throw out the decision of the professional who did the work

Medical Examiners

- Appointed
- Has to be a physician
 - Not necessarily an FP
 - Often is not

State Death Investigation System by Type.

USA, 1996

Medical Examiner System (22)

A. State Medical Examiner (19)

Connecticut	New Hampshire	Tennessee
Delaware	New Jersey	Utah
District of Columbia	New Mexico	Vermont
Iowa	North Carolina	Virginia
Maine	Oklahoma	West Virginia
Maryland	Oregon	
Massachusetts	Rhode Island	

B. District Medical Examiner (1) Florida

C. County Medical Examiner (2)

Arizona	Michigan
---------	----------

State Death Investigation System by Type, USA, 1996 (cont'd)

Coroner System (11)

A. District Coroner (2)

Kansas

Nevada

B. County Coroner (9)

Colorado

Louisiana

Ohio

Idaho

Nebraska

South Dakota

Indiana

North Dakota

Wyoming

Michigan Compiled Laws

- Chapter 52.201- 52.216
- The Office of the Medical Examiner
- Originated from the Coroner

Cases which require autopsy

- All homicides and suspicious death.
- Death which occur under unusual circumstances.
- All prisoners who die in custody or in jail.
- Apparent natural deaths in which the COD is uncertain.
- Fatal traffic accident especially drivers and pedestrians.
(passengers?)
- Practically all drowning which occur in public water, bathtubs and in swimming pools.
- Drug deaths or chemical poisoning.

The Medical Examiner's Autopsy is intended to:

- Assist the police in
 - detecting the crime
 - finding the guilty
 - protect the innocent
 - identification
- Establish for workman compensation commission relationship between cause of death with type of work.
- Establish statistics of causes of death.
- Detect epidemics.

Postmortem Examination

- Who was the victim?
- How long has the victim been dead?
- Why did the victim die?