

2023 Medicolegal Death Investigation Conference

June 13 -June 15, 2023

This conference is brought to you by the University of Nebraska – Omaha School of Criminology, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Office of Injury Surveillance, and the Nebraska Violent Death Reporting System.

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

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| 8:00 AM – 8:15 AM | Welcome: Gaylene Armstrong, PhD, Director and Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, and Ashley Miller, Nebraska Violent Death Reporting System (NeVDRS) Program Manager |
| 8:15 AM – 9:15 AM | Introduction to Death Scene Investigation
MariaTeresa Tersigni-Tarrant, PhD
Associate Professor of Forensic Pathology
Saint Louis University School of Medicine
<i>This presentation will provide a detailed overview of the systematic process of death scene investigation. This presentation identifies the key players at each scene and their various roles. The presentation will detail the techniques that should be used at every scene, every time, and highlight the importance of detailed documentation of the decedent, scene, and witness statements.</i> |
| 9:15 AM – 10:15 AM | Time Since Death and Identification Techniques
MariaTeresa Tersigni-Tarrant, PhD
<i>This presentation will provide a brief review of the processes associated with postmortem decomposition in human remains by describing changes that occur in the human body minutes, hours, days, and weeks after death. This presentation will then provide a detailed overview of the best-practice procedures for the scientific identification of a decedent by detailing what information should be collected at the scene to facilitate a scientific identification and providing examples of mistaken/incorrect identification and the implications of such mistakes.</i> |
| 10:15 AM – 11:15 AM | <u>CAC: 1.0</u> Serious and Fatal Child Abuse
Suzanne Haney, MD, Child Abuse Pediatrician, Children’s Hospital and Medical Center
<i>This session will talk about the most common forms of child abuse that result in fatalities. In addition, we will discuss child death investigations from the perspective of a child abuse pediatrician. Finally, this talk will cover how a child abuse pediatrician can assist in the diagnosis and investigation of childhood deaths.</i> |

11:15 AM – 12:15 PM

CAC: 1.0 Investigating Infant Deaths: Why Environment Matters
Michelle Elieff, MD, Forensic Pathologist, Physicians Laboratory Services

Infant deaths are more than just SIDS. Proper classification of infant death is important to families and society. Presentation will be an overview of infant death evaluation from gathering medical history, to scene investigation, to autopsy correlation to death certification and beyond.

12:15 PM – 1:15 PM

Lunch Break

1:15 PM – 2:15 PM

Investigation of Drug-Related Deaths: It's Not Just About the Numbers
Erin Linde, MD, Forensic Pathologist, Physicians Laboratory Services

This presentation will provide an overview of the investigation of drug-related deaths including emphasis on the importance of scene findings, the circumstances of death, and medical and medication history when interpreting autopsy findings and determining cause of death. There will also be a brief review of toxicology testing, specimen types submitted for toxicology, and proper certification of drug-related deaths.

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM

Death Certification Crash Course

Michelle Elieff, MD, Forensic Pathologist, Physicians Laboratory Services

Participants will review important death certification terminology and apply their understanding to real-world examples in this interactive session.

3:15 PM – 4:45 PM

Forensic Pathology Panel

MariaTeresa Tersigni-Tarrant, PhD, Erin Linde, MD, Robert Bowen, MD, Michelle Elieff, MD, Suzanne Haney, MD

4:45 PM

Adjourn

7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

A Briefing: The Mass Graves of Saddam Hussein's Iraq, An Evening with Infamy

Bob Cryne, JD, and Abigail Osterhaus

After the invasion of Iraq in 2002, President George W. Bush created the Regime Crimes Liaison's Office (RCLO), a group of legal and criminal justice experts to "advise and assist the Iraqi High Tribunal in the prosecution of Saddam Hussein and senior members of his regime for Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity." An important part of that mission was to exploit and process mass graves of the victims of Saddam's savagery for evidence to be used against the late dictator and his henchmen.

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

8:45 AM – 10:15 AM

Three Bodies Burning: The Anatomy of an Investigation into Murder, Money, and Mexican Marijuana

Retired Detective Brian Bogdanoff, Omaha Police Department

Maria Moran, Retired Assistant United States Attorney, District of Nebraska

Additional guest speaker

A haunting triple murder...the inside story of the investigation. The chilling trail of evidence from a remote area where three bodies are set on fire leads detectives across the country chasing down witnesses and conspirators in a search for cold-blooded killers. This case has it all: murder, cash, a blood-soaked crime scene, cars, jewelry, and hundreds of pounds of illegal dope.

10:15 AM – 11:15 AM

Field Search and Recovery Methods for Scattered and Buried Remains

Christian Crowder, PhD, Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office,

Adjunct Professor, University of Texas Arlington, Pace University, NYC

This presentation will provide a detailed overview of search and recovery methods using scene surveying and archaeological techniques. This discussion addresses complex scenarios involving burned, comingled, buried, and scattered skeletonized remains.

11:15 AM – 12:15 PM

Medicolegal Aspects of Mass Fatality Management

Christian Crowder, PhD, Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office,

Adjunct Professor, University of Texas Arlington, Pace University, NYC

This presentation discusses medicolegal operations during a mass fatality incident and provides a framework for fatality management. From recovery operations to the family assistance center, this presentation will introduce operational concepts and provide suggestions for developing or modifying an agency's standard operating guidelines.

12:15 PM – 1:15 PM

Lunch

1:15 PM – 2:15 PM

Prospective and Retrospective Behavior Analysis in Forensics: What is the Difference?

Gary Plank, MA, Associate Professor of Forensic Science, Nebraska Wesleyan University

Behavior Analysis is understood in diverse ways by different professions. This presentation will explain the difference between Behavior Analysis and Behavior Profiling as they are used by Criminal Investigative Analysts. Further explanation will be provided to illustrate how Behavior Analysis is used in the discipline of Threat Assessment.

CPS132 Breakout Room

“What Happened Here?” A Proper Conclusion to Your Case Starts at the Beginning

John Downey, Investigator, Madison County Sheriff

Investigating any death is serious business. The first few minutes on the scene may determine the course of the investigation for years to come. This primer on scene assessment and preservation will help you get it right the first time.

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM

Investigation of Environmental Deaths

Erin Linde, MD, Pathologist, Physicians Laboratory Services

This presentation will provide an overview of the investigation of environmental deaths including drowning, hyperthermia, hypothermia, anaphylaxis, and electrocution.

CPS132 Breakout Room

Bloodstain Pattern Analysis (BPA)

Erin Sims, Crime Scene Investigator/Manager, Lincoln Police Department

This presentation will cover scene analysis, clothing analysis, fluid dynamics, examples of real-life applications, and a brief case study.

3:15 PM – 4:15 PM

The Autopsy, What to Expect

Robert Bowen, MD, Pathologist, Physician’s Lab

What information should you expect to receive from an autopsy? What are the limits to the information you can receive?

CPS132 Breakout Room

Expanded Conclusion for Latent Print Examinations

Joshua Connelly, MFS, Latent Print Unit Technical Lead, Douglas County Sheriff Office

Creating standards for the forensic community to follow. Some of these standards include the expanded conclusion scale, limited examinations, conflict resolution between examiners, proficiency testing, etc., and how they are all important in our aspect of the judicial system.

CPS 132 Breakout Room

Post-Mortem Sketch Composite

Mike Krohn, Crime Scene Investigator, Douglas County Sheriff Office

This session will be a description of post-mortem sketching, how it pertains to post-mortem identification, and how this service can assist with identification of unknown deceased individuals in death investigations. Participants will get an idea of the essential information needed by the artist to complete a sketch, the process that takes place

during the sketch, and how the final product is treated as an item of evidence that can be useful in court.

4:15 PM

Adjourn

Thursday, June 15, 2023

8:30 AM – 8:45 AM

Welcome, housekeeping: Joe Jeanette, Addressing future trainings for professionalism

8:45 AM – 10:15 AM

Ethics 1.5 Nebraska Law Regarding Death Investigations and Coroner Corey O'Brien, Nebraska Attorney General's Office

Review all relevant law in Nebraska dealing with death investigations and Coroners. Legal issues seen as Coroner and examples of potential problems from an ethical and legal perspective.

10:15 AM – 11:00 AM

**The Nebraska Violent Death Reporting System and the Statewide Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System in a Nutshell
Bob Cryne, JD, and Abigail Osterhaus, University of Nebraska – Omaha**

An overview of the Nebraska Violent Death Reporting System, the Statewide Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System, and the Toxicology Testing Program as they relate to County Attorneys in the role of Ex Officio Coroner. Responsibilities, "dos and don'ts", clarification of common misconceptions.

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Federal Prosecution for Overdoses

Kim Bunjer, JD, Assistant United States Attorney

Detective Wendi Dye, Homicide, Omaha Police Department

A person commits drug-induced homicide when they unlawfully deliver a controlled substance to another, and any person's death is caused by the injection, inhalation, absorption, or ingestion of any amount of those controlled substances. What are local, state, and federal investigators and prosecutors doing in Nebraska to combat this?

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Lunch

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Ethics 1.0 Conducting Grand Juries in an Era of Heightened Law Enforcement Scrutiny

Corey O'Brien, JD, Prosecutor, Nebraska Attorney General's Office

This presentation will explore the practical and pragmatic application of Nebraska's Grand Jury laws. It will include insight and analysis from previous grand juries conducted across Nebraska as well as a discussion of possible conflicts of interest, ethics, and the demands for greater transparency into the process in the wake of recent controversial

custodial deaths across the country.

CPS132 Breakout Room

Molecular Forensics at its Evolution

Jesse L Cox, MD, PhD, Director, Molecular Forensics, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Developed in the 1980s, molecular techniques to identify and discern Individuals have proven to be a powerful tool in both medicine and law. Herein, we will discuss the biology that underpins the molecular techniques used previously and currently and discuss the future directions and techniques likely to become commonplace.

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Coroner Partnerships and Relationships with Law Enforcement, Press and Public, and Organ Recovery

Don Kleine, JD, Douglas County Attorney

Focus on all the different contacts and relationships that Coroners will make in their position. The issues and problems that can arise from those relationships. The very positive results that can come from having effective relationships.

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Forensic Entomology in Death Investigations

Dr. Tim Huntington, Professor of Biology and Criminal Justice, Concordia University

This session will present the roles of insects as evidence and what Information they can give the death investigator. Key topics in forensic entomology such as time of death estimations and decomposition will be covered.

4:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Closing remarks and adjourn