



International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

Collaboration · Education · Accreditation

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medicolegal death investigation through collaboration, education and accreditation.

IACME Position Statement

Medicolegal Death Investigators and Coroners Should Be Certified by Accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies

The International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners (IACME) has been serving the medicolegal community since its establishment in 1927. Then, as now, the association strives to assist our members in their efforts to provide consistent, high-quality medicolegal death investigation services to the communities they serve, irrespective of jurisdiction size, type, or location. It is the IACME's position that the path to achieving this goal is three-pronged and lies in a commitment to: (1) third party operational oversight through voluntary office accreditation; (2) access to high-quality education and training; and to the subject of this paper, (3) certification of medicolegal death investigators and coroners.

In 2009, the National Academy of Sciences released a report entitled: *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*. Among other things, this groundbreaking publication alluded to the need for oversight within the forensic science community, suggesting that organizations tasked with evaluating the competence of forensics practitioners, hitherto known as conformity assessment bodies (CABs), should, themselves, be monitored to ensure quality and consistency in the certification process.¹ Prior to this publication, many forensics subspecialties, to include medicolegal death investigation (MDI), did not require such oversight. As a result, a cadre of unproven MDI



International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners

Collaboration · Education · Accreditation

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medicolegal death investigation through collaboration, education and accreditation.

CABs of varying quality took root in the industry, all jockeying for the patronage of aspiring practitioners. Recognizing the need for consistent processes based in scientifically valid principles, the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), the National Forensic Science Technology

Center (NFSTC), and the National Institutes of Justice (NIJ) combined forces to fund and support the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB) in taking on this important oversight role.

Ultimately, it is the expertise and competence of our medicolegal practitioners and their commitment to excellence that most influences the outcome of an investigation. To that end, the IACME recognizes the importance of medicolegal professional credentialing by industry-recognized and accredited CABs. To date, the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) is the only such CAB specific to MDI professionals that has met the rigorous criteria established for FSAB accreditation and is, therefore, the only certifying body recognized by the IACME.

¹National Research Council. 2009. *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*. Washington DC: The National Academies Press.