

COMMISSION ON MEDICOLEGAL INVESTIGATIONS MEETING MINUTES

June 6, 2025

The meeting of the Commission on Medicolegal Investigations was held at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) in Farmington, CT on Friday, June 6, 2025.

Present:

Todd D. Fernow, J.D. Chairman (Remotely)
John H. Sinard, M.D., Vice Chairman (Remotely)
Sidney M. Hopfer, Ph.D. Secretary (Remotely)
Michael Krinsky, M.D (Remotely)
Jennifer Bourn, J.D. (Remotely)
Elizabeth Frugale, DPH (Present)
Susan Keane Baker, M.H.A. (Remotely)
Celia Pinzi (Remotely)

Also Present:

James R. Gill, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner
Maura E. DeJoseph, D.O., Deputy Chief Medical Examiner
Lincoln Dwayne Gordon, OCME Administrator
Holly Cuomo, OCME Executive Secretary

Chairman Fernow called the meeting to order at 2:11 pm.

The minutes from the March 14, 2025 meeting were adopted without corrections.

Medical Examiner Summary:

Dr. Gill provided the Chief Medical Examiner report to the COMLI.

Office Announcements:

1. Bill #7157 is a recent bill that both houses have passed and is now pending the Governor's decision. If approved, the bill will allow parents or siblings, 18 years of age or older, of a child under 18 years of age to obtain the autopsy report at no charge.
 - *Effective 7/1/25 Substitute House Bill #7157, Public Act No. 25-97, subsection (b) of section 19a-411 was passed and is now a law.*
2. OSHA visited the Office to review a complaint regarding wet floors without proper signage, ventilation, and defective stretchers. Their report on findings is still pending.

Autopsy Workload and Turnaround Times:

The number of autopsies for 2025 is estimated to be about 2,600, noting this is similar with the number of autopsies completed in 2024.

The case completion data for 2025 was reviewed. As of March, greater than 96% of cases were completed within 90 days, and 93% within 60 days.

Scene Investigations: Investigator scene presence was 99%, 98% and 97% for March, April and May respectively.

Storage at Facility: There is an average between 70 and 80 bodies stored at OCME a day. On 6/6/25, there was a total of 76 bodies, including 24 remains that have been stored for over 30 days. These numbers can vary drastically during a given month.

Fellowship: Our Fellow is on track to finish at the end of June. We have one Fellow starting in July 2025, and two Fellows starting in July 2026.

Facility Update: DAS will be submitting a new proposal for an addition to the current Office's footprint.

EDRS Integration Updates: No additional updates were provided.

Fiscal Summary:

Lincoln Dwayne Gordon provided the fiscal update for the office.

Agency Staffing: The June organizational chart was provided. As of June 6th, 56 full-time and 19 part-time positions are filled. HR continues their recruitment efforts to fill the vacant positions.

Fiscal:

Expenditures and Grants: OPM released the allotted \$100,000 holdback funding; therefore, we have a small projected surplus for personnel services.

In November, OPM issued a directive to reduce our PS budget by \$100,000 by the end of the fiscal year. The directive was modified to allow the Office to reduce the OE budget (other expenses) instead of personnel/labor funding. We will fulfill the agreement.

The Office received an ASCP Forensic Trainees Rotation Grant of \$2,500. This is a one-year grant, and the money will be used to purchase PPE supplies for the doctors that come to the Office to complete a rotation.

The Coverdell Grant is a \$73,674.00, grant awarded to the Office over a two-year period beginning October 1, 2024. Unfortunately, the funds were not allocated until April 28, 2025. Money in the grant must be used by September 30, 2025.

Fellowship Grants: Fellowship grant money for FY '26 and '27 has been approved and allotted.

Lepow Fund: The fund is used for education purposes only. In FY '25, one course was paid for as directed by the Chief Medical Examiner. The revenue is from interest and a donation made by Dr. Gill.

Revenue: A summary of revenue streams was reviewed. OCME is projecting revenue to be over \$3.4 million by the end of the fiscal year. The projected revenue fluctuates based on cremation and medical record fees. All revenue goes directly to the State General Fund.

Account Receivables: Outstanding account receivable balances continue to decrease with the increased use of the electronic payments through EDRS.

Old Business:

COMLI Officers: One Law Professor appointee position remains vacant.

Election of Officers: Election of Officers remains a standard agenda item. As previously determined, members will stay in their current positions until they no longer wish to, or somebody else wishes to have an election, in which case an election will occur as soon as possible.

New Business:

Crime Lab DNA Testing: The Crime Lab has approached the Office about working collaboratively to help clear cold cases by testing decedents DNA to possibly find familia matches. Commissioner Fernow spoke with the Middlesex States Attorney regarding this request. There are statutes that prohibit the Office from collecting DNA for purposes unrelated to either criminal investigations, decedent identification, or to determine the of cause of death.

NOTE: Commission Fernow left the meeting at 2:52 pm.

EDRS – Amended DC certification: CT-Vitals requires any amendment to the DC to be certified by the person who originally certified the death. This has been problematic in hospital settings where the doctor who initially certified the death is not easily reachable, and the funeral home needs to move forward with their process. The statute only allows “pending” DCs to be initiated by the Medical Examiner’s Office. The statute will be reviewed at the September meeting.

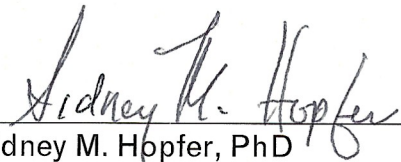
Executive Session:

An Executive Session was not needed.

Next Meeting: The next COMLI meeting is scheduled for September 26, 2025.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:08 pm.



Sidney M. Hopper, PhD
Secretary