

**Office of the Cook County Medical Examiner  
Advisory Committee Meeting | October 16, 2015  
Cook County Building | 118 N. Clark Street  
Conference Room | 11:00am**

**Attendance**

**Present:** Dr. Enrique Beckmann, *Medical Profession - Chairman*; Detective Sergeant Jason Moran, *Cook County Sheriff's Office - Vice Chairman*; Susan Dyer, *Funeral Director*; Isaac McCoy, *President/CEO Urban Mosaic*; Commander Al Nagode, *1<sup>st</sup> District-Central Chicago Police Department*

**Absent:** Vuanita Battle-Maze, *Vitas Hospice*; Mark A. Rizzo, *Licensed Funeral Director-Secretary*; Spencer Leak, Jr., *Funeral Director*; Rabbi Moshe Wolf, *Police Chaplain-CPD/CFD*; Jeffrey R. Tobolski, *Cook County Commissioner 16<sup>th</sup> District*

**No longer on committee:** Assistant State's Attorney Daniel Gallagher, *Cook County State's Attorney's Office*; Commissioner Elizabeth Gorman, *Cook County Board of Commissioners*; Deputy Chief Eugene Roy, *Chicago Police Department*

**Guests Present:** Dr. Stephen Cina, *Chief Medical Examiner*; Dr. Ponni Arunkumar, *Deputy Chief Medical Examiner*; Nadine Jakubowski, *Deputy Executive Officer*; Robert Meza, *CCBOA*; Becky Schleman, *CCBOA*; Edward Olivieri, *Commissioner Tobolski's Office (on behalf of Commissioner Tobolski)*

**Call to Order/Roll Call**

MEAC meeting called to order at **11:20 a.m.** by Chairman Beckmann  
Vice-Chairman Moran does roll call and announces that there is **not** a quorum  
Chairman Beckmann suggests that the committee has an informational meeting due to a quorum not being present and break from formal meeting agenda

**Introductions**

Commander Al Nagode will replace Deputy Chief Eugene Roy as Chicago Police Department representative. Commissioner Jeffrey Tobolski will replace Commissioner Liz Gorman as Cook County Board of Commissioners representative. Edward Olivieri was in attendance representing Commissioner Tobolski. There is no replacement for Assistant State's Attorney Daniel Gallagher at this time.

**Reports**

**Dr. Cina:** Homicide cases are up 90 over last year. Cooler count is 186 (limit is 250), 60 of which are Storage Cases. I would like to see the Office reduce and/or eliminate Storage Cases if possible in the future. The Funeral Homes seem to aggressively make transfers without securing necessary authorizations for payment funds which contributes to number of Storage Cases.

Recently attended the National Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners meeting. We currently have 16 Doctors and 2-3 Pathology Fellows on Staff and are interviewing for 2018-19 Fellowship positions. The goal is to be fully staffed by July 2016. Currently, each doctor is

doing fewer exams per year. Provisional accreditation is showing progress. Director/Chief of Toxicology position still needs to be filled for full N.A.M.E. accreditation.

**11:25a.m. - Isaac McCoy arrives, and Chairman Beckmann announces that we now have a quorum**

**Dr. Cina Continues:** Summary of proposed changes to Medical Examiner Ordinance is distributed. The proposed changes had previously been distributed to Board of Commissioners. Dr. Cina will make himself available to Commissioners and/or MEAC for any discussion or inquiries.

Highlights of proposed changes-

- Cremation Program Policy represents the most significant change to the Ordinance. Ethically speaking it would be best to bury everyone; however it is not financially possible. To clarify, Unidentified Decedents will continue to be buried at County expense, as well as FETAL remains—these two categories of Cases will not be cremated under Ordinance.
- A \$100 charge to “Pick Up Cremated Remains By Family” has been added to Fee Schedule.
- The Care and Dignity of the Deceased remain high priority of the Office of the Medical Examiner, to be reflected in Policies and Procedures for holding Storage Cases—
  - 1) Embalming after 3 day hold for preservation of remains
  - 2) Released to Family
  - 3) Mortuary Schools
  - 4) If determined Indigent may be appropriate for donation to Anatomical Gift Association if within time constraint
- The Cemetery Request for Proposal (RFP) has been posted, NO proposals have been submitted.
- VA Funds available for eligible Veterans

### **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of July 17, 2015 are reviewed by committee

Motion to approve by Dyer

Motion seconded by Vice-Chairman Moran

Motion to approve minutes passed unanimously by committee

### **Reports Continued**

**Chairman Beckmann:** Welcomes new MEAC Members thanking each for their participation, briefly explaining that our role as a Committee is to “protect the dignity of the deceased in the care of the Office of the Medical Examiner” versus “the budget and practical considerations for the day to day operations of the Office of the Medical Examiner.”

Edward Olivieri asked question about Embalming vs Cremation and whether cases could be donated to AGA?

Dr. Cina responds that timing for cases to be used for Anatomical Study generally needs to fall within first 72 hours after death. CCME holds cases for 60+ days, Cremation Policy has expedited that time period for holding Indigent Cases. Currently, 35 cremations are done per month with only 5 being eligible for AGA.

Edward Olivieri informs committee that Commissioner Tobolski is the liaison for Veterans Affairs to the CCBOC and asked what could be done to eliminate delays in coordinating final disposition for VA Cases.

#### Committee Discussion

- Chairman Beckmann and Vice-Chairman Moran relate that the dignified handling of human remains requires that, absent knowledge of decedent's intentions, the body be buried before it is cremated. This is especially true in the case of indigent/unclaimed veterans that will be cremated by the Medical Examiner's Office. There is absolutely no reason to cremate a veteran when there are benefit funds available for the burial of the veteran. If the problem is that Veteran's Affairs is not responding to the Medical Examiner's Office in a timely manner then address that problem, do not use cremation as a remedy
- Susan Dyer inquires if it is possible to adopt a VA Burial List of Funeral Homes and inquires if the CCMEO or MEAC can assist with the problem.
- Chairman proposes the idea of Veteran's Affairs subcommittee to address the issues discussed

**Motion to form Veteran's Affairs Subcommittee** made by Vice-Chairman Moran, seconded by McCoy, and discussed

- Work with the County on process to expedite VA Burials in "a timely fashion" - to be presented at the January MEAC Meeting
- Identify Cook County VA Burial Process
- VA Memorandum of Understanding between FH and CCME
- Indigent VA Burial Benefits
- Determine process and determine changes needed to rectify delay in burial of Indigent Veterans
- In further discussion concerning the "dignity of the deceased," final disposition was explained as "a fundamental wish of the decedent," that in most ME cases, are not made known prior to death

**Motion unanimously approved by committee**

- Veteran's Affairs Subcommittee is appointed by Dr. Beckmann – Susan Dyer as Chairman, Vice-Chairman Moran and Secretary Rizzo

#### **Old/New Business**

Chairman Beckmann – would like Annual Report Subcommittee to remain the same as in previous years - MEAC Officers compile and draft report

**Motion to retain Annual Report Subcommittee** made by Vice-Chairman Moran, seconded by Dyer, and passed unanimously by committee

#### **Adjournment**

**Motion to Adjourn** made by Isaac McCoy at 12:45p.m., seconded by Vice-Chairman Moran, and passed unanimously by committee

