

**Office of the Cook County Medical Examiner  
Advisory Committee Meeting | April 22, 2016  
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-Secretary*; Mark A. Rizzo, *Funeral Director*; Commander Al Nagode, *Chicago Police Department*; Donald Pechous, *Assistant State's Attorney*; Rabbi Moshe Wolf, *Police Chaplain-CPD/CFD*; Vuanita Battle-Maze, *Vitas Hospice*

**Absent:** Spencer Leak, Jr., *Funeral Director*; Jeffrey R. Tobolski, *Cook County Commissioner 16<sup>th</sup> District*; Isaac McCoy, *President/CEO Urban Mosaic*

**Guests Present:** Dr. Stephen Cina, *Chief Medical Examiner-CCMEO*; Dr. Ponni Arunkumar, *Deputy Chief Medical Examiner-CCMEO*; Robert Meza, *Legal Counsel - CCBOA*; Rebecca Perrone, *Indigent Coordinator-CCMEO*; James Sledge, *Executive Officer-CCMEO*; Carlos Aparico, *Commissioner Tobolski's Office*

**Call to Order/Roll Call**

MEAC meeting called to order at **11:03 a.m.** by Chairman Beckmann  
Secretary Dyer performs roll call, we have a quorum

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of January 15, 2016 are reviewed by Committee  
Motion to approve minutes made by Rabbi Wolfe  
Motion seconded by Mark Rizzo  
No discussion  
Motion to approve minutes passed unanimously by committee

**Reports**

**Chairman Beckmann:** The CCMEO is now in full N.A.M.E. accreditation status ahead of schedule thanks to Dr. Cina. We thank you with much gratitude for your effort and hard work. Members of the MEAC were well represented at the Press Conference for the announcement.

[Rabbi Wolfe extends Passover wishes to all and in light of this holiday will need to depart early]

**Dr. Cina:** Thanks everyone with respect to N.A.M.E. accreditation and thanks Dr. Arunkumar for acting as Interim Toxicology Lab Director in order to facilitate the process. David Fowler attended the announcement, the CCBOA has fully supported the accreditation effort to maintain quality in services to the public and to encourage physicians to come and work for the CCMEO.

- Grant Packet Attached to Agenda and Minutes - \$56K was awarded this year
- Items for future consideration can be retrofitted to any future facility
- Mass fatality incident implementation items have been approved
- Unused funds have been appropriated for Full Body X-ray Unit
- Medical District meeting will be held soon to discuss land swap for new facility

- Cooler count 198/Storage cases 59

**Veteran's Affairs Subcommittee (Chairman Susan Dyer):** Sub-committee has been working with CCMEO Indigent Coordinator Rebecca Perrone on issues surrounding proper final disposition of unclaimed veterans

- Rebecca Perrone: VA case vetting continues to be an issue. VA hospital cases are being cleared by National VA Office, as opposed to, the Regional VA Office which is who the CCMEO has always used. This has caused delays in providing final disposition for the unclaimed veterans. This may be due to the regional office administrator utilizing primarily one (1) funeral home to complete the process despite a couple dozen funeral homes being on the approved VA list. Also, by using the regional office administrator we may be missing veterans because their list is not as comprehensive as the national
- Vice-Chairman Moran: CCMEO should be vetting decedents through the national VA office and rotating through the regional approved list of funeral homes to complete the process
- Robert Meza: suggested drafting a Memorandum of Understanding to utilize in unclaimed VA burials similar to regular Indigent Burial Program
- Secretary Dyer: Should the issues with the regional VA administrator be brought to the attention of her supervisor, VA Inspector General, law enforcement, or county board?
- Chairman Beckmann: we need to make this issue known to the CCBOC through our meeting minutes and Annual Report so they can decide how to proceed
- Vice-Chairman Moran: we unanimously approved a recommendation at the last meeting – “Veterans should never be cremated by the Medical Examiner’s Office while the federal burial benefit is available to them. The Medical Examiner’s Office, the CCBOC, and the MEAC should work on solving the processing delays at the Office of Veteran’s Affairs rather than subvert the system through cremation
- Sub-committee makes suggestion that we add the word “unclaimed” before “Veterans” based on questions posed by Robert Meza
- Rebecca Perrone: this issue requires some more research, she will make further inquiries, and report back to committee

## **New Business**

**Secretary Dyer:** Burial of Indigent, Unclaimed, and/or Unidentified: next burial will take place on April 28, 2016 at Mt. Olivet Cemetery

## **Adjournment**

Motion to Adjourn made by Secretary Dyer at 12:15 p.m.

Motion seconded by Vice-Chairman Moran

No discussion

Motion passed unanimously by committee