

# SWGMDI

## Infrastructure Committee

### Report 1

## Death Investigation Systems and NAME, ABMDI, IACME Representation in States

March 21, 2011

Committee Members at the time of this report:

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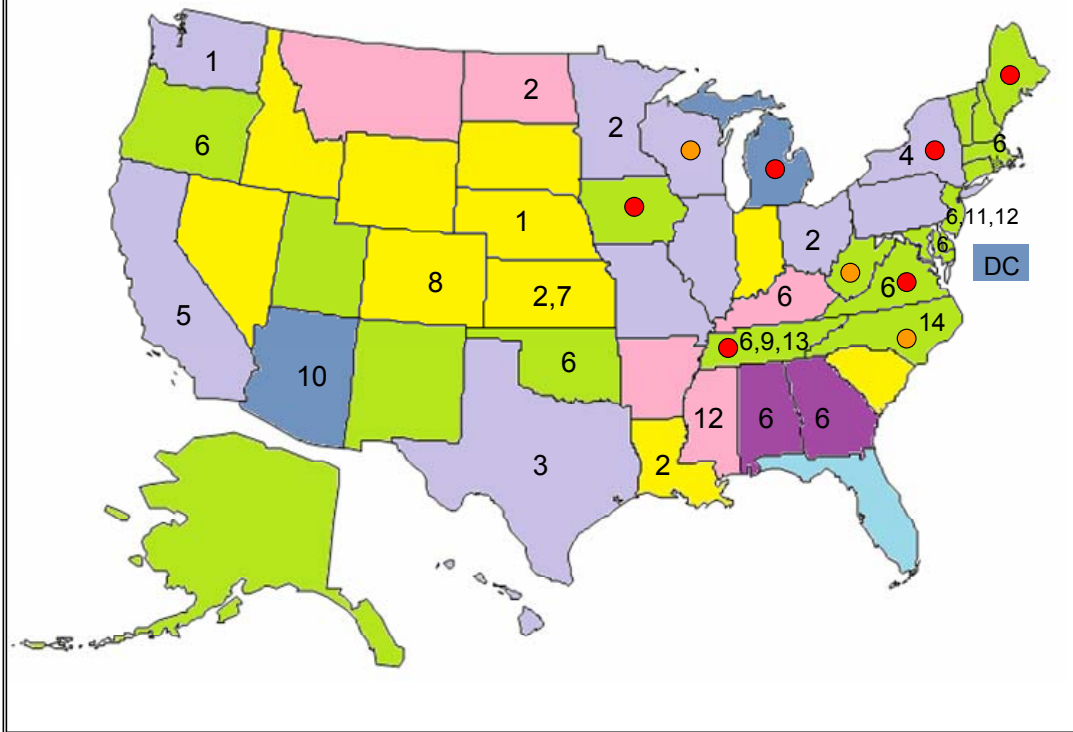
Julie Howe

Donald Jason

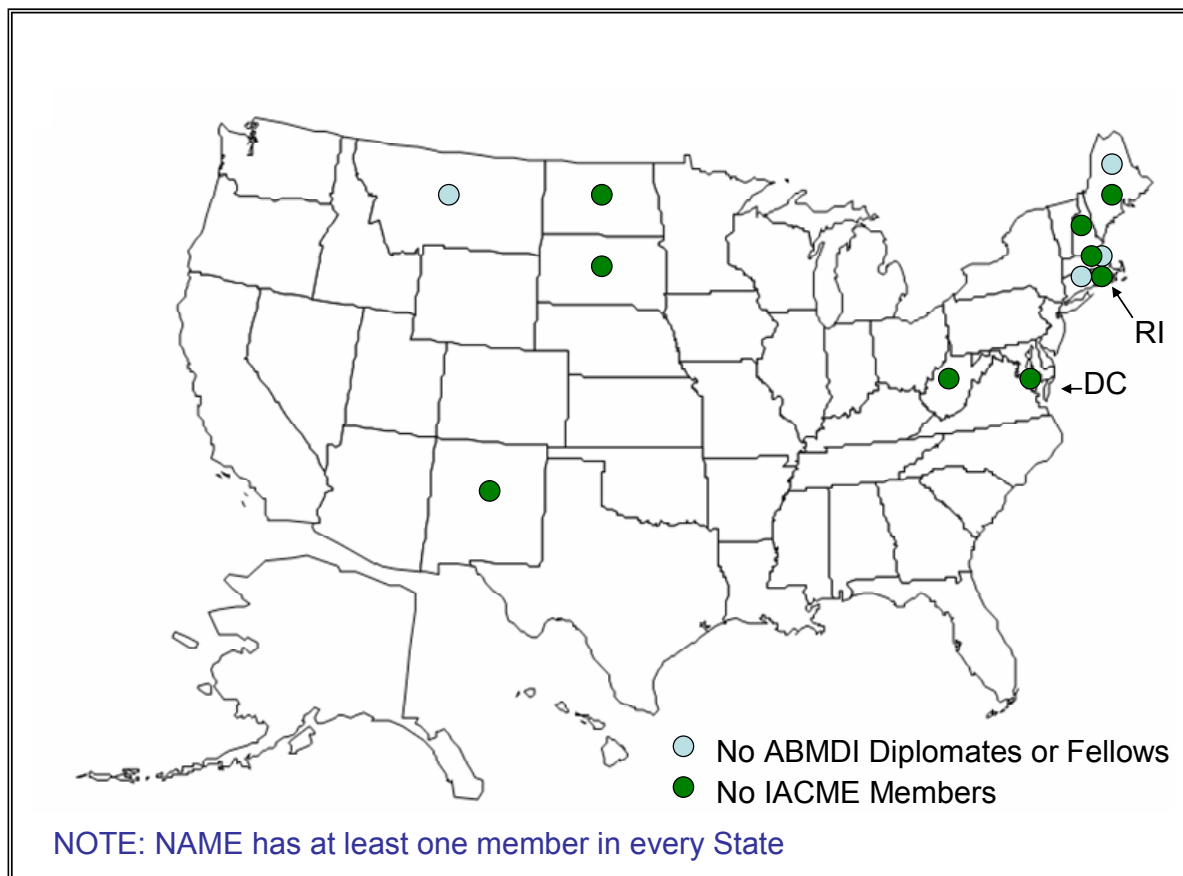
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## Death Investigation Systems: November 2010



- Some counties have a medical examiner and many or most have a coroner. Cook is Illinois' only Medical Examiner County, and Summit is Ohio's only Medical Examiner County.
  - State Medical Examiner with coroners in each county
  - State Medical Examiner with various types of non-coroner regional or local assistance
  - State Medical Examiner assisting coroners in most counties, at least one autonomous county medical examiner
  - District Medical Examiners
  - Medical Examiner (physician) in each county. District of Columbia has a single medical examiner office.
  - Coroner in each county
1. County prosecutor is coroner in some Washington counties and all counties in Nebraska.
  2. Coroners are required to be physicians
  3. Justices of the peace serve as coroner in some counties
  4. Some counties may have more than one coroner. District attorney is coroner in some counties.
  5. In most counties the Sheriff is coroner
  6. State medical examiner with more than one office in the state
  7. Coroners are appointed and serve districts of multiple counties
  8. Coroners are appointed in 3 counties. In Denver, its more like an ME system
  9. Appointed physician (usually not pathologist) medical examiners in each county who refer cases to regional centers
  10. Although correct by statute, not all AZ counties have physician medical examiners. Some counties use other centers.
  11. New Jersey State Medical Examiner has oversight but system runs more like a district/regional system
  12. State Medical Examiner position currently vacant
  13. Some counties also have coroners elected by county commission; they do transport but do not sign death certificates.
  14. NC has one State ME Office and designated regional pathologists also provide autopsy services to the county medical examiners. A few counties have elected coroners who operate within the ME statutes and are responsible to the OCME.
- Some Local "Medical Examiners" are physicians who are not pathologists
  - Some Local "Medical Examiners" are not physicians



Through the membership of NAME, IACME, and the ABMDI Diplomates and Fellows (which for the purpose of the report include persons with either Registry or Certifications status, the Infrastructure Committee should be able to collect state and more local information for virtually all states regarding medical examiner, coroner, and death investigator issues.

Data Sources:

- 1) Hanzlick R. The Conversion of Coroner Systems to Medical Examiners in the US: A Lull in the Action. *Am J Forensic Med Pathol.* 2007;28(4)279-83.
- 2) Hanzlick R, Combs D. Medical examiner and coroner systems: history and trends. *JAMA* 1998;279:870-874.
- 3) Hanzlick R. Coroner training needs: a numeric and geographic analysis. *JAMA* 1996;276:1775-78.
- 4) Hanzlick R. Death Investigation Systems and Procedures. CRC Press. Boca Raton, Florida. 2007.
- 5) Electronic membership databases of IACME, NAME, and ABMDI. March 2011.
- 6) Combs DL, Parrish RG, Ing RT. Death Investigation in the United States and Canada. 1995. CDC. Atlanta, Georgia.

Disclosure: The author of reference #4 receives royalties from the publisher for sales of the book.