

CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER-FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

This is a managerial, professional and administrative position which is responsible for planning and administering the medical-legal activities and supervising the operation of the Dutchess County Medical Examiner's Office. This is specialized work which investigates causes of death in suspect cases, i.e., homicides, suicides, medical misadventures, disease of public health significance, persons in public health institutions or individuals unattended by a physician. The Medical Examiner shall have the authority to the extent required for an investigation and to remove and transport the body upon taking charge of it, notwithstanding any general, special, or local law. The work involves cooperation with other medical personnel in the performance of autopsies, post mortems, pathological, and other examinations for all violent, suspicious, and unexpected deaths. Work is performed according to various sections of the County law and other applicable sections of New York State Public Health Law and local laws. Work is performed under the general direction of the County Executive. Supervision is exercised over investigative, support and other subordinate staff. Evening work and other than normal work schedules can be expected in this position, as the incumbent is on call to cover any emergency, including bioterrorism.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

Typical work activities for incumbents in this title include those listed below in addition to those typical work activities performed by lower level titles in the series. They are indicative of the level and types of activities performed by incumbents in this title. It is not meant to be all inclusive and does not preclude a supervisor from assigning activities not listed which could reasonably be expected to be performed by an employee in this title.

1. Assumes the authority to investigate every death occurring within Dutchess County or a death which appears to be suspicious, i.e., violent in nature; one caused by unlawful or criminal action or by negligence, or one that is unattended or uncertifiable by a physician;
2. Performs and/or supervises the performance of autopsies when necessary to establish cause of death, gross and histologic examinations of surgical specimens, and microscopic examinations, and evaluates all data and prepares reports of findings;
3. Visits or supervises visitation of the death scene, conducts investigations and prepares related reports;
4. Completes and issues death certificates;
5. Files and maintains full records of all investigations in accordance with the methods and forms prescribed by all governing medical and legal regulations;
6. Delivers all pertinent records to the District Attorney whenever investigation indicates that a crime may have been committed;
7. Testifies in court and at inquests and may subpoena and examine witnesses under oath;
8. Advises, consults with, and provides assistance to government officials, other medical examiners, coroners, physicians, laboratories, etc., relative to tests, examinations, and analysis of the body of the deceased, or to matters related to the investigation;
9. Manages and directs the operation of the medical examiner program, ensuring such activities are in support of desired goals and obligations and modifying programs as necessary;
10. Participates in training on changes in law, investigation techniques, criminal forensics, etc.
11. Maintains public relations through public and press contacts, speeches, conferences and participation in professional and community organizations in liaison with the Office of the Medical Examiner.

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FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILL AND ABILITIES:

Thorough knowledge of the modern theory and practice of pathology in order to investigate deaths and perform autopsies;

Thorough knowledge of forensic medicine in order to manage the medical examiner program;

Thorough knowledge of all governing laws, rules and regulations relating to a medical examiner's program, collection of evidence and conducting forensic investigations;

Good knowledge of laboratory equipment, procedures and techniques in order to conduct autopsies, order tests and understand results within the content of a death investigation;

Good knowledge of a variety of software packages for word processing, data collection and spreadsheets;

Ability to manage an office, administer a program and supervise professional and support staff;

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with physicians, hospital personnel, law enforcement and other governmental agencies, business and community leaders and the general public;

Ability to deal sympathetically and objectively with people under stress;

Ability to remain calm and act effectively in tense and potentially difficult situations;

Personal characteristics necessary to perform the duties of the position;

Physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Possession of a valid license and current registration to practice medicine issued by the New York State Education Department and certification by the American Board of Forensic Pathology plus two years of experience as a forensic pathologist.

SPECIAL REQUIRMENT:

Possession of a New York State Driver license at time of appointment.

HL0110

ADOPTED: 01/01/03