



Pathology Biology Section – 2010

G67 Death Investigation and Organ and Tissue Donation in Clark County, Nevada

Alane Olson, MD, Clark County Coroner's Office, 1704 Pinto Lane, Las Vegas, NV 89106*

After attending this presentation, attendees will be acquainted with alternatives and compromises which have been adopted between a medicolegal death investigation agency and the local organ procurement organization in an effort to optimize medicolegal death investigations and organ and tissue procurement.

The presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing knowledge of some successful alternatives in meeting the needs of coroner/medical examiner offices and organ procurement organizations.

During its 2007 session, the Nevada Legislature considered model legislation to modify the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act. At the same time, the Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner and the Nevada Donor Network initiated discussions aimed at tailoring the model legislation to better accommodate specific needs and existing relationships. As a result of these activities, the legislation finally enacted contains provisions which, among other things, allow the coroner's office to refuse organ and tissue donation if it will interfere with the death investigation, attend the procurement if necessary, be reimbursed for attending the procurement, and obtain video and photographic documentation before, during, and after the procurement. In order to accommodate the anticipated need for photo documentation, the coroner's office formed the Forensic Investigative Rapid Support Team (FIRST), which is composed of experienced autopsy technicians who are on-call and available to respond to hospitals in conjunction with the coroner investigator for the purpose of photographing prospective donors. When the coroner's office is notified of a request for donation, on-call medical examiner is responsible for deciding if the procurement can take place, and the FIRST team is activated at his/her discretion. The coroner's office and organ procurement organization consider this a reasonable compromise between optimizing recovery of organs and tissues, and the requirements for conducting thorough medicolegal death investigations.

Death Investigation, Organ Procurement, Legislation