



# NAME *International Newsletter*

VOLUME 6, NO. 3, 2023

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Greetings International, Canadian, and US Friends. What a terrific meeting of the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) was held in California, October 2023. We had a record number of attendees, 653! We also had 24 attendees from outside the United States and Canada. These 24 attendees represented 12 countries! We hope to increase this number next year, so plan on attending! (More details to

follow below) At the meeting, we had 84 stellar platform presentations and 125 fabulous poster presentations! Cutting-edge information, collaborative research, and education were conveyed with plenty of time for questions and answers. But we also had time to socialize and network, getting to know our fellow partners in Medicolegal Death Investigation.



# International Reception at the NAME Annual Meeting

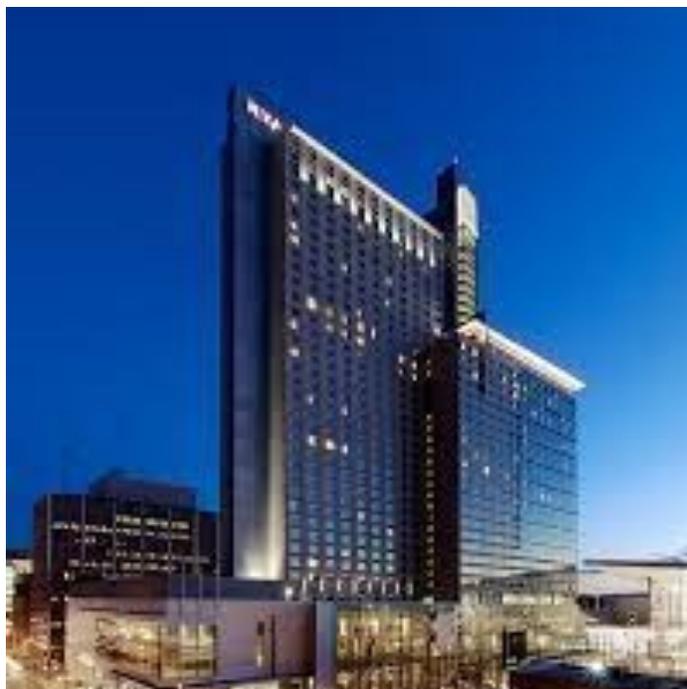
An International Reception was held to welcome and honor our friends from other countries. Each year, this reception proves to be valuable to all. Some NAME members were paired with first-time international attendees. This so-called “Buddy System” helped to orient first-timers to the meeting, location of events, and other NAME members. Below are some photographs of the International Reception.





# NAME 2024

As mentioned above, I have a few details about next year's annual NAME meeting. **Note** that this meeting is a bit earlier than in previous years. In 2024, the NAME meeting will be in September instead of October. The meeting will be held **September 19-23, 2024** at the Hyatt Regency Denver which is at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, Colorado. Colorado is a beautiful state that offers scenic wonders and fun autumn activities. Mark your calendars now! We will be sending more information about registering and hotel accommodations soon. Also, start on your manuscripts, research, and projects **NOW** so that you will be ready to submit this work for a platform presentation or a poster! We want to hear and learn from you!



Hyatt Regency Denver



Hyatt Regency Denver Ballroom



Hyatt Regency Denver

## Special International Feature: Forensic Pathology and Death Investigation in Turkey

**Oguzhan Ekizoglu, MD**, Associate Professor  
of Forensic Medicine

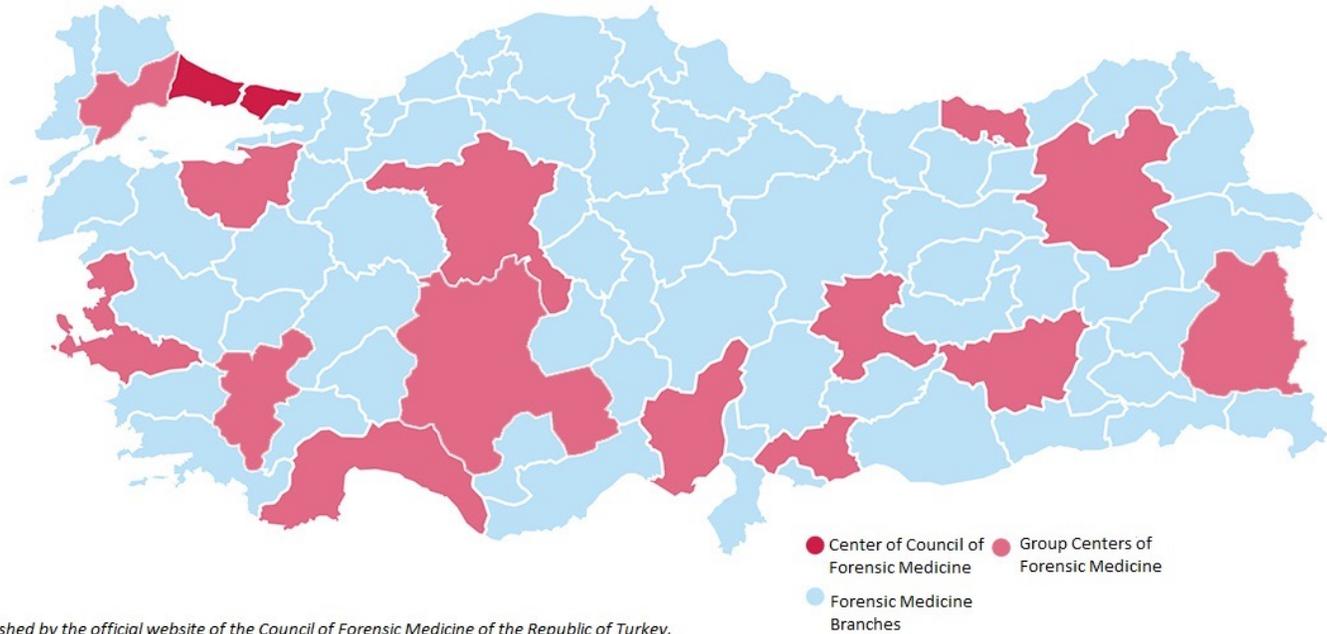
Health Sciences University, Tepecik Training  
and Research Hospital



University Center of Legal Medicine  
Lausanne-Geneva (CURML)

Unit of Forensic Imaging and Anthropology, Phd(c)





Published by the official website of the Council of Forensic Medicine of the Republic of Turkey.  
Web: <https://www.atk.gov.tr/organizasyon-semasi.html>

In Turkey, the basic requirements for the investigation of forensic cases and the performance of medico-legal autopsies are defined in the Penal Code. According to the law, the identity of the deceased must be established in every possible way, unless there are obstacles, especially by showing the deceased to those who can recognise him before the autopsy, and if there is a suspect or accused person, the deceased may also be shown to them for identification purposes. During the forensic examination of the deceased, all findings are determined in order to establish the medical signs, the time of death and the cause of death.

This examination is carried out in the presence of a public prosecutor and with the appointment of a doctor. The person appointed to carry out the post-mortem examination may be any doctor holding the title of doctor of medicine. Medical-legal autopsies are carried out by two doctors, one of whom is a specialist in forensic medicine and the other a pathologist or a member of other related fields, in the presence of a public prosecutor. A doctor appointed by the lawyer or the defence may also be present at the autopsy. If necessary, the autopsy may be carried out by a single doctor.

## Do you have an idea, comment or Suggestion?

Please contact **Kim A. Collins**  
[kimcollinsmd@gmail.com](mailto:kimcollinsmd@gmail.com)



Forensic medicine services in Turkey are mainly provided by the Council of Forensic Medicine affiliated to the Ministry of Justice, the forensic medicine departments and institutes affiliated to the medical faculties of universities, and the hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health. Although all these institutions are defined by law as official experts, in practice the judicial system mainly uses the Council of Forensic Medicine affiliated to the

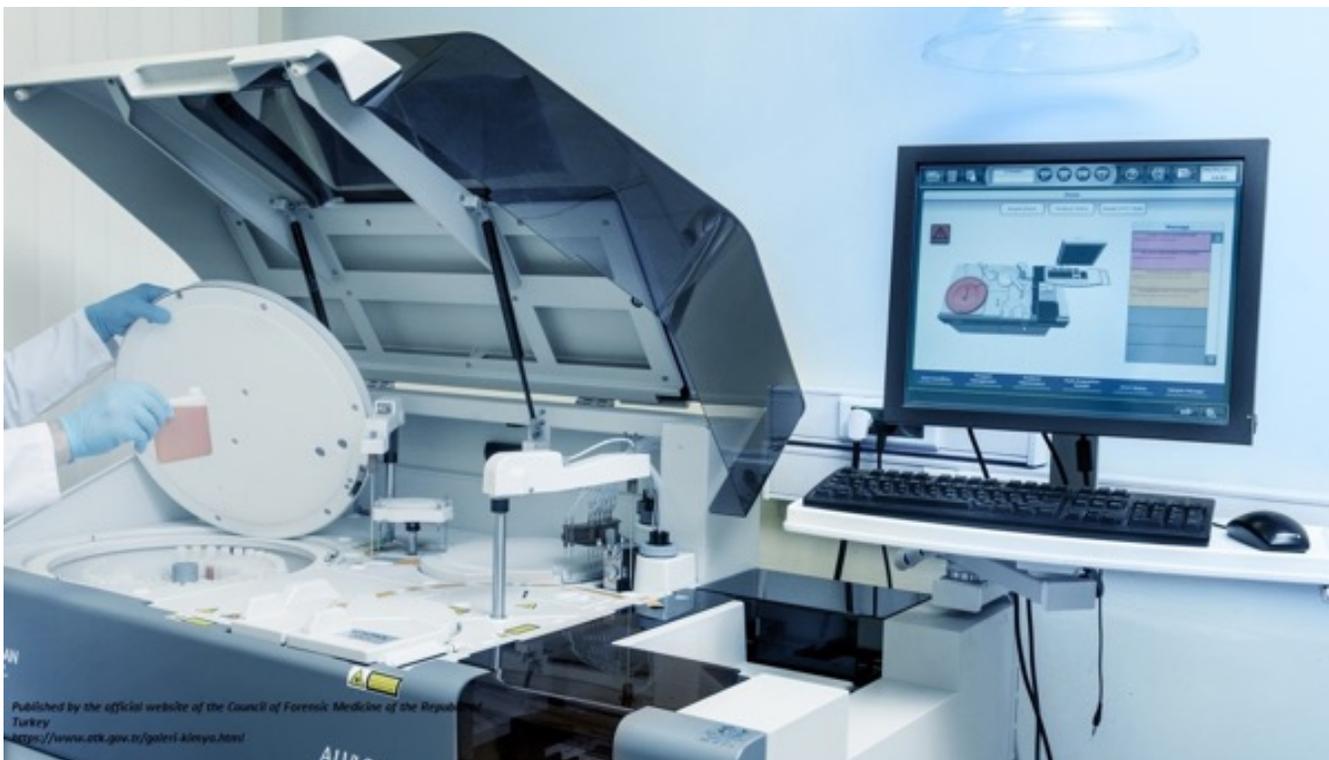
Ministry of Justice as the official and final decision-making authority. In addition to these officially recognised expert institutions, there are also separate centres that provide other forensic services, such as image and document examination, traffic expertise, chemical analysis, etc. In Turkey, the annual number of forensic autopsies varies between approximately 25,000 and 30,000 cases.



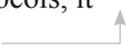
First of all, it is necessary to explain the content of forensic medicine in Turkey. Unlike the USA system, forensic medicine in Turkey has similarities with the systems of most European countries and is a specialised field. To become a specialist in forensic medicine, doctors who have graduated from medical faculties must complete at least 4 years of specialised training, submit a thesis, and pass a specialisation examination to obtain the title of “specialist in forensic medicine”. Forensic medicine generally includes the field of pathology, but does not focus exclusively on forensic pathology/histopathology. The forensic medicine specialist training programme is based on the acquisition of skills in basic clinical forensic medicine practice and related areas such as genetics, toxicology, ballistics, in addition to formal rotations in external pathology, child and adult psychiatry. Forensic medicine specialists are therefore involved in various areas of forensic medicine, such as medico-legal death investigation, trauma reporting, sexual assault, child abuse, disability assessment and other forensic medicine areas, either on their own or in collaboration with doctors from other specialties, depending on the nature of the case. However, despite an increase in their numbers in recent years, access to a forensic medical specialist is not equally available throughout the country. In general, forensic medicine centres are located in large urban centres. In cities where

there are no forensic medicine centres, if it does not seem possible to send the body to a nearby centre for medico-legal autopsy, or if this is not preferred by the prosecutor, any doctor, often with limited knowledge, may be assigned to a case, even without a standard autopsy facility. In such cases, histopathological, toxicological, genetic and testable materials are sent to forensic medicine centres. In any case, ensuring the integrity of the criminal investigation and complying with the rules of medico-legal autopsies is still an ongoing practice in routine forensic activities.

In addition, there is a shortage of experts in Turkey with sufficient doctoral training in forensic toxicology. The Association of Forensic Toxicologists (AKTOD) in Turkey is working to demonstrate the legal regulations and practices that must be followed in laboratories that perform analyses for forensic purposes, such as the investigation of deaths from a medico-legal perspective, traffic accidents, work accidents, probation, sexual assault crimes, etc. AKTOD collaborates with relevant associations such as the Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT), The International Association of Forensic Toxicologists (TIAFT) and the Society of Toxicological and Forensic Chemistry (GTFCH), which provide guidance to laboratories working in this field worldwide.



Forensic services in Turkey are publicly funded, and expert fees for private cases between individuals are paid by the parties involved in the case. The budget of the Council of Forensic Medicine for the year 2021 is approximately USD 7.5 million.

In Turkey, forensic medicine departments of universities mainly provide training to students from medical faculties and related departments such as law, nursing, autopsy technology, etc. In general, these university hospitals are responsible for the provision of clinical forensic services, and the performance of medico-legal autopsies depends on a protocol established with the Ministry of Justice. At present, only a few departments have established such protocols with the Ministry of Justice. Although most departments are willing to establish such protocols, it is not possible for every department to do so. 

The forensic medicine centres affiliated to the Ministry of Justice in Turkey are divided into three classes according to the facilities and services they provide. In Istanbul, there is a comprehensive centre that covers all areas of forensic medicine. In addition, there are 11 centres with specialised group management and comprehensive forensic autopsy units. All of these centres have a toxicology laboratory and four of them also have forensic biology and genetics laboratories. On the other hand, the smallest forensic medicine service units, known as forensic branches, do not have a standard medico-legal autopsy unit and usually refer cases to larger centres. Some units may collaborate with forensic medicine units in Ministry of Health hospitals or university hospitals. All provincial centres have forensic medicine branch directorates, apart from the group directorates.



Forensic death scene examinations are conducted by a doctor appointed by the prosecutor, together with the prosecutor. If there is a forensic medicine specialist present at the scene, they conduct the examination. Additionally, the police or gendarmerie involved in the scene investigation carry out additional assessments. In cases where there is no forensic medicine specialist or it is expected to take time to reach one, any other physician is urgently appointed by the prosecutor. Post-mortem

examinations are preferably performed at the scene of the incident, but often, due to the occurrence of urgent cases requiring medical intervention, these examinations take place in the morgue of the hospital where the deceased received medical treatment. After the death examination at the scene or in the hospital, the decision to perform an autopsy is made by the prosecutor, and generally, it is in line with the doctor's opinion.



Autopsy procedures include macroscopic examination and mandatory toxicological and histopathological examinations. In addition, depending on the nature of the case, other examinations related to forensic biology, genetics, microbiology and anthropology are added to the procedure. The forensic doctor is fully authorised to carry out all these procedures. A preliminary report containing the doctor's opinion based on the macroscopic findings is submitted to the public prosecutor. In addition to the results of the laboratory examinations, a supplementary report is submitted to the public prosecutor. In cases where the cause of death cannot be determined despite all the analyses

and examinations, the forensic doctor sends the case to a higher committee for determining the cause of death, which is based at the Council of Forensic Medicine in Istanbul. The higher committee consists of forensic medicine specialists and experts from different fields and makes an assessment by combining information from the scene investigation and other forensic investigation files to determine the cause of death. In addition, courts or parties to a case may request scientific opinions from university forensic medicine departments. In such cases, a scientific opinion is provided by examining all medical and forensic records.



In Turkey, there are associations that represent the civil society of forensic medicine specialists. The Association of Forensic Medicine Specialists (ATUD) is a professional association founded in 1992, which is the broadest representation in the field. Since its establishment in 1993, ATUD has been an active member of the Coordination Committee of Specialist Associations (TTB-UDKK), established by the Turkish Medical Association, following the principles of the International Academy of Legal Medicine (IALM), the European Council of Legal Medicine (ECLM), regarding the definition of the role of the forensic medicine specialist, the core curriculum and the structures of the professional competence boards. The ATUD has been represented in the Coordination Committee of Specialist Associations (TTB-UDKK) by the Turkish Medical Association (TTB). In its relations with the relevant bodies of the European Union (European Union, Strasbourg), the ATUD has obtained its legal personality through the “Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes” (UEMS) and the Turkish Medical Association (TTB).

Since 1996, ATUD has regularly published a peer-reviewed scientific journal entitled “The Bulletin of Legal Medicine” (<https://www.adlitipbulteni.com/>). This journal allows the publication of both national and international research in Turkish and English.

In addition, Turkey has “The Turkish Journal of Forensic Medicine” published by the Forensic Medicine Institute (<http://www.adlitipdergisi.com/en/>) and “Turkiye Klinikleri Journal of Forensic Medicine and Forensic Sciences” funded by the

Turkey Clinics Publishing Group (<https://www.turkiyeklinikleri.com/journal/adli-tip-ve-adli-bilimler-dergisi/15/about/en-index.html>).

ATUD has actively participated in many national and international projects in the field of forensic medicine. After four years of cooperation with the Turkish Medical Association, the Turkish Human Rights Foundation and various national and international organisations, ATUD members and institutions, its signature is included in the “Istanbul Protocol” which has been accepted by the United Nations as a fundamental document. ATUD has also actively participated in national and international training sessions related to the “Istanbul Protocol”.

In 1997, during the work of the international team established by the United Nations in Bosnia to identify bodies recovered from mass graves and determine causes of death, ATUD contributed by providing evidence to the War Crimes Tribunal. First-level forensic medical services, human rights education, the Working Group on Children’s Justice and forensic reporting forms were established through meetings and events organised or attended by ATUD.

Every year, ATUD organises the “Congress of Forensic Sciences” in collaboration with forensic medicine departments, as well as numerous workshops. The 4th International and 20th National Forensic Sciences Congress will be held at the Palm Wings Ephesus Beach Resort from 02 to 05 November 2023. (<https://adlibilimler2023.com/en>)



Proficiency in forensic medicine Competency Examinations: To be eligible to sit the competency examination, you must have completed the training programme and submitted the necessary documentation. The competency examination consists of two stages: a written knowledge assessment examination (qualifying examination) and a skills assessment examination (certifying examination).

Written Knowledge Assessment Examination (Qualifying Examination): This examination is held at least once a year. Those who have completed the training programme must take and pass the examination within five years. In the event of failure, the individual is given two further opportunities to take the examination. In order to take these additional exams, the person must have worked for three months in an educational institution or have obtained at least 60 credits from activities in the relevant field (major name) accredited by the Turkish Medical Association - Specialist Training Evaluation Board (TTB-STE) in the last two years.

Candidates who are successful in the written examination are eligible to sit the second stage, the oral examination. The scope and format of the examination is determined by the board. The results of the examination shall be notified to the candidate and to the training institution.

Skills assessment examination (certification examination): This practical examination is held twice a year and focuses on the evaluation of an individual's clinical skills in a problem-solving and competency-based manner. There is no practical examination. Those who pass the written exam are eligible to sit the oral exam within five years.





# Visa Information for International Medical Professionals seeking to visit Medical Examiner and Coroner's Offices in the US

## **Purpose**

This guide is intended to be an introduction to the various avenues available to medical professionals seeking to visit ME/Coroner's offices in the US.



## Target Audience

Foreign medical professionals and ME/Coroner's offices

## Visa Options

For many ME offices that are happy to accept international visitors/Observers, the B-1 Visa, J-1 Visa or Visa Waiver program would be good options. Which option to choose would depend on the length and purpose of the intended visit and sponsorship capabilities of the host organization.

## Glossary

**Visa:** An endorsement on a passport indicating that the holder is allowed to enter, leave or stay for a specified period of time in a country

**B-1:** Short term, non-immigrant visa for observership Maximum duration of 6 months

**J-1:** Non-immigrant visa for observership, training or research Maximum duration of 7 years

**H-1B:** Dual-intent visa i.e. a visa holder could apply for a green card Maximum duration of 6 years

**Visa Waiver:** No visa needed. For short observerships, no longer than 90 days

**Labor Condition Application (LCA):** An application filed by prospective

## B-1 VISA

- 1 Short-term, non-immigrant visa for observerships.
- 2 Maximum 6 months stay, although can occasionally be extended.
- 3 The visitor is responsible for applying for the visa and a fee is involved.
- 4 ME/Coroner Office must provide letter of invitation to applicant, stating purpose of visit (strictly observership), applicant's financial arrangement (no US funds used), and the start and end dates. Other than this, no sponsorship needed.

### Other requirements are that:

- 5 The visitor must have a profession or studies outside the U.S. to which he or she will return (may need documentation to prove this).
- 6 There must be evidence that the visitor has finances to fund the visit, including transportation and health insurance.
- 7 For those individuals with a medical degree; there are no patient care responsibilities, only observing.
- 8 Will not be paid a salary from a U.S. source.
- 9 The activity at the ME office will primarily benefit the visitor, not the ME office

Note: It is probably a good idea for B-1 visa applicants to consult with an immigration attorney to ensure the process is as smooth as possible.

## J-1 VISA

- 1 Non-immigrant visa for observerships, training or research.
- 2 Maximum length of stay varies depending on purpose of visit.
- 3 For physician residency training (including fellowship), maximum stay is 7 years.
- 4 Needs sponsorship by the host organization.
- 5 There are eligibility requirements to become a J-1 sponsor, and paperwork for both the host organization and visitor.
- 6 Sponsorship is best achieved through an affiliated academic institution or a private entity that contracts with the host organization to co-ordinate paperwork (See later section: Additional Considerations for Host ME/Coroner's Offices).

Note: An advantage of the J-1 visa is that a spouse of the visa holder is eligible to work in the US during their stay. The foreign physician is required to return to their home country after completion of the program of study, but in some cases a waiver of home residence requirement can be obtained: that discussion is beyond the scope of this guide, but further information about J-1 waivers is readily available online.

employers on behalf of workers applying for work authorization for the H1-B visa.

## Visa Waiver for Business Program

Short-term, non-immigrant program. Does not require a visa.

For this, the individual must stay no longer than 90 days; therefore, this option would only be appropriate for short term electives or observerships.

There is a list of 38 countries that participate on the US Department of State website at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html>

Individuals eligible for this would need to obtain a travel authorization (ESTA) - an automated application can be done online at: [www.esta.us](http://www.esta.us)

Note: It is also advisable for the hosting office to provide a letter, similar to that used for the B-1 visa, to facilitate the visitor's entry to the US. This letter can be shown to an immigration officer at the port of entry if there are questions about the purpose of the visit.

## H-1B VISA

- 1 A dual-intent visa i.e. the visa holder could potentially apply for permanent resident status (green card).
- 2 The dual-intent nature of the visa means that the scrutiny for H visas is much heavier than for J-1 and B-1.
- 3 Maximum length of stay is 6 years (granted for 3 years initially, with option to renew for further 3 years if needed).
- 4 The processing time is long (usually 2-6 months but can be longer). This time can be reduced by paying a 'premium processing' fee.
- 5 H-1B visa applications are complex, usually requiring legal assistance.

Note: The employer needs to demonstrate that the applicant has specialized knowledge and qualifications that make them eligible for the position, and that there are no equivalent US citizens available to fill the position. Paperwork and expenses, such as application and legal fees, can be considerable. As with J-1 visas, sponsorship for an H-1 visa applicant is best achieved with the assistance of an affiliated academic institution or a private entity. If these options are not available, then the input of an immigration lawyer who specializes in work visas is advisable. The latter can add extra expense to the process, in addition to the visa application fees.

## Additional Considerations for Host ME/Coroner's Offices

- 1 ME/Coroner offices interested in hosting foreign visitors are advised to look into affiliation with a local institution ahead of time, if this is not already in place, and discuss sponsorship requirements with the institution's immigration office, as well as other necessary visitor requirements like medical insurance, so that they are prepared for potential applicants.
- 2 A key point is that ME offices accepting visitors would need to ensure the visitor has adequate health insurance coverage, up to date immunizations and, if required, adequate funds and return travel arrangements.
- 3 There are private entities available that contract with host institutions to facilitate the sponsorship process. They work with the State Department and the international visitor to manage and co-ordinate required paperwork, including insurance and immunizations. The assistance of these entities can considerably reduce the time burden and complexity of the process for the sponsoring office. One such organization is the Center for International Career Development (CICD). They have worked with several medical examiner offices to successfully sponsor a foreign physician visitor. Website links to this and another similar private organization are listed in the Useful Links section.

## O-1 VISA

- 1 Non-immigrant visa for outstanding aliens to do specialized work in the United States.
- 2 In the medical field, the O-1A visa applies to individuals who possess extraordinary ability in the fields of sciences.
- 3 Qualification requirements include: Scientific publications, being a reviewer and/or panel judge, employment in critical medical organizations or offices, national or international award recipient, critical membership positions in professional organizations, commanding a high salary or other significant remuneration compared to others in your specialty, have been on national or international media for a work achievement, made significant new developments or discoveries in your field.  
**Requires a job offer.**
- 4 Features and advantages of this visa: No annual cap on number of O-1 visas issued, not subject to “labor condition application”, dual intent is essentially permitted (however, see J-1 visa comments to the right), no maximum number of years for O-1 visa status (can renew in 3-year increments). The qualifying requirements are not strict – doctors can submit comparable experience from their own specialty to establish eligibility.

## It's a great option for J-1 visa doctors subject to the 'two-year rule' (INA Section 212(e)):

- 1 Doctors can switch from J-1 to O-1 if the visa is approved (exiting and re-entering the United States with an O-1 visa is required).
- 2 They still need to find a J-1 visa waiver to start the green card process.
- 3 The O-1 visa **does NOT** cancel the 'two-year rule' requirement, but it delays it: doctors can work in the United States while searching for a J-1 waiver.

Note: The application process is long and not easy. Many supporting documents need to be submitted. Working with an US immigration lawyer is generally recommended.

## Summary

There are several visa options available for foreign medical professionals wishing to visit a US ME/Coroner's Office. Selecting the appropriate option is an individual choice, both for the visitor and sponsoring institution, based upon a variety of factors such as the intended course of study, length of stay and sponsorship requirements.

Private organizations are available who can contract with the host office to considerably ease the process of sponsoring a foreign medical professional.

Foreign physicians and potential hosts interested in exploring these visa options are encouraged to connect with members of the International Relations Committee at the NAME meeting.

Many of the committee members have first-hand experience, both as visa holders and sponsors, and would be happy to discuss them further.

## USEFUL LINKS

### B-1 Visa

<https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-visitors-business/b-1-temporary-business-visitor>

<https://visaguide.world/us-visa/nonimmigrant/visitor/b1/>

### H-1B Visa

<https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations-dod-cooperative-research-and-development-project-workers-and-fashion-models>

<https://www.dol.gov/whd/immigration/h1b.htm>

### J-1 Visa

<https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/exchange-visitors>

<https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/J1Visa-fact-sheet-2018.pdf>

<https://j1visa.state.gov/participants/>

<https://j1visa.state.gov/participants/common-questions/>

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## US Visas in general

<https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/BusinessVisa%20Purpose%20Listings%20March%202014%20flier.pdf>

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## Private Entities Contracting with Host Institutions to Facilitate Sponsorship Process

CICD: <https://www.cicdgo.com/>

IIE: <https://www.iie.org/en/Work-With-Us/US-Exchange-Visitor-Sponsorship>

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## Working in the US

<https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/working-us>

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# J IN US!



## *The National Association of Medical Examiners*

### The Organization for Forensic Pathologists and Medicolegal Death Investigators

[www.thename.org](http://www.thename.org)

#### Why Should You Join?

International Corresponding Membership is \$90 (US\$)/year

#### NAME international member benefits:

- ✓ Free American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology (AJFMP), journal, the peer-reviewed journal of NAME
- ✓ Discount registration at annual meetings
- ✓ Opportunity to serve on NAME committees
- ✓ NAME listserv; be a part of lively educational discussions via email! A true learning experience!
- ✓ Office accreditation opportunities
- ✓ Access to member only sites on NAME website
- ✓ Access to NAME consensus position papers
- ✓ Access to autopsy standards
- ✓ Access to policies and procedures for medical examiners and coroners
- ✓ Access to consultants
- ✓ NAME is the largest organization of forensic pathologists AND medicolegal death investigators
- ✓ Networking with local, national, and international colleagues
- ✓ Opportunities for visits or training at a US medical examiner's office
- ✓ NAME is a forum for the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences between forensic pathologists AND medicolegal death investigators

#### NAME is here for you!

When you contact NAME or attend the meetings, we want you to feel comfortable.



# JOIN NAME TODAY!

Contact Dee McNally

at [name@thename.org](mailto:name@thename.org)  
Or [KimcollinsMD@gmail.com](mailto:KimcollinsMD@gmail.com)

## Languages other than English Spoken By NAME Members 2023

- |                           |                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. American Sign Language | 27. Macedonian                   |
| 2. Afrikaans              | 28. Malayalam                    |
| 3. Antillean Creole       | 29. Maltese                      |
| 4. Arabic                 | 30. Mandarin Chinese             |
| 5. Bemba                  | 31. Marathi                      |
| 6. Bengali                | 32. Montenegrin                  |
| 7. Bosnian                | 33. Nyanja                       |
| 8. Bulgarian              | 34. Persian                      |
| 9. Chinese                | 35. Polish                       |
| 10. Croatian              | 36. Portuguese                   |
| 11. Czech                 | 37. Punjabi                      |
| 12. Danish                | 38. Romanian. Arterial language. |
| 13. Dutch                 | 39. Russian                      |
| 14. Filipino              | 40. Sanskrit                     |
| 15. French                | 41. Serbian                      |
| 16. German                | 42. Sinhala                      |
| 17. Greek                 | 43. Slovenian                    |
| 18. Gujarati              | 44. Spanish                      |
| 19. Hebrew                | 45. Tamil                        |
| 20. Hindi                 | 46. Ukrainian                    |
| 21. Irish Gaelic          | 47. Urdu                         |
| 22. Italian               | 48. Yoruba                       |
| 23. Japanese              |                                  |
| 24. Kannada               |                                  |
| 25. Korean                |                                  |
| 26. Lithuanian            |                                  |

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