

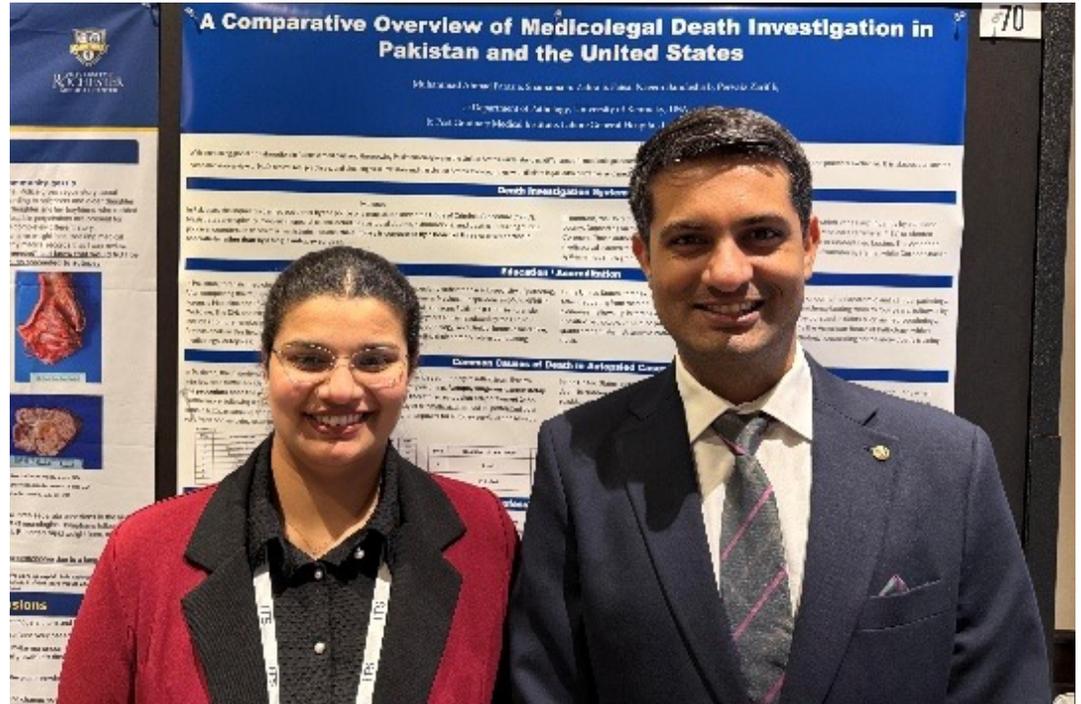


NAME International Newsletter

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1, 2026

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Welcome to the NAME International Newsletter. 2025 was a very busy and productive year for NAME, and we are starting 2026 off with a BANG! The annual meeting in Kentucky was a tremendous success.

The educational posters and platforms exceeded expectations, and awards were earned for the presenters' works.

Much useful and entertaining information is contained in the following pages of this issue newsletter issue.

Enjoy!

International Feature: Georgia

Forensic Medicine in Georgia

Introduction

Georgia, as a sovereign nation, is renowned for its exceptional historical and cultural heritage. Its ancient past is vividly illustrated by landmark archaeological discoveries, including the remains of early hominids uncovered in Dmanisi, dating back approximately 1.8 million years, and widely recognized as the “First Europeans.” Over millennia, Georgian society has steadfastly preserved its Christian faith, its distinctive language and alphabet,

and its unique cultural identity. The nation also takes pride in its enduring architectural legacy and an 8,000-year-old tradition of winemaking, exemplified by the artisanal craft of Qvevri — the traditional Georgian clay vessel used in wine production. Of particular note, the Georgian alphabet, regarded as one of the world’s oldest complete alphabetic systems, was inscribed on UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists on 30 November 2016.

Georgia’s strategic position at the crossroads of Europe and Asia has long commanded global attention. Since antiquity, the Great Silk Road passed through this compact yet geopolitically significant country, establishing Georgia as a vital conduit linking Asia and Europe. This pivotal role has profoundly shaped Georgia’s historical trajectory and reinforced its enduring place within European civilization.



As of 2025-year, Georgia’s population amounts to 3,704,005 persons



Statue of Medea with the Golden Fleece (2007) in Batumi, Georgia made by the Georgian sculptor David (Devi) Khmaladze

Historical Development of Forensic Medicine in Georgia

The history of medicine in Georgia extends back to antiquity. In Greek mythology, the origins of medicine in Georgia are associated with Medea, daughter of King Aeëtes of Colchis — an ancient Georgian state in western Georgia that existed from the late second millennium BC until the first century BC. The very term “Medicine” is believed, according to legend, to derive from Medea’s name. Historical and mythological sources describe Medea as possessing extraordinary healing abilities and profound medical knowledge, enabling her to treat illnesses considered incurable. Her story is also intertwined with the legend of the Golden Fleece and the journey of the Argonauts to Georgia.¹

Prior to the judicial reforms of 1864, forensic examinations in Georgia were conducted on an ad hoc basis, lacking a systematic framework. These aforementioned reforms provided a scientific foundation for the structured development of forensic medicine. From that period, post-mortem examinations and evidence analysis were carried out by city doctors in urban centres, county doctors in the “Uezds”² (counties), and by provincial doctors in the “Guberniyas”³ (provinces).

In 1868, the Medical Directorate formalized the field by establishing two permanent positions dedicated to forensic medicine and medical policing, along with a post for chemical-microscopic examination.

Statue of Medea with the Golden Fleece (2007) in Batumi, Georgia made by the Georgian sculptor David (Devi) Khmaladze

Before Georgia’s independence in 1918, the territory was administratively divided into two Guberniyas — Tbilisi and Kutaisi — each overseen by a principal doctor and two deputies, one of whom served as a medical examiner. At that time, forensic medical examinations were conducted by a total of 34 physicians across the country.

1 <https://mnk.pl/index.php/en/photo-galleries/the-myth-of-the-golden-fleece>

2 Uezd (Mazra) – An administrative-territorial unit within the Russian Empire, which was part of a Gubernya.

3 Guberniya – The highest administrative-territorial unit within the Russian Empire, comprising several Uezds (Mazras).

In 1952, the forensic medical service was reorganized under the Ministry of Health of Georgia with the creation of the Main Bureau of Forensic Medical Examinations. This Bureau included a morgue for post-mortem examinations, an outpatient facility for living individuals, and a laboratory for evidence analysis. It also served as the practical, scientific, and methodological authority for forensic medical examiners nationwide, overseeing and regulating professional activities.

National Forensics Bureau

The National Forensics Bureau (NFB) traces its origins to 1949 as the successor to the Criminalistics Laboratory of the Faculty of Law at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. Following the closure of the university laboratory in 1951, a new Criminalistics Laboratory was established under the Ministry of Justice to conduct ballistic, handwriting, document-technical, and trace evidence examinations. Over time, its remit expanded to include biological, chemical, engineering, financial, and commodity-related examinations.

In 2004, the Criminalistics Laboratory was merged with the Forensic Medical Examination Service (transferred from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Justice) and the Forensic Psychiatric Examination Service to form a unified, multidisciplinary forensic institution — the National Forensics Bureau (NFB).

Under the leadership of Mr. Levan Samkharauli, the NFB underwent fundamental reform, establishing a standardized forensic expertise system and achieving international recognition. The NFB became a full member of the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI), reflecting its adherence to best practices and professional excellence. Following Mr. Samkharauli's tragic death in 2006, the NFB was named in his honor. Since 2009, the Levan Samkharauli National Forensics Bureau operates as an independent legal entity under public law.

Today, the NFB functions as a multidisciplinary state forensic agency, conducting a wide array of forensic examinations and employing highly qualified personnel. Its activities comply with ISO17025

standard and are conducted in accordance with the best international practices.

Qualification of Forensic Medical Examiners

In Georgia, to practice as a forensic medical examiner, an individual must complete six years of medical education, followed by residency training, attainment of candidate status, and three years in a postgraduate program specializing in forensic medicine. Upon successful completion of the program and passing the state certification exam, the individual is authorized for independent professional practice in forensic medicine.

Practice of Forensic Medical Examination in Georgia

The National Forensics Bureau (NFB) is the sole state forensic institution authorized to perform forensic medical examinations and autopsies throughout Georgia. Its main facility is located in Tbilisi, supported by six regional centers. Autopsies are conducted on a 24-hour basis as required.

Toxicological analyses are centralized in Tbilisi, while histological examinations are conducted additionally in Batumi and Kutaisi. Autopsy facilities are equipped with advanced technologies, including X-ray equipment, and Tbilisi's mortuary can accommodate up to 80 bodies simultaneously.

Forensic medical examinations are initiated upon requests from investigators, courts, or any authorized physical or legal entity. The scope of examinations includes living individuals, deceased persons, biological evidence, and materials relevant to ongoing investigations. Modern infrastructure development of the NFB has been significantly supported by the U.S. State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (US Embassy's INL Program in Tbilisi), including modernization and facility renovation of the Forensic Medical Department's building in Tbilisi in compliance with international standards.

Forensic Medical Examination of Corpses

Autopsies are conducted in cases of violent death (homicide, suicide, accidents), sudden or

unexplained death, deceased newborns found in unusual circumstances, deaths in medical institutions, suspected malpractice, suspected poisoning, recovered bodies (including drowned), dismembered remains, unidentified bodies, exhumed remains, and pre-cremation examinations. On-site examinations at crime scenes are critical for identifying evidence and establishing case facts, conducted by investigators with participation from expert-criminalist, forensic medical examiner, or qualified medical specialist.

Forensic Medical Examination of Living Persons

Examinations of living individuals constitute over 80% of forensic medical cases in Georgia. These include assessment of injuries, health evaluation, sexual assault examination, biological age determination, person's identification, and other specific forensic examinations. Examinations are primarily conducted by the NFB forensic medical examiners, with support from contracted specialists such as neurologists, radiologists (for X-ray and tomographic examinations), neurosurgeons, and resuscitators. Certain cases may rely on comprehensive medical documentation rather than direct physical examination.



Main Autopsy Room



Main X-Ray equipment



Histology Laboratory



Toxicology Laboratory

Below is the statistical data of the NFB's Forensic Medical Department in Tbilisi (with a population of approximately 1,282,600 persons).

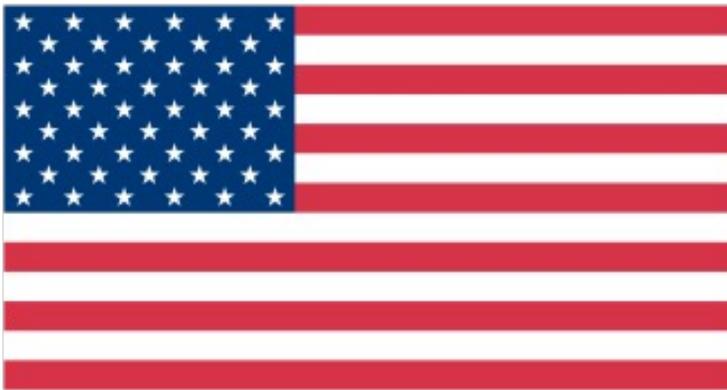
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Examination of Living person	11509	9581	8357	9067	9721
Examination of Corpse	1746	1355	1407	1630	1671
External examination of corpse	466	438	442	512	667
Examination by peers commission	553	524	445	559	305
Total	14274	11898	10651	11768	12364

Conclusion

NFB’s top priority is to standardize its operations according to international standards and to ensure integration into international professional networks, including obtaining accreditation from the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME). Such

accreditation would facilitate the exchange of experience, implementation of best practices, and further development of the medical examination field. This step would substantially expand the NFB’s capacity in terms of professional development and compliance with the international standards.

News from the US Consular Notification and Access Team



Consular Notification and Medical Examiners: Standards in Death Cases

Introduction

When a foreign national dies in the United States, Medical Examiners (MEs), coroners, and funeral home partners play a key role in meeting international obligations of the United States. This includes **Consular Notification (CN)**, the process of informing a foreign government—through its nearest embassy or consulate—about the death of one of its nationals in the United States.

Under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR), the United States shall notify foreign consulates of the death of their nationals within the United States “without delay.” See VCCR Art, 37(a). For MEs, this may feel like an additional administrative burden in already complex cases. However, understanding a few basic principles can make the process straightforward and highlight why it is essential.

Nationality ≠ Ethnicity

One of the most common sources of confusion is the difference between nationality and ethnicity:

- **Nationality** means citizenship of (commonly interpreted as “owing allegiance to” and not always documented) a country (e.g., *Mexico, Nigeria, India, France*).
- **Ethnicity** refers to cultural or ancestral identity (e.g., *Hispanic/Latino, Arab, Yoruba, Punjabi*).

Notification is based on nationality, not ethnicity.

A Spanish surname, possession of items in a foreign language or indicating a particular cultural background is not proof of foreign nationality. The obligation to notify arises **once a foreign nationality is confirmed**.



Suspicion ≠ Certainty: Handling “John Doe” Cases

MEs may receive cases where identity is unknown or provisional (e.g., “aka John Doe”). In these situations:

- **Do not guess nationality** based on appearance, possession of items in a foreign language or indicating a certain ethnicity.
- **Continue normal identification processes.**
- **If nationality is still unknown**, you may alert the Department of State’s CN team (consnot@state.gov) so they are aware of the case.

- **Once nationality is confirmed**, notify the nearest embassy or consulate of that country **without delay**.

This approach balances practical realities with treaty obligations: notification is triggered **when nationality information is available to the competent authority**.

Family Notification ≠ Consular Notification

It is important to distinguish between notifying **next of kin (NOK)** and notifying the foreign consulate:

- **Family notification** informs relatives about the death.
- **Consular notification** informs the foreign government, which can assist with documentation, repatriation of remains, or locating family members abroad.

Family notification is **not a substitute** for consular notification. Even if you have notified the NOK, you must also notify the nearest embassy or consulate of that country.

How Notifying the Consulate Can Help You

Notifying a foreign embassy or consulate is not just an obligation,—it can also help your office:

- **Identify the decedent** through information provided by the foreign embassy or consulate or family overseas.
- **Locate and inform next of kin** abroad, often faster than local authorities.
- **Assist with repatriation** if the family wishes the remains to return home.
- **Provide translations** or liaison support, saving your staff time.

If a Foreign Embassy or Consulate Contacts You First

Sometimes, a foreign consulate may reach out to your office asking about a possibly deceased national. If you have relevant information, you may:

- Confirm whether the deceased national's remains are in your custody.
- Share relevant case details to help identify the deceased.
- Coordinate further as needed to fulfill CN obligations.

Quick Checklist for Medical Examiners

1. **Confirm nationality**—don't assume from ethnicity.
2. **Document how nationality was established** (e.g., passport, ID, database, family statement).
3. **Notify the nearest embassy or consulate** of that country without delay (see travel.state.gov/CNA for contacts).
4. **If identity/nationality unknown:** You may flag the case to consnot@state.gov and notify the nearest embassy or consulate once nationality is confirmed.
5. If an embassy or consulate contacts you: you can share limited, relevant information.
6. Keep a record of the notification and any correspondence.

Consular Notification is not only a treaty obligation—it is also a practical tool that supports Medical Examiners and families alike. By distinguishing

nationality from ethnicity, acting on confirmed information, and working in partnership with consulates, MEs can ensure dignity of the deceased and assistance for their families, while ensuring compliance with international obligations of the United States.

For additional resources or training, visit travel.state.gov/CNA or contact the Department of State at consnot@state.gov.



NOTIFICATION SHEET	
SUBJECT:	
<u>NOTIFICATION OF DEATH, SERIOUS INJURY OR ILLNESS OF A NATIONAL OF YOUR COUNTRY</u>	
DATE/TIME: _____	
TO: Embassy/Consulate of _____ in _____, _____ (COUNTRY) (CITY) (STATE)	
FROM:	
Name/Office _____	
Address _____	
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____	
Telephone (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____	
<p>The following individual, who we understand is a national of your country: <i>has died, was seriously injured, OR is seriously ill within our jurisdiction.</i> (CIRCLE ONE)</p>	
Name: _____	
Date of Birth/Place of Birth: _____	
Nationality/Country: _____	
Passport Issuing Nation: _____	
Passport Number: _____	
Date of Death: _____ Place of Death: _____	
Apparent Cause of Death: _____	
For more information, please call _____ between the hours of _____.	
Please refer to case number _____ when you call.	
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:	

Breaking News!

NAME's New Artificial Intelligence (AI) Committee



Dr. Paul Uribe, Chair

The National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) has established an AI Subcommittee under its Strategic Planning Committee to address the transformative potential of artificial intelligence in forensic pathology. This need arises from the field's growing challenges, including increasing caseloads, data overload, and the demand for efficient, accurate death investigations. AI tools can streamline workflows, enhance data analysis, and support multilingual family communications. Without a dedicated committee, NAME risks falling behind in adopting technologies that could improve efficiency and decision-making while maintaining ethical standards.

Anticipated problems with AI in forensic pathology include algorithmic biases that could skew autopsy interpretations or demographic analyses, leading to inaccurate opinions and interpretations. Ethical concerns, such as data privacy regarding protected or sensitive information in medical histories or medicolegal cases and over-reliance on AI potentially eroding human expertise, are increasingly evident. The legal standards for the use of AI applications in a forensic setting are largely unknown.

The subcommittee's goals focus on developing guidelines for responsible AI use, promoting research

on applications like machine learning for forensics, and educating members on the do's and don'ts of using AI. It aims to foster collaboration with stakeholders to mitigate risks, advance best practices, and ensure AI enhances rather than replaces forensic pathologists' roles in public health and justice.

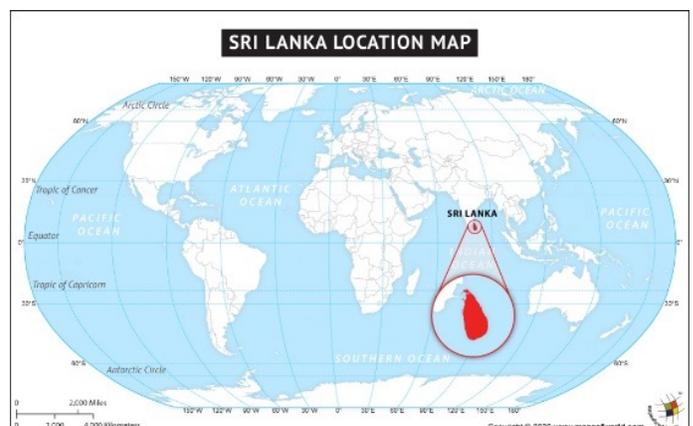
JOIN NAME TODAY!

Contact Dee McNally

at name@thename.org
Or KimcollinsMD@gmail.com

Meet A Member

Our featured international member for this issue is Forensic Pathologist **Dr. Dilhani Amarasinghe** of the beautiful country, Sri Lanka.



“The most precious gift that really makes my professional life successful is being a member of NAME since 2018. I have experienced how forensic pathologists work with all the facilities that dream in our setup and how they come into perfect opinion, unchallenged in the Court of law. It’s an added point to my oral evidence presentation whenever I say that I trained for a year in the USA and I am a member of NAME.

My research work, presentation on organ and tissue recovery/donation, and poster presentation during the 2018 NAME was an unforgettable experience in my professional life. At this meeting, I met many forensic pathologists from all over the world, shared knowledge and experiences, and personally got to know the other attendees. It was an unforgettable experience. Through the NAME, I have had an amazing opportunity to meet forensic pathologists throughout the world.

I wish and dream I could meet up with you all with love at the 2026 NAME meeting.

With all my heart, I bless NAME many more years! Cheers.”

Dr. Dilhani Amarasinghe



Let’s learn about Dr. Amarasinghe’s life as a forensic clinical physician and pathologist practicing in Sri Lanka.

Years of practice:

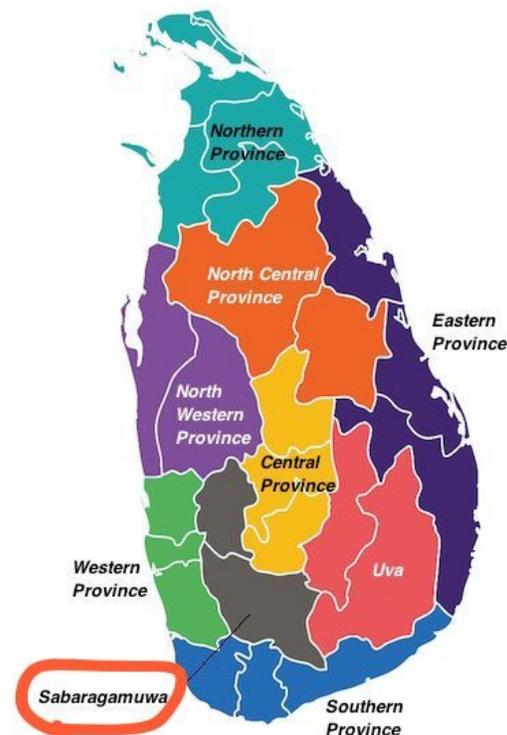
- In the medical profession - 24 years.
- In the field of forensic medicine and pathology - 12 years.
- As a board-certified Forensic Pathology Consultant - 7 years

Location of practice:

Southwest region of Sri Lanka

Ratnapura district, Sabaragamuwa province

Approximately, every 4 years, the forensic pathologists must change their work location within this region.



Population served:

Sabaragamuwa province = 2.1 million (2022 census)

Ratnapura district = 166,000 (2022 census)

As crime rate is higher than other areas of Sri Lanka, and the people's nickname of this area is "Chicago".

**Overall Practice:**

It is teamwork!

In my institution, three medical officers are working under my supervision.

1. Clinical forensic pathology cases: medicolegal examination of victims or the accused, work with prisons, institutional inquiries, work with the Human Rights Commission
2. Postmortem forensic pathology cases: conduct scene investigations, postmortem examinations, courtroom testimony, work with law enforcement and the courts, mortality meetings and case conferences, participate in educational programs

Examples of types of cases

Quite a variety

Torture, wild animal attacks such as wild boar and elephants, earth slides, gem mining accidents, hand grenade, poison gas, custodial deaths, road traffic deaths (pedestrian, vehicle occupants) fires, acid burns, gunshot wounds, electrocutions, toxicology deaths, rape, abortions and maternal deaths, occupational injuries, child abuse, natural disease, and exhumations.

Challenges

- Lack of interest among young doctors in choosing the forensic field.
- Mortuary: No air conditioning, exhaust fan not working, poor condition of microscopes, damaged autopsy tables, water supply issues, broken coolers and equipment, improper specimen storage, no funding for mortuary repairs
- No histopathology laboratory
- Autopsy technicians are not trained
- Cases taken about 5-15 years later,
- Long travel distance for court testimony
- Delay in transporting ancillary specimens to a proper laboratory
- Lack of security even though handling higher criminal cases

**JOIN
NAME
TODAY!**

Contact Dee McNally

at name@thename.org
Or KimcollinsMD@gmail.com

Special Opportunity for International Colleagues



Stephen Pustilnik, MD

Chief Medical Examiner
Fort Bend County (the Great State of) Texas, USA
stephen.pustilnik@fortbendcountytexas.gov

Hello. I am Stephen Pustilnik, the Chief Medical Examiner for Fort Bend County, Texas, USA. I also moderate the Medical Examiner /Forensic Pathologist listserv which is an invaluable resource for the US and other international practitioners. I have always wanted to include as many of the international forensic pathologists as possible, but there has been little if any access to these individuals. I would like to invite all international forensic pathologists to join the listserv for information sharing and better access to the greater forensic pathology community. The participating forensic pathologists on the listserv communicate in English.

*Please contact me personally to be added to the list. My information is below. Welcome!

Stephen Pustilnik, MD

Chief Medical Examiner
Fort Bend County (the Great State of) Texas, USA
stephen.pustilnik@fortbendcountytexas.gov

Why? Look at what listserv/blog members say:

“I sincerely regret not trying to participate 20 years earlier!!!!

In my next life, one of the first things I’m going to do is apply to NAME and the blog (among other things...)

In the time I’ve shared this blog, I’ve learned more about Forensic Medicine than in many hours of study. Each colleague generously shares their comments, even those that sometimes generate a few sparks, as is often the case with sincere people. It has given me a very broad overview of US Forensic Pathology, which I was previously unaware of, and many other topics. Well, the excellent academic level of US Forensic Pathologists is nothing new. I am sincerely proud that I was accepted into NAME.”

Delfin Francisco Delgado (Paco) Medicina Legal - Investigación Forense Fuerte General Roca - Río Negro República Argentina

“I would recommend joining the “FP and ME” listserv without hesitation to all my forensic medicine colleagues around the world. Not only does the listserv, by way of regular postings, offer an excellent and efficient way to keep abreast of new developments in the field, but it is home to a large number of very experienced forensic medical practitioners who are very able and willing to offer advice and guidance on a whole array of issues which you might encounter in your professional life. The listserv also provides a means of connecting the international community: Sure, we may not all know each other in person, but we do get to know one another in the online sphere, which helps build bridges and foster better standards and understanding across the board. Come and join us!”

Matt Orde Forensic Pathologist Western Canada Formerly of UK and Australia

It is never too early!

Start making plans to attend the annual 2026 NAME meeting. Education, networking, platforms and posters, cutting edge research presentations, updates on death investigation, and more!

October 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

www.forthright.com

Mark Your Calendars!

2026 Annual Meeting
 Chair: Heather Jarrell, M.D.
 October 16 - 20, 2026 (Fri-Tues)
 Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center
 Kansas City, Missouri

Registration will begin
 mid-May, 2026.





Future 2027 NAME Annual Meeting: Portland, Oregon

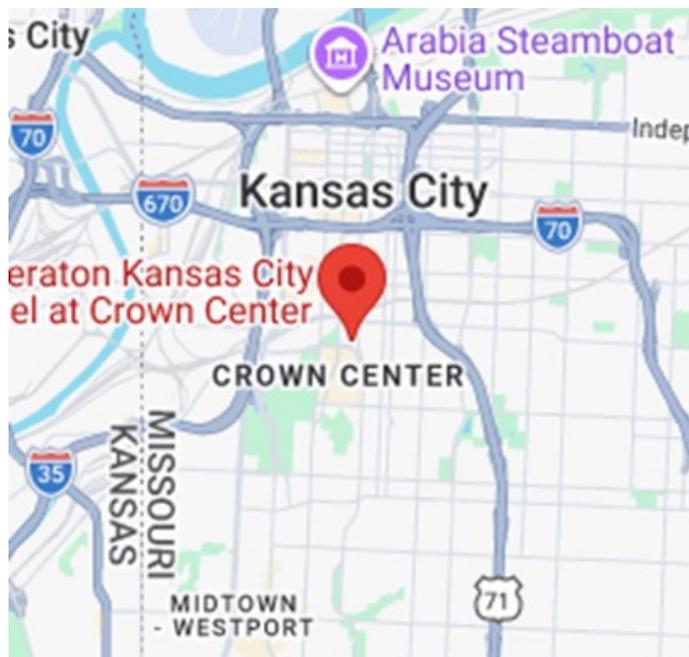
2027 Annual Meeting

Chair: Nicole Jackson, M.D.

October 15 - 19, 2027 (Fri-Tues)

Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront

Portland, Oregon



Languages other than English Spoken By NAME Members 2025

American Sign Language	Korean
Afrikaans	Lithuanian
Amharic	Macedonian
Antillean Creole	Malayalam
Arabic	Maltese
Armenian	Mandarin Chinese
Bemba	Marathi
Bengali	Montenegrin
Bosnian	Nyanja
Bulgarian	Oriya
Chinese	Persian
Croatian	Polish
Czech	Portuguese
Danish	Punjabi
Dutch	Romanian.
Filipino	Arterial language.
French	Russian
German	Sanskrit
Greek	Serbian
Gujarati	Sinhala
Hebrew	Slovenian
Hindi	Spanish
Irish Gaelic	Tamil
Italian	Turkish
Japanese	Ukrainian
Kannada	Urdu
	Yoruba

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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

Why become an International Corresponding Member of NAME?

NAME international member benefits:

- ✔ International Corresponding Membership is \$90 (US\$)/year
- ✔ Free AJFMP journal, the peer-reviewed and indexed journal of NAME
- ✔ Discount registration at annual meetings, both in-person and virtual
- ✔ Attend lectures, academic sessions, workshops, and webinars
- ✔ An opportunity to build lasting professional relationships and collaborations at the meetings, receptions, and events
- ✔ Opportunities to participate in and contribute to educational activities
- ✔ Opportunity to serve on NAME committees
- ✔ Office inspection and accreditation opportunities
- ✔ Access to NAME consensus position papers and autopsy standards
- ✔ Network with US and global experts in forensic pathology and medicolegal death investigation
- ✔ Be on the cutting edge of forensic pathology and medicolegal death investigation
- ✔ Influence global forensic practices through international collaborations
- ✔ Access to the International Relations Committee, a committee focused on YOU: your profession, participation, education, involvement, and collaborations
- ✔ Receive guidance from the NAME Visa Applicant Advisory Committee on navigating the US visa process for future training and practice
- ✔ NAME is the premier 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 NAME meetings,
we want you to feel comfortable!

www.thename.org

