

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 708  
(A-24)

Introduced by: National Association of Medical Examiners, American Society for Clinical Pathology, American Society of Cytopathology, College of American Pathologists

Subject: Medicolegal Death Investigations

Referred to: Reference Committee G

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- 1 Whereas, forensic pathology is the practice of medicine; and  
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3 Whereas, the practice of forensic pathology in medicolegal death investigations is critical for  
4 many aspects of public health, practice, and research, including death certification, surveillance,  
5 epidemiology, and injury prevention in areas such as unexpected child deaths, suicide, violence,  
6 and substance use; and  
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8 Whereas, the findings noted at a forensic autopsy, as well as the results of ancillary studies,  
9 must be interpreted in the context of the medicolegal death investigation to correctly determine  
10 the cause and manner of death; and  
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12 Whereas, protecting physicians practicing forensic pathology from undue influence is necessary  
13 to ensure the independence of medicolegal death investigations, safeguard medical integrity,  
14 preserve public trust and confidence; and  
15  
16 Whereas, state and local governments must ensure strong institutional and workplace  
17 protections to bolster the independence of physicians practicing forensic pathology in the course  
18 of medicolegal death investigations; and  
19  
20 Whereas, state laws and regulations on causes and manner of deaths should not deny or limit  
21 physician authority to exercise necessary and appropriate medical judgment in the performance  
22 of the forensic autopsy; therefore be it  
23  
24 RESOLVED, that our American Medical Association supports the independent authority of  
25 physicians practicing forensic pathology to provide accurate and transparent postmortem  
26 assessments and death investigation reporting in a manner free from undue influence (New  
27 HOD Policy); and be it further  
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29 RESOLVED, that our AMA advocate with state and federal governments to ensure laws and  
30 regulations do not compromise a physician's ability to use their medical judgement in the  
31 reporting of postmortem assessments and medicolegal death investigations. (Directive to Take  
32 Action)  
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Fiscal Note: Modest - between \$1,000 - \$5,000

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