

ASSOCIATE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER

This is advanced specialized professional medical work providing administrative and pathological assistance to the Chief Medical Examiner. Work involves directing the activities of all professional and technical personnel engaged in determining the cause and manner of death in cases of a violent, sudden, or otherwise suspicious nature. The incumbent acts as Head of the Pathology Branch in the Chief Medical Examiner's office and assumes the duties of the Chief Medical Examiner in his absence. Responsibility is assumed for training newly appointed medical examiners, reviewing their reports for accuracy and completeness, and providing technical advice/assistance to other staff and professionals. Work requires performing autopsies, medicolegal interpretations of findings, and testifying in court on autopsy results. Assignments are analytical in nature and are carried out in accordance with departmental management and policy direction. Employee assists the Chief Medical Examiner in policy information, management and guidance of the system, and in research relative to the operation of the system. Work is performed independently but is subject to review by the Chief Medical Examiner.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope - Employee performs autopsies on greater proportion of the more difficult cases received by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Work requires determination and diagnosis of multitude of death-causing factors of a biological, chemical, occupational, or environmental nature. Employee acts as Chief Medical Examiner in the Chief's absence and is subsequently involved in a variety of administrative, managerial, research, and advocacy roles in the execution of assigned duties and responsibilities.

Intricacy - Work requires employees to explore or research unknowns or decide upon an appropriate pathological, chemical process, or similar method to aid in the determination of cause and manner of death. Because of variations in individual cases, work requires continuous, non-routine analytical decisions and interpretations.

Subject Matter Complexity - Work requires detailed medical knowledges in the specialized field of forensic pathology and skills in anatomical pathology.

Guidelines - Guides for the specialty include the General Statutes relevant to the medical examiner system and the Division of Health Services; rules and regulations of the office of the Chief Medical Examiner as approved by the Secretary, Department of Human Resources; and a variety of internal guides. Employee consults current professional literature in the execution of assigned duties and responsibilities.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions - Daily work is self-planned and performed with considerable independence. Employee is responsible for planning short-range and long-range goals and objectives, and assists Chief Medical Examiner with implementation.

Nature of Review - Though the work is performed with substantial independence, it is subject to review by the Chief Medical Examiner, usually upon completion or whenever consultation is indicated or desired.

Scope of Decisions - Decisions and interpretations reached contribute to the overall integrity of the State's public health programs. The work results in safeguarding the public health by determining the presence of contagious disease, dangerous bacterial agents, or the possibility of epidemic. Data compiled as a result of the work performed is vital to the compilation of certain public health statistics

needed to guide and direct program goal setting, to project State health needs, and to determine critical areas of public health.

Consequence of Decisions - Judgmental errors impact on the direction and integrity of the State's medical examiner system. Diagnostic errors include misidentification of tissues or bodies of decedents or misinterpretation of causes and manner of death. Possible consequences include prosecution and imprisonment of innocent people, evasion of penalty by guilty people, invalid public health data, prolonged trials, and development of epidemics.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts - Work requires a high degree of public contact with law enforcement officials, media representatives, public health personnel, families of decedents, and a variety of professional groups. Employee exercises programmatic supervision and technical review of subordinates' work and serves as a consultant for county medical examiners.

Nature and Purpose - Employee maintains contact with a variety of professional and/or lay groups for purposes of collecting data, research, teaching, or interpretations of findings. Contact with members of decedent's family is frequent and requires empathy, tact, diplomacy, and an ability to clearly and concisely answer questions or explain findings.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Work Conditions - Working conditions involve disagreeable aspects that can only be partially controlled. Conditions are unique to the specialty and require the work to be performed in a medical laboratory setting or under a variety of field conditions.

Hazards - Unusual hazards include exposure to highly dangerous and contagious diseases such as viral meningitis, infectious hepatitis, carcinogenic chemicals, and scenes of disaster or violence.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills and Abilities - Extensive knowledge of the principles, practices, literature, and current developments in the fields of pathological anatomy and forensic pathology. Extensive knowledge of the diversified specialized equipment, instruments, and materials required in all phases of pathology. Considerable knowledge of microscopy, toxicology, ballistics, and investigative techniques as they relate to forensic medicine. Thorough knowledge of procedures involved in detecting, analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting manifestations and symptoms of physical conditions from pathologic examinations. Ability to supervise professional, technical, or non-professional employees engaged in various tasks relating to determination of cause and manner of death.

Minimum Training and Experience - Licensed to practice medicine in the state of North Carolina, board certified by the American Board of Pathology and two years of experience in forensic medicine; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.