

Idaho Criminal Justice Commission - Coroner Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Date: October 14, 2025,

Location: Idaho Association of Counties,
700 W. Washington St., Boise, ID 83701

Time: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM Mountain Time

Facilitators: Senator Melissa Wintrow and Kelli Brassfield (IAC)

Subcommittee Members Present:

- Senator Melissa Wintrow, JLOC Co-chair
- Kelli D. Brassfield, Idaho Association of Counties
- Ryan Langrill, Director, Office of Performance Evaluations
- Matthew Gamette, ISP Forensic Services
- Bernie LaSarte, Coeur d'Alene Tribe
- Brett Harding, Ada County Chief Deputy Coroner
- Torey Danner, Bannock County Coroner
- Jimmy Roberts, Bingham County
- Will Carson, Twin Falls County Coroner
- Tara Beard Parsons, Butte County Coroner
- John Fudenberg, Executive Director, IACME
- Robert Bleazard, Ada County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Subcommittee Members Absent:

- Sheriff Bart Quayle, Fremont County
- Kirt Gaston, Bellevue Police Department
- Robert Beers, Bonner County Coroner
- Joshua Hall, Nez Perce County Coroner
- Scott Carver, Valley County Coroner

Others Present:

- Duke Johnson, Kootenai County
- James Aydelotte, IDHW, Vital Stats

Action Item – Approval of the minutes from August 18, 2025.

Ryan Langrill made a motion to approve the minutes from August 18, 2025; Robert Bleazard seconded. Motion carried.

Confidentiality Language – Current status, Senator Melissa Wintrow & Kelli D. Brassfield

The draft is still in a work in progress, but it is almost ready to share with the stakeholders. It will only allow for photos to be released to next of kin by request only; otherwise, photos of decedents will be exempt from disclosure.

Assignments – Kelli D. Brassfield & Senator Melissa Wintrow

- Deaths required for autopsies – see NAME recommendations:

Cases that would require an autopsy needs to be addressed for public safety. The lack of autopsies being done is a resource issue. We need to put forth a proposal with what the standards should be and then relay again that there is a resource issue. Minnesota has language for required autopsies and has religious exceptions (Jimmy will share with the group).

The group agrees that the case types requiring autopsies under the NAME standards should all be met. The group will continue to work on finding resources so counties are able to do these autopsies.

- <https://www.thename.org/assets/docs/2016%20NAME%20Forensic%20Autopsy%20Standards%209-25-2020.pdf>

- New facility possibility? – Facility field trip results
 - NAME standards for facility accreditation:
<https://www.thename.org/assets/docs/NAME%20Accreditation%20Autopsy%20Facilities%20Checklist%202024%20-%202029%207-25-2025.pdf>
 - North Idaho Facility? – Dr. Duke Johnson

Dr. Johnson informed the group that Spokane said they are over saturated and need to cut back 20% of the workload. This spurred more discussion in Kootenai County about developing a facility. The county has a fund with interest income that is available for developing the facility. The commissioners have stated they are willing to allocate a quarter of that money for county facilities (to include coroner needs). The commissioners allocated funding and then moved some offices around so there is plenty of space. The initial estimate is \$1.4M to do this work. The county has chosen a general contractor and will be meeting this week to hopefully finalize the contract.

The facility will have a section for decomp and a room with two beds. It will have refrigeration, plus more. There will be room to expand. Dr. Johnson is anticipating construction to begin in about a month and then to be operational in July 2026.

How will this impact Ada County and across the state? Sounds like the northern counties are interested in using the facility and he will approach the counties across the border in Washington. The money counties are currently spending on autopsies would be used to cover the cost of the forensic pathologist/s.

Bonneville County – This facility is not staffed full time and is off sight. It does have a cooler and space for a single autopsy. Right now, it doesn't have the space to be accredited. It also needs significant upgrades.

District 5 ISP site – This site could be a possibility as it plenty of space for growth to accommodate accreditation; however, it cannot support autopsies right now. It just has the space to accomplish this goal if the funding was there. Some have concerns about being about under ISP to maintain autonomy.

District 6 ISP site – This site is not an option.

Portneuf – The hospital does have an existing autopsy area. It is sitting vacant right now. It could be utilized as a viable temporary space. It is a single autopsy space so it couldn't be accredited. Need a doctor or locum under contract. There isn't a decomp space. Some are hesitant to use the hospital.

Recommendations that can be included in this process:

Certified process for medicolegal death investigators (some felt creating a state certification system would be a mistake). Some other states have it but they haven't done well. The state associations have a hard time maintaining the system. Some coroners are hesitant to ABMDI certification.

Other Business – Kelli D. Brassfield & Senator Melissa Wintrow

- Death certificate fee:

The fee was last changed in 2010. \$1.00 from the fee goes to ISACC for continuing education. That generates ~\$20,000/quarter. (Jimmy has suggested language for fee use and reimbursements)

State washington passed a new law for coroners. It includes a fee increase. Any legislative change needs to have some teeth to it to make sure coroners are adhering to standards. Autopsy reimbursement, accreditation/certification, continuing ed, (should look at using it for supplies)

We should ask the Governor's office for matching funds if we can get the fee increase.

- MDI Log – (reporting) – Vital stats collect records for certain types of deaths. 11 coroners use MDI log and submit reports to vital stats. Vital stats would like to have more counties report to them. Ada County pays the lion's share of MDI log costs (34 counties that contract with Ada). Small counties don't have to pay for it. ISP Forensics is doing training across the state to train about MDI. They are working on a grant to have an electronic component to MDI for reporting. The data is only as good as the

person entering it. Many coroners don't use the software unless they have to do an autopsy because they see it as a burden. There was a suggestion that any legislative update should include certain data points to be reported.

Some coroners are concerned with sharing sensitive information and what vital stats is going to do with it.

ICJC presentation – The Chairman of ICJC has requested a presentation on the OPE report and what the subcommittee has been discussing. Senator Wintrow and Kelli D. Brassfield will work with subcommittee members to put this presentation together. The presentation will be on November 14th, 2025, at the regular ICJC meeting.