

Summer School:

CONVERSATION WITH A
MEDICAL EXAMINER

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Welcome

Dr. Amy Gruszecki, American Forensics

Amber Myers, Staff Attorney, TJCTC

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Today's Webinar



INTRODUCTION



PREPARED MATERIAL



QUESTIONS?

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Dr. Amy Gruszecki, DO
Forensic Pathologist

American
Forensics[®]



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COVID-19 Testing

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Is your office seeing a
higher volume for inquests
during the pandemic?

6

What special procedures do you have in place because of the pandemic?

7

What kind of precautions should JPs take when they suspect COVID-19 on an inquest?

8

What precautions would you recommend when the JP goes home after an inquest?

9

What are some screening questions that a JP should ask law enforcement prior to going out to a scene?

10

What kind of screening questions should be asked of the family of the deceased in light of COVID-19?

11

What are some common questions you have been getting asked lately?

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Any advice on what NOT
to do prior to sending a
body for autopsy?

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Let's talk briefly about
chain of causation on
death certificates.

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Pre-existing conditions?
Contributing factors?
What are some common
chains of causation?

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Are there any pandemic
policies that you think will
be adopted going forward?

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Cause and Manner of Death Resources

National Center for Health Statistics Training on Writing Cause-of-Death Statements & other CDC Resources: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/writing_cod_statements.htm

National Center for Health Statistics Guidance on Certifying COVID-19 Deaths: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvss/vsrg/vsrg03-508.pdf>

CDC "blue sheets" (natural deaths): https://www.dshs.texas.gov/uploadedFiles/Content/Chief_Operating_Officer/vs/field/TxEVER/blue_form.pdf

CDC "red sheets" (unnatural deaths): https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/red_form.pdf

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Updated Inquests Deskbook (2nd Ed.)

<https://www.tjctc.org/tjctc-resources/Deskbooks.html>

Cause and Manner of Death is discussed in Chapter 5 – pages 21-28

- *On page 22 you will find a table of resources with links to help you in filling out death certificates*

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Proper Language for Heart Attack on a Death Certificate

Do not use "cardiac arrest" or "cardio-pulmonary arrest" on death certificates. These phrases literally mean the heart stopped or the heart and lungs stopped which happens to everyone when they die. Better phrases are:

Hypertensive cardiovascular disease (aka long-standing high blood pressure disease).

Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (aka clogged coronary arteries - may have had a heart stent placed, or cardiac bypass surgery).

Hypertensive and atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (both as above).

You can also legitimately use the word "probable" in front of either - for instance "Probable hypertensive and atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease".

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