

FTCoE

Last week we had another extremely productive ASCLD Board meeting. We met with representatives of NIJ and the Forensic Technology Center of Excellence (FTCoE) regarding their initiatives in 2019. The FTCoE is a cooperative agreement funded by NIJ under which Research Triangle Institute (RTI) fosters the transition of research into practice in forensic science organizations in the United States. The cooperative agreement includes three main areas of emphasis: advancing technology, sharing knowledge, and addressing challenges. FTCoE typically manages 40-50 projects per year under a plan jointly developed by NIJ and RTI. ASCLD is extremely excited about a number of areas where the ASCLD strategic plan intersects with FTCoE initiatives. ASCLD has already started planning a number of new webinars in conjunction with FTCoE. We plan to host a full-day rapid DNA DVI workshop at the ASCLD symposium this year with assistance from FTCoE. We also plan to continue working with the FTCoE on projects such as trauma and stress in the workplace, sexual assault kit tracking, and accreditation of laboratories. ASCLD also appreciates the work of RTI to host and facilitate the FLN-TWG meetings that benefit the community by crime laboratory leaders discussing the most critical needs of practitioners. We look forward to many new and exciting opportunities that the ASCLD membership will see this year through our engagement with the FTCoE. Please engage with any member of the Board regarding ideas that would be productive for the FTCoE to tackle. RTI continually asks us for projects that will benefit the community and we appreciate all of their efforts on our behalf.

Federal Corner—MDI-WG

We have established an ongoing “Federal Corner” to update you on events happening with our federal government partners. Today I want to highlight another working group that has been recently established. The Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently established a Medicolegal Death Investigation (MDI) Federal Interagency working group (MDI-WG) to coordinate Federal initiatives to strengthen the MDI system and support death investigation services practiced by medical examiner and coroner offices (ME/Cs) across the U.S.

The MDI-WG recently developed a [OJP/HHS Federal MDI Working Group Public Resource](https://ojp.gov/resources/ojp-hhs-mdi-wg.htm) webpage for medical examiners, coroners, and death investigators that we want to share with ASCLD. This Resource webpage will serve as a consolidated source for information and links for current Federal programs and grant-funding opportunities that support medicolegal death investigation (MDI). These resources serve to advance both public safety and public health initiatives, including resources to address the opioid crisis. We hope this webpage will be a useful and informative tool for the community, and we plan to update this webpage as new information becomes available.

A link to this MDI-WG Resource webpage is also located on the OJP Resources website:

<https://ojp.gov/resources.htm>

<https://ojp.gov/resources/ojp-hhs-mdi-wg.htm>

If you are aware of other information that could be included on this webpage, please reach out to Jonathan McGrath (jonathan.mcgrath@usdoj.gov).