

STUDY STATEWIDE FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST SHORTAGE



Washington State is currently in the grips of a severe shortage of Board-Certified Forensic Pathologists. With fewer than 18 current Forensic Pathologists working for Washington counties, and less than 500 in the nation, Washington faces stiff competition for Forensic Pathology services. Additionally, to maintain both individual certification and facility accreditation there are federal limits to the number of autopsies a single pathologist can conduct annually.

Washington needs both long term systemic solutions – as well as immediate methods for relief. A lack of Forensic Pathology services leads to longer timelines for certification of death certificates which prevents families from gaining closure, as well as potentially jeopardizes estate related issues that impact families when they are at their most vulnerable.

Only through a comprehensive approach and immediate action will we be able to support our state's medical death investigation system with adequate forensic pathology services.

The Washington Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners (WACME) and all WACO members support a multi-faceted proposal that will:



Provide tuition reimbursement to Board-Certified Forensic Pathologists who contract with a county no less than two years.



Create a study on the state's forensic pathologist shortage in order to develop potential policy initiatives that would attract and retain board certified Forensic Pathologists.

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