

Forensic Pathology Fellowship



Forensic Pathology training at USF is conducted by the faculty at the Hillsborough County Medical Examiner Department in Tampa. Hillsborough County has a population base of 1,408,000, encompasses 1072 square miles, and has its seat in the City of Tampa. The County performs approximately 2000 death investigations per year, over 1100 of these involve autopsies.

Mission and Emphasis

The mission of our program is to provide comprehensive training in forensic pathology that will enable the fellow to practice in the field with competence, confidence, and compassion; fellows are expected to become American Board of Pathology Diplomates in Forensic Pathology.

The fellow will participate in a diverse array of autopsies involving traumatic and non-traumatic deaths, and learn skills and techniques specific to each category, as well as to reconstruct pathophysiological processes leading to death in specific cases. The fellow will learn to successfully integrate and communicate autopsy findings with law enforcement, attorneys, family members, and health care professionals in other disciplines. Interdisciplinary conferences are considered essential to training. We will provide the fellow with a congenial and welcoming environment that is conducive to learning.

After graduation, the fellow will be equipped to practice as a competent medical examiner or coroner's pathologist, or to enter academic practice as the director of the autopsy service of a teaching hospital. The emphasis in our program is on the acquisition of analytical and cognitive abilities to permit the fellow to function as an expert consultant to the legal, academic medical and practicing medical communities. The fellow will be prepared to conduct outreach efforts with various governmental entities and non-governmental community groups on a local, state, and national level.

Required Rotations

A fellow can expect to perform over 200 autopsies during the academic year, possibly testify in depositions, and potentially testify in court (murder trials in Hillsborough County come to trial anywhere from 6 to 18 months after arrest). Each fellow spends time at the Regional Crime Laboratory of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and attends a week-long course in forensic toxicology with Axis Forensic Toxicology. There are two in-house forensic toxicologists for on-site consultations and exposure to forensic anthropology is through opportunities to both attend scenes and examinations at the Medical Examiner Department.

Appointment and Conferences

Each fellow has a statutory appointment as Associate Medical Examiner, conducts scene investigations, performs autopsies, and signs his or her own reports. Our teaching program includes case supervision and daily teaching conferences; including fixed brains and hearts, journal discussion, and case discussion.

Scene Investigations

Hillsborough County medical examiners go to the scenes of all homicides, all infant deaths, some suicides, and all industrial accidents when there has been no hospital treatment; and to any other scenes that they elect. They regularly participate in the multidisciplinary conferences at various hospitals and organizations within the community.

Geography

Tampa is situated at the head of Tampa Bay and is the cultural and financial center of a metropolitan area of 3 million people spread over several counties. The urban core is surrounded by suburbs, lakes and waterways, farms, and mines. This diverse geography makes for a rich case mix. Because Hillsborough County is only 30 miles square, medical examiners can easily attend death scenes anywhere in the jurisdiction. Because of the favorable climate, scene investigations are not made unpleasant by winter weather.

Selection of Candidates, Starting Dates, and Compensation

The fellowship starts July 1. Preference is given to candidates who will have completed required training in Anatomical Pathology in a program accredited by the ACGME. The salary is \$95,000. Benefits are described on the USF website at:

<https://health.usf.edu/medicine/gme/current/stipend-benefits>

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