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From: Lisa Barker  
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Indiana State Coroners' Training Board

Subject: Budget Transmittal Letter  
FY 2014 and FY 2015 Budgets

The Indiana Coroners' Training Board (CTB) was established under I.C. 4-23-6.5-3 and granted authority under I.C. 4-22-2 to set mandatory standards for certification training and continuing education for county coroners and deputy coroners. The Coroners Training and Continuing Education fund was established under I.C. 4-23-6.5-8, and this fund collects monies to be used by the CTB to conduct all business and training as set forth in the statutes. The uses of these funds are governed in I.C. 4-23-6.5-9.

The CTB consists of 6 members as established by statute to include the following:

- The Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Health (or designee)
- The Superintendent of the State Police (or designee)
- 4 County Coroners appointed by the Governor (2 democrats and 2 republicans)

The board also employs 2 contract employees, the Executive Administrative Assistant and the Director of Training, to oversee the daily operations, budgets and training.

In 1994, the board began the process of establishing training guidelines and curricula to meet the standards set forth by law. In 1998, the board conducted the first certification training under these established rules and guidelines. The primary objectives of the board are to ensure that all coroners and deputy coroners meet or exceed the minimum training and continuing education requirements. Since the inception of the training courses in 1998, the board has trained and certified over 1,000 coroners and/or deputies in the State of Indiana to be able to conduct Medicolegal Death Investigations in a uniform standard from one county to another and provided the ability to allow for reporting of deaths to be consistent statewide.

Currently, under I.C. 36-2-14-22.3, the CTB is in consultation with the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy to create and offer a training course of at least 40 hours in length

covering topics of death investigations, crime scenes and preservation of evidence at a crime scene. The course is taught by Certified Medicolegal Death Investigators, certified crime scene investigators and Board Certified Physicians and Pathologists. The board also created and offers an annual continuing education course consisting of at least 15 hours of training, exceeding the 8 hours required in the statute.

I.C. 36-2-14-23 requires that all coroners and deputy coroners attend the required certification training course and maintain continuing education annually. Each coroner shall have 6 months from taking office to complete all certification requirements and each deputy shall have one year from their hire date to complete the same process. The certification training includes over 40 hours of classroom instruction, an externship program that includes attending and participating in a forensic autopsy and documenting death investigation cases in narrative report form. After the completion of those steps, a certification exam is administered to the students to test their knowledge based on the curriculum, standards and laws. The test is a 200 question written exam that is administered by a proctor at a predetermined location. The test is broken down into 10 sections and each test has its own cut-score with an average score of 80% resulting in a passing grade. After the test is taken, the test is scored by an offsite company to ensure the integrity of the test and scores.

The CTB is required by statute (36-2-14-22.3) to conduct trainings 2 times per year, one in the winter and then next in late summer. Since the CTB does not have a facility to conduct the trainings, they are held centrally in the state and the students are provided with all training materials and housing. The monies from the training board budget are used to cover those costs, all contractual obligations of the employees and instructors and office expenses and testing, along with retesting.

In the last 7 years, the CTB has reduced its overall budget by approximately \$160,000 by eliminating reimbursement for mileage and per diem, eliminating training grants to attend trainings not offered by the training board and renegotiating contracts for testing and training text books. The board has also held internal spending to a minimum by not giving pay raises to the contractual employees, not updating training equipment, and eliminating mileage and per diem for outside instructors.

Our performance indicators are judged based on pass/fail rate of the tests and evaluations of the instructors. Over the last 10 years, the board, under the guidance of its contractual employees, has raised the pass rate of the certification from 64% to 84% on the initial training and testing and the pass rate from 81% to 96% on retesting or remedial training, with a goal of 100% on the initial test.

The board has also obtained a web-based records management/reporting system that is available to all county coroners and their deputies to do their written reports on deaths. This web-based program allows them to complete their reports from anywhere they have internet access, causes each county to utilize a standardized reporting system on all deaths, and allows for accurate and concise sharing of data with appropriate agencies. This web-based program is currently linked to the Indiana Criminal Justice

Institute's Fatal Accident Reporting System, allowing them instant access to fatal crash statistics.

With the ever changing advancements in death investigation and forensics, the CTB will work to upgrade the curriculum and materials used in training to meet current practices based on national guidelines over the next biennium.