

# **Office of the Chief Medical Examiner**

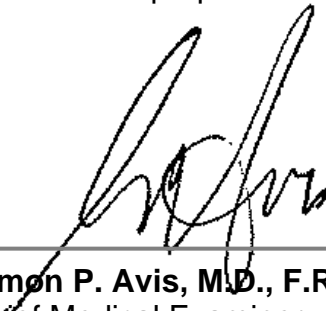
## **Activity Plan 2017-20**

## *Message from the Chief Medical Examiner*

I am pleased to present the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Activity Plan 2017-20. This plan was prepared under my direction and in accordance with the provisions of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is classified as a Category 3 government entity and, as such, must prepare an activity plan taking into consideration the strategic directions of Government applicable to the Department of Justice and Public Safety. I have taken those directions into account.

As Chief Medical Examiner, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of its objective.



---

**Simon P. Avis, M.D., F.R.C.P.C.**  
Chief Medical Examiner  
Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

## Overview

The *Fatalities Investigations Act (Act)* states that the Chief Medical Examiner is responsible to the Minister for the operation of this *Act* in relation to the reporting, investigating and recording of deaths.

Approximately 700 deaths per year come to the attention of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (not all of these deaths are considered 'reportable' under the legislation). Deaths which are considered reportable are those which are due to violence, accident or suicide, improper or negligent treatment, are sudden and unexpected or occur when an individual is not under active medical care at the time of death or when the cause of death cannot be determined. Deaths of this nature account for approximately 30 per cent of the deaths within Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is also responsible for appointing physicians to act as medical examiners. In addition to the Chief Medical Examiner, there are 19 medical examiners practicing within the province in various locations. The work of these medical examiners is subject to review by the Chief Medical Examiner. Assistance in investigation is provided by police officers employed by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who are, by virtue of their office, medical examiner investigators.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is located in the Health Sciences Centre, Prince Philip Parkway, St. John's. Independence of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is heightened and enhanced through the employment of the Chief Medical Examiner as a Full Professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland's Faculty of Medicine.

Administrative support is provided by an Administrative Officer with additional clerical support provided for a portion of the year. Files related to the investigations conducted by the office are presently stored at the L.A. Miller Centre, a facility of Eastern Health.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner receives reports of approximately 570 reportable deaths per year. According to the Estimates of the Program Expenditure and Revenue of the Consolidated Revenue Fund 2017-18, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner operates with a budget of approximately \$900,000.

## Issue

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner considered government's strategic directions and the key priority of the office is ensuring compliance with the *Fatalities Investigations Act*.

### Compliance with *Fatalities Investigations Act*

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner responds to reportable deaths as defined by the *Fatalities Investigations Act*. The response to a particular death is dependent upon the circumstances of the deceased's health, level of health care at the time of death, and the suspected cause of death. Some cases may involve a review of information submitted by a medical examiner, a post-mortem examination, or even the assistance of a Forensic Anthropologist. The focus of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is consistent over the three years of this plan. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will report on the results of this objective each year of this three year plan.

<b>Objective:</b>	By March 31, 2018, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will have responded to deaths that are reported in accordance with the <i>Fatalities Investigations Act</i> .
<b>Indicators:</b>	Conducted file reviews of medical examiners' reports
	Ordered and/or conducted post mortem examinations, as appropriate
	Ordered and/or conducted autopsies, as appropriate
	Recorded and reported on cause of death

**Office of the Chief Medical Examiner**  
Health Sciences Centre  
300 Prince Philip Drive  
St. John's, NL A1B 3V6  
**Tel: (709) 777-6402**