

Colorado Coroners Association

Established 1987



Summer Newsletter

The Colorado Coroners Association provides service and support through the sponsorship of training and educational activities for all Colorado Coroners and Deputies.

www.coloradocoroners.org

From The President

Greetings Everyone,

I hope this letter finds you well during these trying times.

The October Conference will be held October 7-9 at the Hotel Elegante' in Colorado Springs and is in full swing. Our keynote speaker, Paul Holes, is scheduled, and a Ghost Hunter group will be an entertaining addition to our Banquet. Also, during our evening Banquet, Donor Alliance will be conducting an awards ceremony.

In conversations with the hotel about restrictions due to COVID, we are still planning and moving forward with the Conference. The Hotel Elegante' in Colorado Springs is equipped to follow COVID protocols for social distancing and sanitation, and they have assured us they can safely manage a group of up to 250 participants.

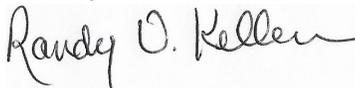
The election of the Board of Directors will be conducted at the Membership Meeting on Wednesday, October 7 at 5:30 p.m. We will also be updating our Members on current legislation and other important matters. I encourage all Coroners to become involved with the education requirements and legislation in Colorado.

The CCA Board will be meeting at the end of July to discuss the details of this Conference, attendance, and the restrictions we may be required to follow. Attendance numbers will be critical to our decisions, so it is of utmost importance that everyone sign up for the Conference at your earliest convenience, preferably by July 26th. Rest assured, if we must cancel the October Conference, any registration funds received can be refunded or rolled over into our 2021 events.

Coroners please take note: this will be the only opportunity this year for you to receive continuing education credits through the Colorado Coroners Association so that you can meet your CCSTB requirements.

We have a very strong line-up of presenters on our Agenda, and I look forward to seeing everyone at the Fall Conference in Colorado Springs.

Sincerely,



Randy V. Keller, President





**THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN
DEATH INVESTIGATORS
CONFERENCE**

brought to you by the
Colorado Coroners Association

Will be held at the
**HOTEL ELEGANTE'
CONFERENCE AND EVENT CENTER**

**Wednesday, October 7, 2020
through
Friday, October 9, 2020**

**2886 S. Circle Drive
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80906
719.576.5900**

Room rates are **\$104 per night (plus tax)** double occupancy.
Rates are valid through **12:00 Noon Saturday, September 5, 2020.**

Copy and paste this link to make your online reservations

[https://www.reseze.net/servlet/SendPage?
hotelid=1410&skipfirstpage=true&page=2699730](https://www.reseze.net/servlet/SendPage?hotelid=1410&skipfirstpage=true&page=2699730)

You can also call the hotel directly at 719.576.5900.
All reservations must be secured with a credit card.

Your tax exempt certificate **MUST** be submitted to the hotel at least
30 days in advance (9/5/2020)

Conference Scholarships

The Colorado Coroners Association will be awarding
4 scholarships to the October, 2020 Conference.

If you or someone in your office is interested in applying,
please visit our website at coloradocoroners.org
and complete the application.

Scholarship applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on
Sunday, September 6, 2020

Fax or email them to Jen Vien at
719.309.6625 or coloradocoroners@gmail.com

As of June 2018, The Ike Miller Scholarship will be
awarded every three (3) years.

We plan to award it again in 2021. Please visit our website for more details.



Colorado Coroners Association BOARD ELECTIONS

Elections will be held at the
General Membership meeting on
Wednesday, October 7, 2020.

There are six (6) positions up for election.
The terms are for 2 years.

If you have any questions, please contact any of the current Board Members.

Announcements

The next CCA Board Meeting will be held at 11:00 a.m..

Wednesday, July 29, 2020

This will be a Conference Call Meeting

Meeting minutes are posted on our website.



Continuing Education Credits

Due to circumstances surrounding COVID-19 and the cancellation of our June 2020 Conference, we recognize that many of you will have difficulty meeting the Continuing Education requirements for your CCA Certified Death Investigator Certification. While we anticipate having an October Conference, we also understand that not everyone will be able to attend that Conference and complete the 20 hours of education it will provide. Therefore, CCA is temporarily allowing **20 online CEU's** during the 2020 calendar year instead of the normal 16, in order to meet Certification (Certified Death Investigator) requirements. Some of the acceptable sites for CCA Certification are:

<https://ditacademy.org>

<https://und.edu/academics/development/death-investigation-training>

If you are using these resources for your CCA Certification, you need to make certain that your certificate lists the number of hours the credits are worth. If you submit a certificate without the hours specified, it will not be accepted.

If you are a **CORONER** and need credits to meet your **CCSTB** requirements, please make sure you sign up to attend the 2020 Fall Conference.

Eye Tissues Donated Under a Coroner's Jurisdiction Transplanted More Often

A retrospective study by the Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank has shown that among all eye donations, those that occur under the jurisdiction of the coroner are transplanted more often than corneas from all other donors. Yet, the decisions the coroner makes on the timing of the release for cornea recovery can drop that transplant rate by 15 percent.

Two factors stood out in the study: pre-autopsy release and recovery prior to moving the body from the hospital. Across the board, corneas under a coroner's jurisdiction that were released for recovery prior to autopsy and prior to moving the body from the hospital had an average death to preservation time of 8 hours and 45 minutes. This is even faster than the average for all eye donation cases, which have an average death to preservation time of 9 hours and 10 minutes. Indeed, the eye bank often tries to expedite these cases so the coroner's process can proceed. Most impressive, however, is the finding that the transplant rate of the corneas a coroner allowed to be recovered pre-autopsy was 67%, the highest of any other group of corneas.

If the corneas, however, were recovered after the autopsy, the average death to preservation time shot up to 19 hours and 20 minutes, a 121% increase. The resulting transplant rate among these corneas fell to 52%. The study also showed that an additional 24 corneas in the study period of 6 months could not be recovered because the post-autopsy release caused the eye bank to miss the window of opportunity for corneal preservation.

Minimizing the time between death and preservation of the cornea is crucial because it leads to better transplant rates. The cornea is unlike other tissues that can be transplanted. In fact, it's more like an organ because it's a living tissue that goes unprocessed to transplant. To keep the cells alive, they must be preserved in a specialized storage media as soon as possible after death.

Because not every case is straight forward, the study also looked at coroner cases that were atypical and were termed "complicated." These cases were defined in the study as having one or more of the following issues:

- The next-of-kin identification or notification was delayed.
- The donor was not immediately positively identified.
- The body was moved to the Donor Alliance recovery center.
- The body was moved to the coroner's office, and the eye bank could not have access.
- There were jurisdictional questions that had to be ironed out.
- Any other extraneous factors that unexpectedly delayed the coroner from being able to make a quick decision.

The study found that even in these more complicated and naturally delayed cases, an eventual pre-autopsy release still lowered the time between death and preservation of the corneas by 2 hours and 50 minutes compared to a post-autopsy release in cases with similar complications and delays.

While the National Association of Medical Examiners advocates release of donated organs and tissues in all cases, it is a high bar that requires some work. Nonetheless, a few counties in Colorado do take an approach that maximizes transplants through consideration of release of the corneas separate from other tissues, routine release prior to autopsy, increasing access to the coroner's facility for recoveries, and consistent use of the eye bank's coroner kit, which includes a thorough eye exam, pupil measurement, and collection of vitreous fluid.

According to Robert Austin, the eye bank's public and professional relations manager, the takeaway of the study is clear. "Coroners' decisions affect transplant rates," he said. "Any time the eye bank is given faster access prior to the autopsy and before transport from the hospital, those corneas have the absolute best chance of being transplantable to restore someone's sight." He also urges coroners to have a discussion with pathologist about the forensic value of the cornea in death investigations. The eye bank is also happy to be a part of those discussions, with the aim of maximizing transplants from the donors under a coroner's jurisdiction.

For a look at graphs that depict the study results, as well as other resources for coroners and pathologists on the forensic value of the cornea, visit <http://corneas.org/coroners>.



Colorado Coroners Association Board Members

Executive Directors

President - Randy Keller, Fremont County
randy.keller@fremontco.com
Vice President - Robert Glassmire, Garfield County
rglassmire@garfield-county.com
Secretary - Brian Cotter, Pueblo County
cotterb@pueblocounty.us
Treasurer - Victor Yahn, Mesa County
victor.yahn@mesacounty.us

Directors

Jeff Graf, Chaffee County
jgraf@chaffeecounty.org

Randy Gorton, Past President, Kit Carson County
rgkccoroner@gmail.com

Thomas Canfield, MD, Montrose County
coroner@montrosecounty.net

Brenda Bock, Past President, Grand County
bbock@co.grand.co.us

Matt Reid, El Paso County
mattreid@elpaso.com

Stephen Hunzeker, Rio Grande County
rgccoroner@riogrande.org

Michael Burson, MD
specializedpathology@me.com

Emily Russell, MD., El Paso County
emilyrussell@elpasoco.com

Jen Vien
Administrative Assistant/Conference Coordinator
coloradocoroners@gmail.com

