

Bond Hearing Testimony
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
Update on the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Farmington
March 18, 2024

In January of 2023 an architect was selected for an assessment and feasibility study regarding our 30,000-square-foot facility on the UCONN Health Center campus in Farmington. The architectural firm, McClaren, Wilson & Lawrie, has extensive experience in pre-design planning, programming, design, and construction of forensic science projects which includes over 60 medical examiner/coroner facilities across the country.

They examined our current facility and workload. Based on this review and current recommendations from the Scientific Working Group for Medicolegal Death Investigation (SWGMDI) and industry best practices, Connecticut needs an OCME facility that can autopsy up to 3,600 bodies a year and refrigerate up to 200 bodies at any given time in a two-floor, 60,000 square foot facility. Based on numerous factors including the need to maintain 24/7/365 operational status of our current facility, geographic limitations (e.g., surrounding wetlands), and the age of our current facility, we have concluded that a new facility is the best option.

We are currently in conversation with UCONN Health and DAS real estate to find a suitable location and also working on obtaining cost estimates for a new facility. By current statute, OCME must be located at a Connecticut medical school (CGS Sec. 19a-403). Inadequate autopsy space, as well as inadequate refrigerated storage space, has resulted in our agency's loss of full accreditation by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME).

