



PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Andrew McArdle (OCME) – (202) 698-9008; andrew.mcardle@dc.gov

Bowser Administration and Howard University Host International Symposium on Death Investigation

Medicolegal experts from across the globe share best practices and policies

(WASHINGTON, DC) – Last week, the District of Columbia’s Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), in collaboration with Howard University, hosted the “Medicolegal Death Investigation (MLDI) and the Integration of Gender Based Violence and Equity” Conference at the Consolidated Forensic Science Lab.

Dr. Francisco J. Diaz, Director of OCME and Interim Director of the Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS) hosted this event along with Deputy Mayor of Public Safety and Justice, Lindsey Appiah, and Howard University Chief Medical Officer and Professor of Pathology, Dr. Roger Mitchell. The symposium was coordinated by OCME Deputy Chief Medical Examiner and Medical Director, Dr. Sasha Breland, and brought together global experts in forensic pathology and death investigations from several countries around the world.

“Collaborations between agencies and departments in death investigations are critical for establishing and reporting cause and manner of death,” said Dr. Diaz. “It is imperative every jurisdiction have sound practice and policies for reporting death to support law enforcement, public health officials and the affected families.”

MLDI is the intersection between how medicine and law come together to determine cause and manner of death. MLDI defines and supports the investigation, examination, and reporting of sudden, suspicious, and violent deaths. MLDI consists of two major entities: the medical examiner system and the coroner system. The death investigations process includes examining the scene, determining the cause of death and analyzing evidence discovered at the scene.

“The purpose of this conference is to bring together leading experts in death investigations to make sure there is a coordinated interagency effort between the Department of Forensic

Sciences, Officer of the Chief Medical Examiner and the District's law enforcement partners," said Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice Lindsey Appiah. "The goal is to ensure we are applying best practices to the science and technology available to us all."

"Howard University is very proud to partner with the District of Columbia to introduce inspiring students to a group of diverse leaders in their field to highlight the significance of the work they will begin to practice upon entering the workforce," said Dr. Roger Mitchell. "When you bring these collective and collaborative minds together, we all learn from each other."

Attendees of the conference represented The Philippines, South Africa, Belize, Sénégal, Algeria, Nigeria, Tanzania, Morocco, Namibia, Iraq, United Kingdom, Trinidad, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Algeria, India, the United States, and more.

The MLDI Conference took place from Thursday, June 13 through Saturday, June 15, 2024.