



# Practice Alert

## Use of Certified Child Death Pathologists

The purpose of this Practice Alert is to inform staff involved in Child Abuse/Neglect investigations resulting in a child death of the need to use certified child death pathologists for the autopsy.

While it is the responsibility of the law enforcement agency, medical examiner, or coroner involved in the co-investigation of an alleged child abuse/neglect fatality to make decisions regarding processing of the death scene and evidence, including the deceased child's body, it is important for Children's Division staff to be aware of and, when possible, help ensure the autopsy is conducted by a certified child death pathologist.

The State Technical Assistance Team (STAT), in conjunction with the Department of Health and Senior Services, maintains a "network" of child death pathologists who must meet certification requirements and follow specific policies and guidelines, including a uniform autopsy protocol. The link to the network of certified child death pathologists is provided.

<http://dss.mo.gov/stat/cpn.htm>

STAT also manages a program of state-financed autopsy reimbursements to Child Pathologist Network members. This guarantees, not only that the autopsy will be performed by a certified child death pathologist, but the decision to autopsy will not be influenced by county budget constraints.

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