

§ 130A-382. County medical examiners; appointment; term of office; vacancies; training requirements; revocation for cause.

(a) The Chief Medical Examiner shall appoint two or more county medical examiners for each county for a three-year term. In appointing medical examiners for each county, the Chief Medical Examiner shall give preference to physicians licensed to practice medicine in this State but may also appoint the following professionals:

- (1) Dentists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, or physical therapists as long as the appointee is licensed to practice in this State.
- (2) Emergency medical technicians or paramedics credentialed under G.S. 131E-159.
- (3) Pathologists' assistants certified by the American Society for Clinical Pathology.
- (4) Pathologists' assistants or medicolegal death investigators certified by a nationally recognized certifying body determined by the Chief Medical Examiner to have an appropriate certification process for pathologists' assistants or medicolegal death investigators to demonstrate readiness to serve as a county medical examiner.

A medical examiner may serve more than one county. The Chief Medical Examiner may take jurisdiction in any case or appoint another medical examiner to do so.

(a1) During a state of emergency declared by the Governor or by a resolution of the General Assembly pursuant to G.S. 166A-19.20, or by the governing body of a municipality or county pursuant to G.S. 166A-19.22, the Chief Medical Examiner may appoint temporary county medical examiners to serve until the expiration of the declared state of emergency. In appointing temporary county medical examiners pursuant to this subsection, the Chief Medical Examiner may appoint any individual determined by the Chief Medical Examiner to have the appropriate training, education, and experience to serve as a county medical examiner during a declared state of emergency.

(b) County medical examiners shall complete continuing education training as directed by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and based upon established and published guidelines for conducting death investigations. The continuing education training shall include training regarding (i) sudden unexpected death in epilepsy and (ii) requirements for compliance with the duties prescribed by G.S. 130A-385 and G.S. 130A-389. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner shall annually update and publish these guidelines on its Internet Web site. Newly appointed county medical examiners shall complete mandatory orientation training as directed by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner within 90 days after their appointment.

(c) The Chief Medical Examiner may revoke a county medical examiner's appointment for failure to adequately perform the duties of the office after providing the county medical examiner with written notice of the basis for the revocation and an opportunity to respond. (1955, c. 972, s. 1; 1957, c. 1357, s. 1; 1963, c. 492, s. 4; 1967, c. 1154, s. 1; 1973, c. 476, s. 128; 1981, c. 187, ss. 2-4; 1983, c. 891, s. 2; 2007-187, s. 4; 2014-100, s. 12E.6(a); 2015-211, s. 1; 2023-65, s. 6.2; 2024-43, s. 1(a).)