

## CASE STUDY

### Immediate Review of Decedent Medical Records is Mission Critical for The Oklahoma Office of the Chief Medical Examiner



MyHealth<sup>®</sup>  
ACCESS NETWORK

## CHALLENGE

Investigators and Physicians at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) require timely access to decedent medical charts. Access to these records aid in determining appropriate jurisdiction over a death and delegation of resources to process all aspects of investigations and examinations. OCME could only access records after sending a fax request and waiting, sometimes extended amounts of time, for a medical facility to process and return the records requested.

## SOLUTION

### Death Reports

- Participation of medical groups in the HIE enhances OCME investigations by expediting jurisdiction determination, and reducing resource wastage.
- OCME's round-the-clock operation benefits from immediate HIE access, eliminating delays and funeral home storage constraints.
- OCME can efficiently access reliable, compliant medical data for jurisdictional decisions, adhering to state and federal regulations.

### Triage of Cases

- HIE aids OCME in making informed decisions, saving time, optimizing staff assignments, and reducing unnecessary testing.

### Permit Turnaround Time

- State mandates require OCME to issue permits for dispositions, including cremation, and certify death certificates for cremations.
- HIE participation accelerates processing, particularly for natural deaths, allowing timely services for families.

### Decedent Identification

- HIE facilitates access to critical medical data, including radiology, bolstering decedent identification processes.

## AT A GLANCE

### Oklahoma Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

**Clinical Setting:** Forensic Pathology

#### Benefits

- Reduces unnecessary testing and procedures, saving time and money
- Improves efficient use of resources and site staff
- Helps speed family experience
- Identifies substance abuse



*"The benefit of having access to medical records is two-fold.*

*One, often we can't get ahold of primary care physicians or know that one exists. The HIE helps us find information to assist with jurisdictional issues on the front end.*

*Two, the sooner we can get decedent medical records and medical histories, the sooner we can finalize uncomplicated cases that we have taken jurisdiction on."*

**Dr. Ross Miller**  
OCME Forensic Pathologist

*“The impact the HIE has had on my team’s ability to triage and process cases is invaluable. “Game Changer” is what often comes to mind when I think about My Health.*

*When we are trying to obtain information about a decedent, who cannot relay that information to us themselves, at all hours of the day in all areas of Oklahoma; The HIE tool shines.”*

**Samantha Richardson**  
OCME Eastern Investigations Supervisor

*“When hospice or a nursing home report a trauma injury but do not have much information about it, MyHealth is a huge help. Immediate access to a list of past diagnoses gives a time frame of the injury occurred. This eliminates wasted time attempting to track down injury diagnosis.”*

**Brooke McDonald**  
OCME Permits

## CONCLUSION

MyHealth’s HIE has had a profound impact on OCME across multiple areas, including death reports, case triage, permit processing times, and decedent identification. Before HIE participation, the lack of information hindered OCME's ability to provide explanations and communicate findings effectively.

The HIE provides OCME with invaluable additional information, such as next of kin contact details, insurance claims data for tracking out-of-state care, social services connections, and pharmacy data to aid in overdose investigations. This comprehensive data access further strengthens OCME's ability to carry out its critical functions effectively.

Participating in the HIE has brought about significant improvements in OCME's operational efficiency. It enables faster and more informed decision-making, minimizes resource wastage, and enhances services for grieving families. This case study underscores the vital role of health data exchange in enhancing public health services and outcomes.

