



DISTRICT TWELVE MEDICAL EXAMINER

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Lora Kenniff - Olivia Loveridge
Michael A. Rogers - Shawn C. Walker

Amira D. Fox
Chair, District 22 Medical Examiner Search Committee
State Attorney, 20th Judicial Circuit
Office of the State Attorney, 20th Judicial Circuit
Lee County Justice Complex Center
2000 Main Street
Fort Myers, Florida 33901

August 4, 2022

Dear Ms. Fox,

I am writing this letter as a follow-up to my presentation to the Committee on July the 5th and to address some comments that were presented in that meeting and subsequently.

I understand that members of the Committee voiced some concern about the number of associate medical examiners that I would employ in the provision of services to the District 22 office. In addition, I perceived some concern about whether or not I can guarantee that certain associate medical examiners either do or do not participate in this coverage. As a solution to these concerns, members of the Committee suggested the possibility that the Committee could appoint me as district medical examiner and that I could hire an associate medical examiner that would be “assigned” to Charlotte County, even asking if I might commit to such a solution. I am VERY amenable to this solution, but it may require additional budget dollars (I would estimate in the neighborhood of \$25,000-50,000, maybe less?). In addition, it may not be possible to find someone for this position, especially in the short term, and thus would probably require some sort of cross-coverage until the position were to be filled. And while the committee would be welcome to make suggestions regarding the associate ME position (and I would give such recommendations high consideration), the Committee cannot make such an appointment – that authority resides solely with the district medical examiner. In summary, yes, I will commit to attempting to provide coverage with a single associate medical examiner, but I must have the flexibility to provide coverage in some other way until the right person is brought on board.

If as expected there would be some requirement for associate medical examiner cross-coverage in the short term, my plan would be to have only two of my current associates participate in the

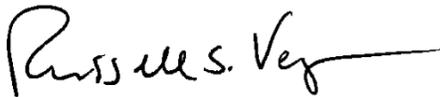
District 22 coverage (in addition to me, of course). Those two, doctors Utley and Broussard, have been working along with me providing coverage in Charlotte County for the last several years. We have worked together for many years in Sarasota, and both are very quick to discuss any challenging or unusual cases with me right from the start. I believe both pathologists have developed excellent working relationships with District 22 Medical Examiner office staff and the law enforcement agencies within the County. It is my hope that this commitment would alleviate some of your concerns on this issue should such cross-coverage be required.

In addition, for oversight and quality assurance purposes, regardless of how the associate medical examiner issue is resolved, I would plan to personally review each death certificate and autopsy report that is generated before it is released.

Finally, Dr. Wolf indicated that I should provide a Policy and Procedure manual, and I would certainly develop one upon my appointment.

I remain available and open to any questions, comments, or suggestions from the Committee.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell S. Vega". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Russell S. Vega, MD
Chief Medical Examiner
District Twelve of Florida