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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HCIFS Awarded ‘Accreditation with Commendation’ from the Texas Medical Association Committee on Continuing Education

The highest accreditation status awarded by the medical association

HOUSTON, Texas (Sept. 27, 2016) – The [Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences](http://www.harriscountytexas.gov/ifs) (HCIFS) has received ‘Accreditation with Commendation’ awarded by the Texas Medical Association Committee on Continuing Education, which is recognized by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education as the Texas accreditor of Continuing Medical Education (CME) providers.

HCIFS is the only medical examiner’s office in Texas to hold this accreditation, which allows HCIFS to sponsor educational conferences and seminars that qualify for CME credits required by the Texas Medical Board in order for physicians to maintain their licensure.

“‘Accreditation with Commendation’ is the highest accreditation status, accompanied by a six-year term of accreditation, instead of the routine four-year term,” said Michal Pierce, M.S., HCIFS director of Quality Management. “It confirms that we demonstrate compliance with the core accreditation criteria, as well as additional standards for quality improvement.”

The ‘Accreditation with Commendation’ status recognizes HCIFS’ ability to impact the development of healthcare professionals within the community through educational programs. To achieve ‘Accreditation with Commendation,’ HCIFS demonstrated how the agency’s educational efforts were integrated into its process for improving professional practice and the services offered.

The Texas Medical Board requires physicians to earn 24 CME credits every two years from formal courses certified for ‘AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™’. Two of the 24 formal credits must be in ethics and/or professional responsibility content. This accreditation allows HCIFS to offer educational programs that satisfy these requirements including the ethics requirements, which can be targeted to and customized for forensic pathologists.

“The Institute’s position within the Texas Medical Center, along with the county’s support, has allowed our office to develop high-quality relevant instructional programs for physicians in various specialties and disciplines,” said Dwayne A. Wolf, M.D., Ph.D., HCIFS deputy chief medical examiner. “From a practical standpoint, this allows our physicians, as well as other physicians in the Texas Medical Center, to remain current in their knowledge of forensic-related topics, to remain current in non-forensic topics that impact forensic practice, and to benefit from these trainings without leaving Harris County.”

HCIFS maintains [seven accreditations](#) spanning both the Medical Examiner and the Crime Laboratory services. The agency has maintained CME accreditation from the Texas Medical Association beginning with Provisional Accreditation in 2010 and full accreditation in 2012. HCIFS earned this ‘Accreditation with Commendation’ for a period of six years following a rigorous review of the agency’s past educational events and activities to ensure it met requirements.

“We routinely strive for service improvement and undergo re-accreditation inspections for each of our seven accrediting agencies,” said Luis A. Sanchez, M.D., HCIFS executive director and chief medical examiner. “Reaccreditation with commendation stands as a recognition of our past excellence in this area as well as our commitment to ongoing educational programs.”

About the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences:

The Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences, an independent, science-based organization, provides two distinct forensic services for the Harris County community – the Medical Examiner Service and the Crime Laboratory Service. To learn more about the Institute of Forensic Sciences, its seven accreditations or its Forensic Pathology training program, visit: www.harriscountytexas.gov/ifs.