



# HARRIS COUNTY INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC SCIENCES

## PRESS RELEASE

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June 4, 2019

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences Announces Certification to ISO 9001:2015** New certification demonstrates the Institute's commitment to quality service and management

HOUSTON, Texas (June 4, 2019) – The Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences (HCIFS), a leader in forensic examination and laboratory testing, today announced that the organization has earned certification to ISO 9001:2015 for its quality management system. The Institute's certification was granted by Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance (LRQA) following two separate onsite assessments for compliance with the International Standard.

ISO 9001:2015 is a globally recognized quality management standard for organizations of all types and sizes to achieve an effective quality management system. The standard is comprised of 368 requirements for planning, control, and improvement.

"Certification to ISO 9001 exemplifies the Institute's longstanding commitment to excellence and mission of providing forensic services of the highest quality to our community," said Luis A. Sanchez, M.D., HCIFS executive director and chief medical examiner.

The Institute's leadership, as well as the entire staff, were fully engaged throughout these assessments. During the final meeting with the LRQA assessors, the lead auditor stated, "This agency has a high level of customer service to families, law enforcement and other government agencies. You have a phenomenal culture and promote it well... [HCIFS] shows great teamwork between divisions and between the members of management." The scope of the certificate issued to the Institute includes both the crime laboratory and the medical examiner services and is valid for three years.

The Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences holds seven accreditations, including the crime laboratory's ISO 17025 accreditation program and the forensic anthropology division's ISO 17020 accreditation program, both through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) National Accreditation Board (ANAB). The ISO 9001 Standard applies to the entire operation including leadership, and can only be formally recognized by an ANAB-accredited certification body, such as LRQA.

Most forensic service providers focus on accreditations that highlight technical competence, but do not consider a separate assessment of quality management. As quality management is a separate division within the HCIFS, an independent assessment and certification of the quality system is a natural step and reinforces the Institute's mission to provide unbiased, uncompromised service of the highest quality. The focus on quality in all aspects of the department demonstrates HCIFS' commitment to ensure its customers' needs are appreciated and being met.

"This achievement represents third-party validation of the Institute's strong leadership and its ability to manage the quality of our service through efficiency and accountability," said HCIFS Quality Director Michal Pierce. "We are thrilled to have obtained LRQA's stamp of approval and to add ISO 9001 certification to our list of agency credentials."

#### **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, visit: [www.harriscountytexas.gov/ifs](http://www.harriscountytexas.gov/ifs).

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