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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HCIFS Observes National Forensic Science Week
Hosts Career Day to Commemorate Week-long Observance**

HOUSTON, Texas (Aug. 2, 2016) – The [Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences](http://www.hctx.net/ifs) (HCIFS) is one of many forensic agencies across the nation commemorating next week, August 7 through 13, as National Forensic Science Week.

Forensic science plays a critical role in the investigation of crimes, from exonerating the innocent to identifying the guilty. National Forensic Science week was established in 2013 as a means to recognize the scientific and technical professionals that serve the community in this very important role.

To begin the week-long observance, HCIFS will host a Future Forensic Investigator career day for middle- to high-school students who may one day give back to their communities in this same capacity. Local students are expected to attend the half-day session on Friday, August 5, 2016, to learn about careers in Forensic Science from experts in all disciplines throughout the agency.

“The Institute’s forensic investigators, pathologists, scientists, analysts and technologists provide unbiased, valid, and reliable analyses of evidence recovered from crime scenes and scenes of sudden and unexplained death from across Harris County and its municipalities. The contributions of these professionals aid the local justice system to work effectively in our communities and we are honored to recognize their efforts during National Forensic Science Week,” said Luis A. Sanchez, M.D., HCIFS executive director and chief medical examiner. “This year, we are also privileged to be able to launch the first HCIFS Future Forensic Investigator career day, enabling us to engage students considering a future in forensics and interact with the next generation of professionals in our community that will carry on this good work.”

As an independent, science-based organization, the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences that provides two distinct forensic services for the Harris County community – the Medical Examiner Service and the Crime Laboratory Service.

The Medical Examiner Service investigates cases of sudden death to determine the cause and manner of death. As the third most populous county in the country, the Institute’s forensic pathologists and investigations staff investigate an average of more than 10,000 cases of death and conduct approximately 4,000 post-mortem examinations each year.

The Crime Laboratory Service works to analyze physical evidence and includes five distinct forensic disciplines of Drug Chemistry, Forensic Toxicology, Trace Evidence, Firearms Identification and Forensic Genetics. The Crime Laboratory tests more than 100,000 pieces of evidence each year received from approximately 70 submitting law enforcement agencies within Harris County.

“Both service areas are integrated to better serve the needs of the community and the justice system through internal collaboration on issues of public concern and safety.” Dr. Sanchez added. “We take great pride in serving the citizens of Harris County and providing quality service.”

As a testament to quality forensic service and testing, the Institute is accredited by seven scientific accrediting organizations. The accreditations span all services and disciplines of the Institute including the most recent accreditation of the Forensic Anthropology Laboratory received in August 2015 awarded by the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board, making the Institute the only Medical Examiner Office in the nation to be accredited to ISO standards.

To learn more about the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences, visit: www.harriscountytx.gov/ifs.

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