

# MDI Connect Awardee Spotlight: Alaska State Medical Examiner's Office

The Alaska State Medical Examiner's Office (SMEO) was established in 1996 by the Alaska Legislature. SMEO serves the entire population of Alaska, consisting of 663,300 square miles, 20 boroughs, and a population of 734,323 people. With a large geographical area and a relatively small population, SMEO is unique, with one central office covering the entire state. All cases that require an examination by a forensic pathologist are flown to SMEO in Anchorage, Alaska. SMEO participates in the Medicolegal Death Investigation Connect (MDI Connect) which provides a supportive environment for selected MDI offices to innovate using standards-based approaches to improving data quality and timeliness that are scalable and reusable across multiple locations with different data entities.

The MDI office wants to automatically update the EDRS with information about cause and manner of death from their CMS.



Dataflow:	MDI CMS to EDRS
Project Description:	The Alaska State Medical Examiner's Office (SMEO) and their Health Analytics and Vital Records System (HAVRS) section are interested in data exchange from SMEO's electronic case management system (VertiQ) and the electronic death registration system (Netsmart) used by HAVRS. Making the two systems interoperable and bi-directional would decrease double data entry tasks completed by employees of both agencies.
CMS Vendor:	VertiQ
Data Sharing Partner:	Health Analytics and Vital Records System (HAVRS)
Data Sharing Vendor:	Netsmart

Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More timely processing of death certificates</li> <li>• Increased efficiency in the processing of death certificates</li> <li>• Improved data quality</li> <li>• Reduced data entry efforts</li> </ul>
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating subcontracts with partners</li> <li>• Incorporation of additional requirements from state IT department</li> </ul>

MDI Connect is a collaborative learning environment where MDI offices, data sharing partners, vendors, and FHIR subject matter experts can work together to modernize MDI data practices and work towards interoperability. The goal of this collaborative is to create reusable tools and approaches that will reduce data entry efforts, reduce efforts exchanging data with others, and increase access to information for office functioning and research. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Collaborating Office for Medical Examiners and Coroners (COMEC) and the CDC Foundation work jointly on this project.

**Acronyms**  
**MDI** – Medicolegal Death Investigation  
**CMS** – Case Management System  
**EDRS** – Electronic Death Registration System  
**HL7** – Health Level 7  
**FHIR** – Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources

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