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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2432**

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**State of Washington**

**66th Legislature**

**2020 Regular Session**

**By** House Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Klippert and Goodman)

READ FIRST TIME 02/04/20.

1 AN ACT Relating to coroners; amending RCW 68.50.104; adding new  
2 sections to chapter 36.24 RCW; and adding a new section to chapter  
3 43.101 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 36.24  
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 Within twelve months of assuming office, a person who files a  
8 declaration of candidacy for the office of coroner or county medical  
9 examiner must have a certificate of completion of medicolegal  
10 forensic investigation training that complies with the standards  
11 adopted for the medicolegal training academy adopted by the criminal  
12 justice training commission in conjunction with the Washington  
13 association of coroners and medical examiners pursuant to section 3  
14 of this act.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 36.24  
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 Except those run by a county prosecutor, all county coroner's  
18 offices and medical examiner's offices must be accredited by either  
19 the international association of coroners and medical examiners or

1 the national association of medical examiners no later than July 1,  
2 2024, and maintain continued accreditation thereafter.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.101  
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) All elected coroners, persons serving as coroners, medical  
6 examiners, and all other medicolegal investigative personnel employed  
7 by a county coroner's or medical examiner's office must successfully  
8 complete medicolegal forensic investigation training through the  
9 medicolegal training academy program within twelve months of being  
10 elected, appointed, or employed unless otherwise exempted by the  
11 commission. This section does not apply to elected prosecutors who  
12 are coroners in their counties, or to such prosecutor's staff.

13 (2) The commission, in conjunction with the Washington  
14 association of coroners and medical examiners, shall develop the  
15 medicolegal forensic investigation training curriculum and adopt the  
16 standards for the medicolegal training academy and any exemption from  
17 the requirement to complete the medicolegal training academy.

18 (3) The commission must certify successful completion of the  
19 medicolegal training academy or exemption from the medicolegal  
20 training academy within sixty days from the receipt of proof of  
21 completion or request for exemption.

22 (4) The medicolegal forensic investigation training required  
23 under this section must:

24 (a) Meet the recommendations of the national commission on  
25 forensic science for certification and accreditation; and

26 (b) Satisfy the requirements for training on the subject of  
27 sudden, unexplained child death including, but not limited to, sudden  
28 infant death syndrome developed pursuant to RCW 43.103.100 and  
29 missing persons protocols pursuant to RCW 43.103.110.

30 (5) Certification under this section is a condition of continued  
31 employment in a coroner's or medical examiner's office.

32 **Sec. 4.** RCW 68.50.104 and 2019 c 317 s 4 are each amended to  
33 read as follows:

34 (1) The cost of autopsy shall be borne by the county in which the  
35 autopsy is performed, except when requested by the department of  
36 labor and industries, in which case, the department shall bear the  
37 cost of such autopsy.

1 (2) (a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, when the  
2 county bears the cost of an autopsy, it shall be reimbursed from the  
3 death investigations account, established by RCW 43.79.445, as  
4 follows:

5 (i) Up to forty percent of the cost of contracting for the  
6 services of a pathologist to perform an autopsy;

7 (ii) Up to (~~twenty-five~~) thirty percent of the salary of  
8 pathologists who are primarily engaged in performing autopsies and  
9 are (A) county coroners or county medical examiners, or (B) employees  
10 of a county coroner or county medical examiner; and

11 (iii) One hundred percent of the cost of autopsies conducted  
12 under RCW 70.54.450.

13 (b) When the county bears the cost of an autopsy of a child under  
14 the age of three whose death was sudden and unexplained, the county  
15 shall be reimbursed for the expenses of the autopsy when the death  
16 scene investigation and the autopsy have been conducted under RCW  
17 43.103.100 (4) and (5), and the autopsy has been done at a facility  
18 designed for the performance of autopsies.

19 (3) Payments from the account shall be made pursuant to biennial  
20 appropriation: PROVIDED, That no county may reduce funds appropriated  
21 for this purpose below 1983 budgeted levels.

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