



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Regional Forensic Center Receives Full Accreditation from National Org**

*KNOXVILLE, Tenn.*—In July, at the height of the pandemic, the Knox County Regional Forensic Center (RFC) received an onsite inspection of 350 specific items from the National Association of Medical Examiners. After thorough review, the RFC was granted full accreditation.

Of work done by RFC staff this year, Dr. Darinka Mileusnic said, “Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, none of our investigators, technicians, administrative staff or pathologists missed a beat. We continued to work at the full capacity and not one person contracted the virus at work despite our daily interactions with the public at the scenes and the fact that we had to handle SARS-CoV-2 positive autopsies.”

In addition to being accredited, the RFC worked with the drug task force to identify, research, and eradicate two novel psychoactive substances—synthetically manufactured opioid drugs—from our area.

One of the drugs, isotonitazene, was believed to be as or more potent than fentanyl, which is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“With early detection and information sharing with the drug task force, one of these drugs completely left our market in the early summer and has not been seen again,” said Chris Thomas, Chief Administrative Officer of the Knox County Regional Forensic Center.

“This has been one of the most gruesome years on record for forensic center staff,” said Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs. “Their work is important but can really take a toll emotionally and almost everything is behind the scenes. I am grateful for the staff and admire what they do.”

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