

Response to NAS Report

2009 Trace Evidence Symposium

Education

Ethics

Terminology

Jeffrey H. Comparin
Laboratory Director
Drug Enforcement Administration
Special Testing and Research Laboratory

Response to NAS Report

National Science and Technology Council
Committee on Science
Subcommittee on Forensic Science
Inter-Agency Working Group (IWG)

What needs to be done to properly address:

Education, Ethics, and Terminology

?

Recommendations from the Report

1 – NIFS

- 1d – Develop a strategy to improve research and education programs.
- 1f – Fund state & local agencies, research projects, & educational programs, with conditions that advance credibility & reliability of forensic science fields.
- 1g – Oversee educational standards & accreditation of forensic science programs at colleges & universities.

Recommendations from the Report

2 – Standards for Reporting and Testifying

- 2 – Establish standard terminology, model laboratory reports, and minimum information requirements for reporting on and testifying about forensic science investigations.

Recommendations from the Report

9 – National Code of Ethics

- 9 – Establish a code of ethics for all forensic science disciplines, encourage individual societies to incorporate this code into their professional code, and explore mechanisms of enforcement.

Recommendations from the Report

10 – Graduate Education Programs and Fellowships in Forensic Sciences

- 10 – Emphasize multidisciplinary fields critical to forensic science practice, including funding to attract students in the physical and life sciences. Also support continuing legal education programs.

Recommendations from the Report

11 – Improve Medicolegal Death Investigation

- 11b – Congress should appropriate resources to the NIH and NIFS, jointly, to support research, education, and training in forensic pathology.
(continues)

Inter-Agency Working Group (IWG) Education/Ethics/Terminology

Co-Chairs

Jeff Comparin - DEA

Rob Lesnevich - Treasury

Executive Secretary

Katie Suchma - FBI

IWG Members

*Broad consortium of forensic practitioners
and managers*

Potential Activities

Education

- Formal degree programs
- Continuing education
 - Examiners
 - Prosecutors
 - Defenders
 - Judges
- Classroom and online
- Educating the population

Potential Activities

Ethics

- Develop and/or work with external groups to develop/select a Code of Ethics

Potential Activities

Terminology

- Develop terminology and definitions for expert conclusions and opinions

Broader participation required for this area

Main Objective

In response to the NAS Report, we will investigate, analyze, and develop recommendations for issues brought forth in the NAS report concerning education, ethics, and standardized reporting terminology in forensic science.

Information Gathering

Education-Formal Degree Programs

- Identify degree programs nationwide
- Identify accredited and non-accredited programs
- Identify accrediting entities
- Identify if discipline specific or general program degrees are offered
- Identify core requirements
- Identify how degree or classes are delivered
- Identify scholarship opportunities for students
- Identify research opportunities for students

Information Gathering

Education-Continuing Education

■ **Practitioners**

- Identify agency requirements
- Identify in-house educational opportunities
- Identify available vendor training
- Identify professional development opportunities offered by other entities (conferences, etc.)
- Identify specific areas of education as outlined in the NAS report (Ethics, Policy, Legal, Evidence Handling, Communication, Discipline Specific)

■ **Users**

- Users are defined as attorneys, judges, field agents, etc.
- Identify any opportunities available to users
- Identify opportunities available through law schools or bar associations

Information Gathering

Education-Lay Person

- Identify how potential jury members (lay people) are educated about the capabilities and limitations of forensic science
- Survey Courses available in forensic sciences
- Discuss “The CSI Effect”

Information Gathering

Education-Training Programs

- Identify in-house training programs in federal agencies
- Identify in-house training programs at the state and local level

Information Gathering

Ethics

- Identify codes of ethics
- Identify enforcement mechanisms
- Catalog by:
 - Professional organizations
 - Certifying organizations
 - Accreditation organizations
 - Agencies
 - Laboratories
 - SWG's

Information Gathering

Terminology

- Identify current standards and guidelines
- Identify which standards are mandatory
- Evaluate whether and to what extent terminology intersects with a code of ethics

Coordinate efforts with other groups

Thank You For Your Attention

Questions?

Jeffrey H. Comparin

Laboratory Director

Drug Enforcement Administration

Special Testing and Research Laboratory

22624 Dulles Summit Court

Dulles, VA

703 668 3300

jeffrey.h.comparin@usdoj.gov