

Minnesota Department of Health

Mortuary Science Program

Topic Selection Background Information

May 2026

Program Overview	The Minnesota Department of Health's (MDH's) Mortuary Science program regulates mortuary science services by licensing or registering those involved in providing such services, such as funeral directors and morticians. Program staff also inspect facilities that provide mortuary science services, including funeral establishments and crematories. In addition, program staff receive complaints related to licensure and licensed or unlicensed activities, and take action when regulated entities are out of compliance.
Evaluation Questions	How well does MDH manage the licensing process for funeral establishments and morticians? To what extent does MDH's complaint handling approach reflect best practices? How consistently has MDH applied disciplinary actions to establishments?
State Resources <i>Low-Medium</i>	The Mortuary Science program is within MDH's Health Regulation Division, which completes licensing, complaint, and enforcement activities for a range of health care providers and organizations. In Fiscal Year 2024, the Division spent about \$62 million on all activities, of which a portion was spent on the Mortuary Science program.
State Control <i>High</i>	Minnesota statutes outline mortuary science licensure and registration requirements, complaint reporting obligations and information MDH is to provide to complainants, and circumstances in which MDH may take certain disciplinary actions.
Impact <i>Medium</i>	Properly licensing individuals and regulating entities involved in mortuary science supports and protects public health. In 2023, MDH reported that 1,130 individuals were licensed either as morticians, interns, or funeral directors. At that time, MDH reported there were 545 funeral homes and 80 crematories.
Timeliness <i>Medium</i>	While there has been interest in this topic recently, there is no urgent reason to evaluate the Mortuary Science program this year. Our ability to analyze data on facilities conducting natural organic reduction may be limited because licenses for operating such facilities have been required only since July 2025.
Feasibility <i>High</i>	OLA could complete this evaluation using standard evaluation methods, such as surveys, document reviews, and interviews.
Balance <i>Low-Medium</i>	OLA has never evaluated the Mortuary Science program. However, we are currently evaluating MDH's Health Regulation Division's licensing of assisted living facilities and will be evaluating its licensing of nursing homes.
Discussion	Properly overseeing individuals and facilities in the mortuary science field helps to protect the public and their health. An OLA evaluation could help determine how effectively MDH manages mortuary science licensing requirements and addresses any issues that arise. However, consecutive evaluations may be overly burdensome for MDH's Health Regulation Division.