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Contact:

ANDREA RASIZER

Communication Services Director

Direct: 303-795-4284

Mobile: 303-882-1909

E-mail: arasizer@arapahoegov.com

Arapahoe County Commissioners unanimously appoint Dr. Kelly Lear-Kaul as next Coroner

*Lear-Kaul to fulfill the remaining term of Coroner Dr. Michael J. Dobersen,
who retires June 2 after 21 years of dedicated service to Arapahoe County*

Littleton, Colo --- On Tuesday, the Board of County Commissioners formally named Dr. Kelly Lear-Kaul to serve as the next Coroner of Arapahoe County following the resignation of Dr. Michael Dobersen, who is retiring June 2 after serving in the office since 1993.

“Dr. Kelly Lear-Kaul is well qualified to serve as Arapahoe County Coroner and the Board of County Commissioners is proud to appoint her to this position,” said Commissioner Nancy A. Doty, who serves as Board Chair. “As a Board Certified Forensic Pathologist, she has the qualifications and skills to serve in this role. She is well respected in the Coroner’s Office, in Arapahoe County and within the forensic pathology community, and we are confident in her ability to lead the men and women of the Coroner’s Office.”

In April, Dobersen formally submitted his resignation, effective 11:59 a.m. June 2, 2014. The Board of County Commissioners has the power to fill the vacancy of the coroner, pursuant to provisions of the Colorado Revised Statutes and Article XIV of the Colorado Constitution.

The Coroner’s Office guards the health, safety and welfare of Arapahoe County by investigating sudden and unexpected deaths, and by providing information to families, public health agencies, the criminal justice community and the media.

In 2013, the Coroner’s Office investigated 2,664 deaths and performed 450 autopsies, while for the first time, earning accreditation through the National Association of Medical Examiners. Arapahoe County is one of four counties in the state and one of 77 Coroner’s Offices in the nation to earn accreditation, which ensures compliance with rigorous national standards and procedures governing the operation of a medical examiner’s office.

Lear-Kaul, M.D. is a forensic pathologist for the Coroner's Office, where she has worked since 2004. Lear-Kaul earned her undergraduate degree in Biology, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Cornell College and subsequently received her Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center School of Medicine.

She is board certified in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology and Forensic Pathology, having completed her residency at the University of Colorado Hospital, and her Forensic Pathology Fellowship at the New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator. She is a Fellow of the National Association of Medical Examiners and College of American Pathologists.

She shares her knowledge and expertise by participating on a variety of boards and committees, some of which include: the Colorado State Child Fatality Prevention Review Team; the American Board of Pathology Test Development and Advisory Committee; the Sudden Unexpected Death in Childhood Medical and Investigative Advisory Board; the North Central Region Fatality Management Committee; the TriCounty Healthcare Coalition and the Arapahoe County Narcotic Prescription Drug Abuse Working Group.

In addition to teaching medical students and residents as a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Pathology at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Lear-Kaul lectures to a wide variety of audiences, and has written numerous peer-reviewed publications.

"I want to thank the Board for their consideration and support" said Lear-Kaul, who will be sworn in to office during a formal ceremony 3:15 p.m., May 30. "In our field, we find it is important to have a forensic pathologist serving in the role of the coroner as we feel that expertise provides a better service to the citizens of Arapahoe County. This has been the standard for the last 30 years and I look forward to continuing that great tradition."

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Media Note: Photos of Dr. Kelly Lear-Kaul and the Board of County Commissioners from the May 20 public meeting are available for download at: <http://www.arapahoegov.com/gallery.aspx?PID=137>

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