
This act summary is provided for the convenience of the public and members of the General Assembly. It is intended to provide a general summary of the act and may not be exhaustive. It has been prepared by the staff of the Office of Legislative Counsel without input from members of the General Assembly. It is not intended to aid in the interpretation of legislation or to serve as a source of legislative intent.

Act No. 83 (S.210). An act relating to access to autopsy reports

Subjects: Health; Judiciary; Office of the Chief Medical Examiner; autopsy report

This act both codifies how disclosure of autopsy reports operates in Vermont under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and creates an additional HIPAA-compliant path for disclosure of an autopsy report through the court system. It allows an individual who is not otherwise authorized to obtain an autopsy report under HIPAA to petition the Probate Division of the Superior Court for a copy of the autopsy report. This act allows the court to order the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to provide a copy of the autopsy report, in whole or part, to the petitioner upon a finding of good cause. In determining good cause, the act requires the court to consider factors such as the relationship of the petitioner to the decedent and the decedent's family; the seriousness of the privacy invasion; and whether the disclosure interferes with an ongoing criminal investigation.

Effective Date: July 1, 2026