

**LEHIGH COUNTY
CORONER'S OFFICE &
FORENSICS CENTER
ANNUAL REPORT**



2014



LEHIGH COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE & FORENSICS CENTER

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Scott M. Grim, D-ABMDI
Coroner

To the Citizens of Lehigh County,

I am pleased to share the 2014 Annual Report for the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center. We have seen a great accomplishment with the grand opening of the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center that started as a dream 18 years ago. The Lehigh Valley is rich with the level and abundance of medical care available to the public. With that comes an increased number of patients from surrounding counties and states. Our goal in furnishing the information contained in this Annual Report will hopefully help raise awareness to the public in the role of the Coroner's Office and to illustrate the services provided. I, as well as my staff, make every effort to honor the people we serve, those who have died as well as their loved ones.

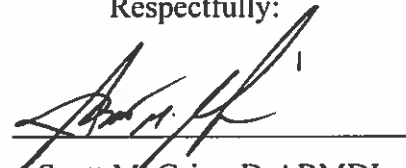
The information contained in this annual report has been compiled from investigative reports, autopsy reports, police reports, death certificates, cremation permits, and various supplemental reports.

As always, if there are additional questions, concerns, or the need for additional information, please contact the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center.

It is recognized that each statistic listed in this report represents the death of a person whose loss is grieved by family, friends, and loved ones. Our compassionate team takes pride in every person we serve, from the decedents to their families in mourning.

To the Citizens of Lehigh County and beyond this Commonwealth and Nation that have suffered the loss of a family member, loved one, friend, or neighbor; this report is dedicated.

Respectfully:



Scott M. Grim, D-ABMDI
Lehigh County Coroner



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INTRODUCTION

“We should be considerate to the living; to the dead we owe only the truth” – *Voltaire*.

The mission of the Lehigh County Coroner’s Office & Forensics Center is to serve not only the families and loved ones of those that have passed; but to the deceased themselves. The Lehigh County Coroner’s Office & Forensics Center conducts independent and thorough investigations; often working in conjunction with physicians, nurses, law enforcement, emergency service responders, to assure the facts and circumstances surrounding a death are accurate and true. The staff of the Lehigh County Coroner’s Office & Forensics Center recognizes the responsibility to treat all deceased persons with dignity and the respect they deserve. We consider it an honor to speak for those who cannot.

The Lehigh County Coroner’s Office & Forensics Center is responsible to investigate all deaths that occur within the geographical boundaries of the County of Lehigh. Deaths that occur under violent and suspicious manners are those that garner the top headlines. However, most deaths occur away from the public eye. The staff of the Lehigh County Coroner’s Office & Forensics Center recognizes the responsibility to all citizens regardless of the circumstances surrounding the death. Investigations performed by our staff often assist surviving loved ones with valuable medical information, specifically related to inherited diseases and conditions. This type of information provides families with comfort and peace of mind; serving as a tool to early detection and treatment of potential life threatening illness. In addition, information obtained by our staff are often requested to assist in legal proceedings and insurance settlements.

It should be noted, the Lehigh County Coroner’s Office & Forensics Center Annual Report does not include *all* deaths occurring in Lehigh County; rather those cases reportable to the office under Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Title 16. For a further description and of all death that occur within Lehigh County, please contact:

Vital Records, Pennsylvania Department of Health
P.O. Box 1528
101 South Mercer Street
New Castle, PA 16101



PURPOSE OF THE CORONER'S OFFICE

The Coroner's Office is an independent, investigative division of the Lehigh County Government. The citizens of Lehigh County fund our operation through taxpayer's dollars.

Under the direction of Coroner Scott M. Grim, D-ABMDI, our office provides Medicolegal Death Investigations, Perform Autopsies; as needed, and Administrative Support as well as many other family assistance services.

The six basic functions of the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center are:

- ✚ Determine the Cause and Manner of Death for individuals in a timely fashion.
- ✚ Identify the deceased with the highest degree of certainty possible and provide written documentation of same.
- ✚ Proper and timely notification of the legal next of kin.
- ✚ Prepare, maintain, and safeguard thorough and timely reports regarding our investigations.
- ✚ Account for, maintain, and safeguard personal property of the decedent and evidence.
- ✚ Provide assistance to families involved in our investigations as applicable.

The Coroner's Office is an independent investigatory office. We are charged with determining the Cause of Death and the Manner of Death. We receive this Statute Right based upon the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Title 16 § 1237.

- a) The Coroner having a view of the body shall investigate the facts and circumstances concerning deaths which appear to have happened within the county, regardless where the cause thereof may have occurred, for the purposes of determining whether or not an autopsy should be conducted or an inquest thereof should be had in the following cases:
- 1) SUDDEN DEATHS NOT CAUSED BY READILY RECOGNIZABLE DISEASE, OR WHEREIN THE CAUSE OF DEATH CANNOT BE PROPERLY CERTIFIED BY A PHYSICIAN ON THE BASIS OF PRIOR MEDICAL ATTENDANCE.
 - 2) DEATHS OCCURRING UNDER SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, INCLUDING THOSE WHERE ALCOHOL, DRUGS OR OTHER TOXIC SUBSTANCES MAY HAVE HAD A DIRECT BEARING ON THE OUTCOME.
 - 3) DEATHS OCCURRING AS A RESULT OF VIOLENCE OR TRAUMA, WHETHER APPARENTLY HOMICIDAL, SUICIDAL, OR ACCIDENTAL.
 - 4) ANY DEATH IN WHICH TRAUMA, CHEMICAL INJURY, DRUG OVERDOSE OR REACTION TO DRUGS OR MEDICATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT WAS A PRIMARY OR SECONDARY, DIRECT OR INDIRECT, CONTRIBUTORY, AGGRAVATING OR PRECIPITATING CAUSE OF DEATH.
 - 5) OPERATIVE AND/OR PERI-OPERATIVE DEATHS IN WHICH THE DEATH IS NOT READILY EXPLAINABLE ON THE BASIS OF PRIOR DISEASE.

Accredited by the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners



- 6) ANY DEATH WHEREIN THE BODY IS UNIDENTIFIED OR UNCLAIMED.
 - 7) DEATHS KNOWN OR SUSPECTED AS DUE TO CONTAGIOUS DISEASE AND CONSTITUTING A PUBLIC HEALTH HAZARD.
 - 8) DEATHS OCCURRING IN PRISON OR A PENAL INSTITUTION OR WHILE IN THE CUSTODY OF POLICE.
 - 9) DEATHS OF PERSONS WHOSE BODIES ARE TO BE CREMATED, BURIED AT SEA OR OTHERWISE DISPOSED OF SO AS TO BE THEREAFTER UNAVAILABLE FOR EXAMINATION.
 - 10) SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME
 - 11) STILLBIRTHS
- b) The purpose of the investigation shall be to determine the cause of any such death and to determine whether or not there is sufficient reason for the coroner to believe that any such death may have resulted from criminal acts or criminal neglect of persons other than the deceased.
 - c) As part of this investigation, the coroner shall determine the identity of the deceased and notify the next of kin of the deceased.

LEHIGH COUNTY CORONER

Scott M. Grim, D-ABMDI: has served at the Lehigh County Coroner's Office since 1993, first as Deputy Coroner, then Office Supervisor in charge of Investigations and Training, and since 1997 as the Coroner of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. Prior to joining the Coroner's Office, Grim was a Police Officer for 15 years with the Boroughs of Macungie and Slatington Police Departments.

Scott is a graduate of the Lehigh County Community College, the Allentown Police Academy and the Pennsylvania Coroner's Basic Education Course at the Pennsylvania State Police Academy. He has attended numerous Basic, Advanced and Masters Courses in Forensics and Medicolegal Death Investigations from Penn State University, the FBI National Academy, Mercyhurst College, St Louis University School of Medicine, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Miami-Dade Police Training Institute and University of Tennessee.

Grim is a Pennsylvania State Certified Instructor, permitting him to lecture at Police Academies throughout the Commonwealth, as well as an instructor for the Coroner's Basic Education Course. He has also lectured at numerous colleges, high schools, and civic organizations on Forensic Death Investigations.

Coroner Grim is the Immediate Past President of the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners, Vice President & (past President) of the Pennsylvania State Coroner's Association, Past Secretary and Board Member of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators and a Founding Board Member and Secretary/Treasurer of the Society for Medicolegal Death Investigators. Further, he is



a member on the National Institute of Justice Steering Committee for Forensic Death Investigations, Pennsylvania State Attorney General's Medical-Legal Advisory Board on Child Abuse, Pennsylvania State and Lehigh County Child Death Review Teams and the Lehigh County's Elder Abuse Task Force.

Meet the Staff

Full Time Staff

Chief Deputy Andrew Kehm, D-ABMDI

Andy has been the Chief Deputy since August 2014 and had previously been a part-time Lehigh County Deputy Coroner for 19 years receiving his Basic Coroner's Certification in 1997. He retired as a Detective/Sergeant with the Bethlehem Police Department after serving 21 years. Andy was the Supervisor of the Forensic Services Unit, a past member of ERT, a Field Training Officer, Water Rescue Team Member (PA Level III), Criminal Investigator, and Patrol Officer. He served 6 years in the U.S. Army Military Police Corps as a K-9 Officer, Patrol Sergeant, and Senior Military Customs Inspector. Andy has been certified as an expert and testified in Crime Scene Investigation, Crime Scene Processing, Latent Print Identification, Bloodstain Pattern Analysis, and Crime Scene Reconstruction.

1st Deputy Eric Minnich, D-ABMDI

Eric has been with the Coroner's Office since 2006. He has been certified with the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators since 2007. His background brings over 20 years of experience in emergency medical services to the Coroner's Office as he has served as Paramedic with Northern Valley EMS and the City of Allentown. Eric has also been active in the volunteer fire service in Lehigh County (Neffs) since 1991.

Morgue Manager Raymond Anthony, D-ABMDI

Ray has 17 years of experience with the Lehigh County Coroner's Office. In addition, Ray has 22 years of experience in Law Enforcement and is currently serving as a Police Officer, Fire Marshal, and Evidence Manager for the departments in which he works. His law enforcement experience includes Patrol, K-9, and investigative duties. Ray is currently part of the Accreditation team at the Coroner's Office. Ray has been a volunteer Firefighter for 29 years and is currently serving as Asst. Chief and Fire Marshal. Ray's board certifications include: Registered Medicolegal Death Investigator, EMT, Certified Fire & Explosion Investigator, and Certified Fire Inspector.

Deputy Wendy Brantley, D-ABMDI

Wendy has been with the Coroner's Office since 2006 and successfully completed the Coroner's Basic Education Course in 2007. Wendy is retired from the Allentown Police Department after serving for 25 years in Patrol and the Special Victim's Unit. She is currently working as a part-time Police Officer with the Catasauqua Police Department.

Deputy Daniel Buglio, D-ABMDI

Dan has been with the County since 1999, and joined the Lehigh County Coroner's Office in 2000. Dan has been a Certified Police Officer since 1993 and currently works for the Slatington Police Department. Dan is a D.A.R.E Officer as well as an Instructor to other officers in the D.A.R.E program and has numerous certifications provided by police and coroner's training programs.

Deputy Jack Fliter, D-ABMDI

Jack started as a Part-Time Deputy Coroner in 2010. He attended the Coroner's Basic Education Training in November 2011 and achieved full-time status in 2014. He started his career as a Police Officer with the Lower Saucon Police Department where he served for 5 years. Jack retired from the Bethlehem Police



Department as a Patrol Sergeant after serving 25 years. During his career, Jack was a K-9/Bomb Dog Handler and an ERT Team Leader.

Deputy Craig Hanzl, D-ABMDI

Craig has been with the Coroner's Office since March of 2008. He is also a part-time Deputy Coroner with the Northampton County Coroner's Office. He worked for 19 years as an Emergency Room Technician for Lehigh Valley Hospital. He is still an active member of the Whitehall Fire Department, having climbed through the ranks to Assistant Chief and Fire Investigator. Craig has participated in specialty training in various fields which he has completed stating his expertise as a HazMat Technician, Firefighter One, Flashover Trainer, and an Open Water Diver.

Deputy/FTO David Krause, D-ABMDI

Dave started as an Investigator with the Lehigh Coroner's Office in January 1992 after graduating from the Coroner's Basic Education Course. Dave previously worked as a Lehigh County Deputy Sheriff and a Bucks County Correctional Officer. Dave has 35 years of automotive experience, including certificates in computer control technology, suspension and alignment, engine rebuilding including performance applications, and still holds a current State Inspection license. He has specialized training in Auto Accident Investigation and Reconstruction, Fingerprint Identification and Classification, Homicide Investigation and Reconstruction, Body Recovery with fire and bone trauma, and Bloodstain Pattern Analysis.

Deputy Richard Kroon, D-ABMDI

Rich has been employed as an Investigator with the Lehigh County Coroner's since 1995. Prior to coming to the Coroner's Office, he served in the United States Air Force from 1984 until 1994; first as a Firefighter/EMT and later a Criminal Investigator with the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. He graduated from the Pennsylvania State Coroner's Basic Education Course in 1996. He has since attended numerous training courses in Advanced Homicide Investigations, Crime Scene Processing, Shooting Reconstruction, Interpretation and Documentation in regards to Forensic Entomology, Recovery of Physical Evidence and Human Remains at Mass Disaster and Terrorist Crime Scenes, and Identification of Human Skeletal Remains.

Deputy Jason Nicholas, D-ABMDI

Jason received his Basic Coroner's Certification in 2003. He has served the coroner's office since November 2001. In 2012 he obtained his Diplomate with the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators. Jason is a member of the Slatington Volunteer Fire Department where he serves as Deputy Fire Chief. Jason and his wife, Anne-Marie, enjoy rescuing Golden Retrievers and are the proud owners of 4 Golden Retrievers of their own. They currently reside in Washington Township.

Deputy Richard Pender, D-ABMDI

Rick received his Basic Coroner's Certification in 1995. He served with the coroner's office from 1995 through 2000 and from 2012 to the present. In 2012, he obtained his certification as a Diplomate with The American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators. He is a former Police Officer from the City of Rahway, New Jersey, retiring in 1995. Rick is a member of Bethany Wesleyan Church where he serves on the Local Board of Administration. Rick and his wife, Shelly, reside in Washington Township with their 5 children.

Marianne Granitz

Marianne has been with the Coroner's office for 5 years and with the County a total of 11 years. She has been working in the Administrative Assistant/Secretarial Profession since high school. She attended the Allentown Business School for typing, shorthand, and phone etiquette.



Part Time Staff

Deputy Michael Bartholomew

Mike has been with Coroner's office since 2012 and has successfully completed the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Coroner's Basic Training Course and Examination. He has also attended a Medicolegal Death Investigation class sponsored by St. Louis University. Mike has almost 30 years of Public Safety Experience in Law Enforcement, Fire, and EMS. He is currently employed full-time with the Pennsylvania State Police at Troop M in Bethlehem. Mike is currently working to achieve National Death Investigation certification through the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators.

Deputy Elisabeth Cascino, D-ABMDI

Elisabeth "Betsy" started with the Coroner's Office in 2005. Betsy attended the Coroner's Basic Education Course in 2006 and received her certification. In 2008, she received her D-ABMDI certification. Betsy is a graduate of Lehigh Carbon Community College and brings 32 years of nursing experience to this office. Skiing is one of Betsy's passions and she served as a National Ski Patroller for many years.

Deputy Kelly Gillis, F-ABMDI

Kelly is the Chief Deputy Coroner at the Northampton (Pennsylvania) County Coroner's Office, a part time Deputy Coroner for Lehigh County, and a Fellow with the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators. She has a Master's degree in Anthropology from Louisiana State University. She is deputized in four counties, all of which use her forensic anthropology expertise. Her affiliations include, but are not limited to, Kenyon International Emergency Services, Society for Medicolegal Death Investigators, American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators, International Association for Identification, Pennsylvania State Coroner's Association, International Association of Coroner's and Medical Examiners, and the International Association of Bloodstain Pattern Analysts.

Deputy Mark Peters

Mark has been with the Lehigh County Coroner's Office as a part-time Deputy Coroner since December 2014. He is a retired Sergeant from the Allentown Police Department. Mark has worked numerous assignments throughout his career including Patrol, Field Training Officer, Vice and Intelligence, Platoon Sergeant, Academy Instructor, Primary Firearms Instructor for Allentown Police Department, and retired as Assistant Director of the Allentown Police Academy. Mark has accrued numerous certifications related to General Instruction, Firearms, Use of Force, Defensive Tactics, Physical Fitness, and Mandatory In-service Training. Since Retirement in 2005, he has continued to work and travel as a Staff Instructor in the Law Enforcement Division of the NRA which serves to train Law Enforcement, Military, Nuclear, and Private Security.

Eva Marie Poliquin, RT(R)(CT),BBA

Eva Marie has been with the Lehigh County Coroner's office and Forensics Center since September 2014. She has been a Registered Radiologic Technologist for 23 years and has worked for the last 18 years at Lehigh Valley Hospital, Cedar Crest. Although only recently employed by the LCCO, her experience with forensic radiography has spanned her entire career. She is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Public Health and enjoys spending time with her family.

Gabrielle Riley, Morgue Technician

Gabrielle started with the Lehigh County Coroner's Office as a part-time Morgue Technician in December 2014. She attended Emmaus High School and is in the process of getting her nursing degree through Lehigh Carbon Community College. Gabrielle also works as a Senior Surgical Recovery Specialist with the Northeast Pennsylvania Lions Eye Bank.



Deputy Rebecca Saborsky

Rebecca became a Deputy Coroner in March 2014. She will be attending the Coroner's Basic Education Course in November 2015. She graduated from Lackawanna College Police Academy in September 2009. Rebecca is a certified Police Officer for both Slatington and Catasauqua Borough Police Departments. Rebecca has advanced training in Crime Scene Photography, Evidence Handling, and Drug Identification.

Deputy Jason Smith

Jason Smith has been with the Lehigh County Coroner's Office as a part-time Deputy Coroner since December 2014. Jason has 19 years of Emergency Medical Services experience including 7 years in Communications. Jason currently works at the Eastern PA EMS Council as the Director of EMS Providers, Lehigh Ambulance as an EMT, and is in his senior year at American Public University where he is majoring in Public Health.

Deputy George Wirth

George has been a part time deputy since May of 2013. Before he became a Deputy Coroner, he served in the United States Air Force as a Munitions Specialist. After his separation, he completed some credit hours at Wilkes University in the Nursing Program. During that time he worked as a Nurse's Aide at John Heinz Rehab in Wilkes-Barre, PA. He completed his Act 120 in December, 2012 at the Allentown Police Academy. George completed Coroner Basic Training in 2014. [He now is full-time as a Corrections Officer at Berks County Jail.]

Deputy Edward Zucal, D-ABMDI

Ed started with the Coroner's Office as a part-time Deputy in 1995. He attended the Coroner's Education Course later that year and continues to be a dedicated staff member. He is also a Diplomate with the American Board of Medical Death Investigators. Ed is a Sergeant with the Allentown Police Department in the Traffic Bureau and has been serving since 1992.

Christopher Beebe, Firearms Instructor

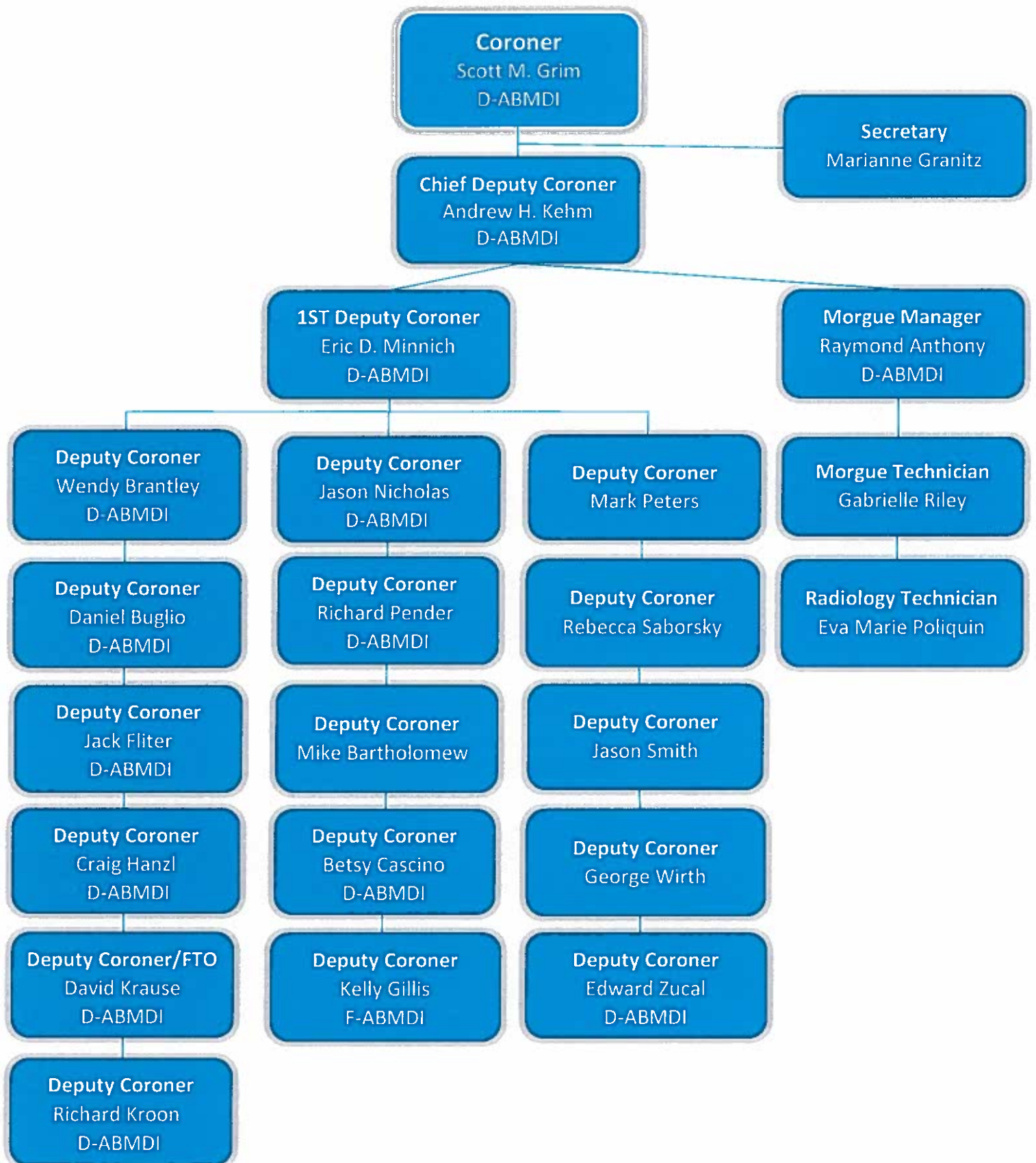
Christopher graduated with a BA in Criminal Justice in 1995 from Moravian College. He served with the U.S. Army's 82d Airborne Division as a paratrooper, Jumpmaster, and Non-Commissioned Officer for five and a half years. Chris served as a police officer with the Wilson, NC Police Department for nearly six years. Chris attained numerous instructor certifications and specialized in firearms training, served on the SWAT team for five years, and as the Department Training Officer. In 2006, Chris moved back to PA and has served with the Bethlehem Police Department since then. Chris is a firearms instructor, served with the SWAT team from 2007 to 2014, and has been a Detective from 2007 to the present. In 2010, Chris was hired by the Lehigh County Coroner's office to create a concealed carry firearms program. Chris worked with Coroner Scott Grim to create a program that received national accreditation from the National Rifle Association and is the only such program in the nation with the NRA using it as a "model program".

Jason Fulmer, Defensive Tactics Instructor

Jason served in the U.S. Army Military Police Corps from 1989 until 1992. He has been a Police Officer for the City of Bethlehem since 1997 and has held positions of Patrolman, Community Police Officer (Bike Cop) and Detective. In addition, he has held a position on the City of Bethlehem's Emergency Response Team since 2002 and has been a Team Leader since 2005. Jason became a Defensive Tactics Instructor for the City of Bethlehem Police Department in 2003 and has been a Defensive Tactics instructor for the Lehigh County Coroner's Office since 2011. In 2012 he became a Pro Board Certified Fire Investigator and is an NRA certified handgun and shotgun instructor.



LEHIGH COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE & FORENSICS CENTER ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



The American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators

The American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) is a voluntary national, not-for-profit, independent professional certification board that has been established to promote the highest standards of practice for medicolegal death investigators.

ABMDI certifies individuals who have the proven knowledge and skills necessary to perform medicolegal death investigations as set forth in the National Institutes of Justice 1999 publication *Death Investigation: A Guide for the Scene Investigator* (2011 updated version available).

ABMDI was created, designed, and developed by veteran, practicing medicolegal death investigators who were involved in the development of *Death Investigation: A Guide for the Scene Investigator*. It will also assist the courts and public in evaluating competence of the certified individual.

In 2005, the ABMDI was first accredited by the [Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board](#) and reaccredited in 2010.

The goal of FSAB is to establish a mechanism whereby the forensic community can assess, recognize and monitor organizations or professional boards that certify individual forensic scientists or other forensic specialists.

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators

900 West Baltimore St. Baltimore, MD 21223

Email: info@abmdi.us

Phone: 410.807.3007 / Fax: 410.807.3006

Purpose of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators®

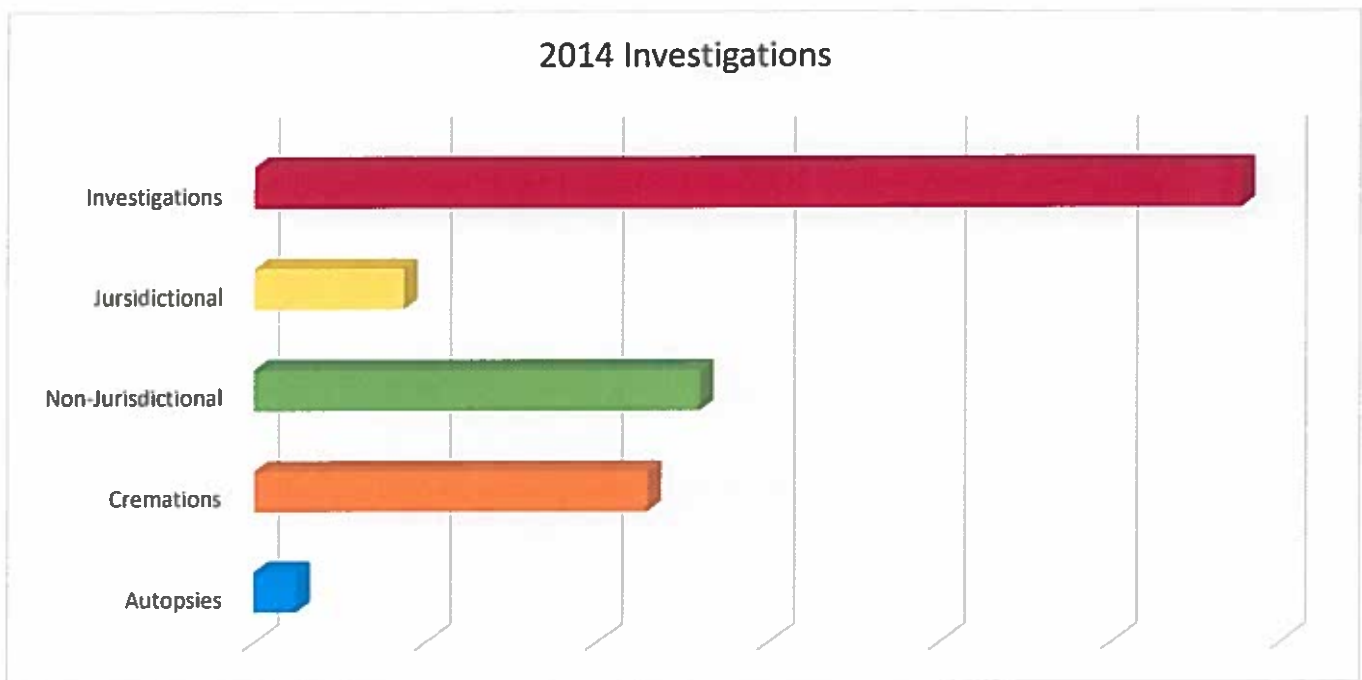
- To encourage adherence to high standards of professional practice and ethical conduct when performing medicolegal death investigations.
- To recognize qualified individuals who have voluntarily applied for basic and advanced levels of professional certification.
- To grant and issue certificates to individuals who have demonstrated their mastery of investigational techniques and who have successfully completed rigorous examination of their knowledge and skills in the field of medicolegal death investigation.
- To maintain a listing of individuals granted ABMDI certification.
- To recertify individuals every five years according to established professional recertification criteria, including continuing education requirements and work verification.



OUR MISSION

The mission of the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center is to investigate the Cause of Death and to determine the Manner of Death of individuals who die within the boundaries of the County, as a result of sudden, unattended, violent or suspicious circumstances.

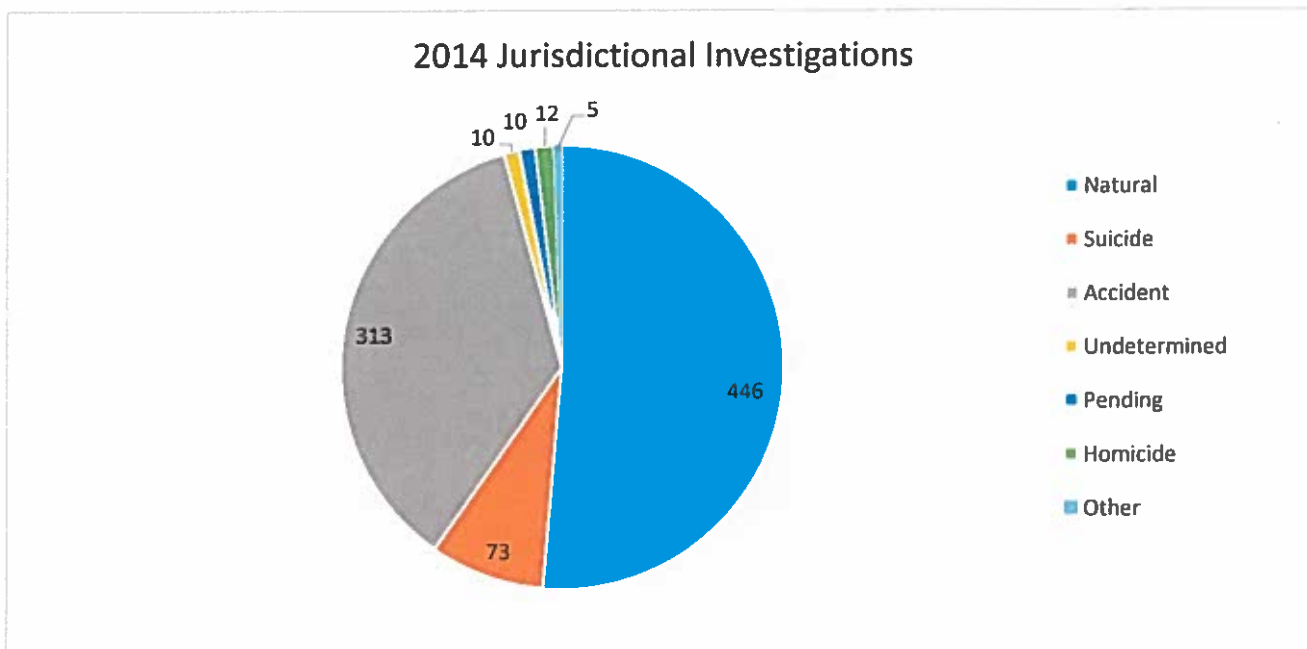
In 2014, there were 5,749 investigations reported to our office. This is an approximate 5.56% increase in the number of investigations as compared to 2013. Of these investigations, 2,592 deaths did not require scene investigation or external examinations. Additionally, 2,288 of them were for authorizations for cremation. 869 of the death investigations required the Office of the Coroner to provide scene investigations as well as external examinations. Autopsies, in non-criminal cases, were not performed where scene investigation, circumstances, medical history, and external examination provided enough detail for death certification. In the 869 deaths that the office provided detailed investigations of, we autopsied approximately 28% of those cases (244 autopsies). The tables and figures summarize the manner of death in all cases reported to the Coroner's Office.



The needs of each investigation vary from case to case. The public has grown to expect, and rightly deserves, the best quality investigation possible. Jurisdictional Investigations demand that the



Coroner's Office Investigator respond to the location of the death. Whether the death occurred in a public place, hospital or private home, the law requires the Coroner or his Deputy shall have view of the body and shall investigate the facts and circumstances of the death regardless of where the cause of this death may have occurred. Out of the 869 scene investigations conducted by our office, there were: 446 Natural deaths, 313 deaths determined Accident, 73 deaths as Suicide, 12 as Homicide, and 10 Undetermined deaths. 5 investigations are classified as Other. As of February 18, 2015 there are still 10 deaths that are Pending further investigation. Below is a chart to show the breakdown.



CAUSE AND MANNER OF DEATH

Manner of Death was originally not required on the certification of death; however in 1910 the classification of the manner of death was added to the United States Certificate of Death. Currently, Manner of Death is not directly addressed by the World Health Organization. This was added to the death certificate by public health agents in an attempt to classify the circumstances of death.

Currently there are five (5) Manner of Death classifications on final death certificates. They are; Natural, Accident, Suicide, Homicide, and Could Not be Determined. If the investigation is in process, we can and will annotate the Manner of Death as Pending Investigation. This means simply stated that the investigation is ongoing; however, a death certificate is issued to allow for the families of the deceased to proceed with services.



Additionally, we do conduct investigations where there is no death certificate issued and we will classify these investigations as “Other”. These investigations are technically not death investigations; however do fall under our purview. They are investigations such as bones found; typically animal remains, when a crypt of burial site is defaced and bones are unearthed, or simply when remains are found that it is unclear whether they are indeed human.

NATURAL DEATH INVESTIGATIONS

Our office conducted 3,040 Natural death investigations in the calendar year. Of these investigations, only 448 required scene investigation and external examinations of the deceased. Of these investigations, the Office of the Coroner certified 261 of the deaths. The deceased’s attending physician certified the remaining 2,779 deaths. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, physicians are only able to certify Natural deaths. Our office affords the opportunity to the attending physician to certify the death following our investigation if he/she so chooses. If the attending physician opts not to certify the death, our office certifies and issues the death certificate.

ACCIDENT DEATH INVESTIGATIONS

Our office investigated 313 deaths that were resultant of some type of injury and based on our investigation, the Manner of Death was ruled Accident.

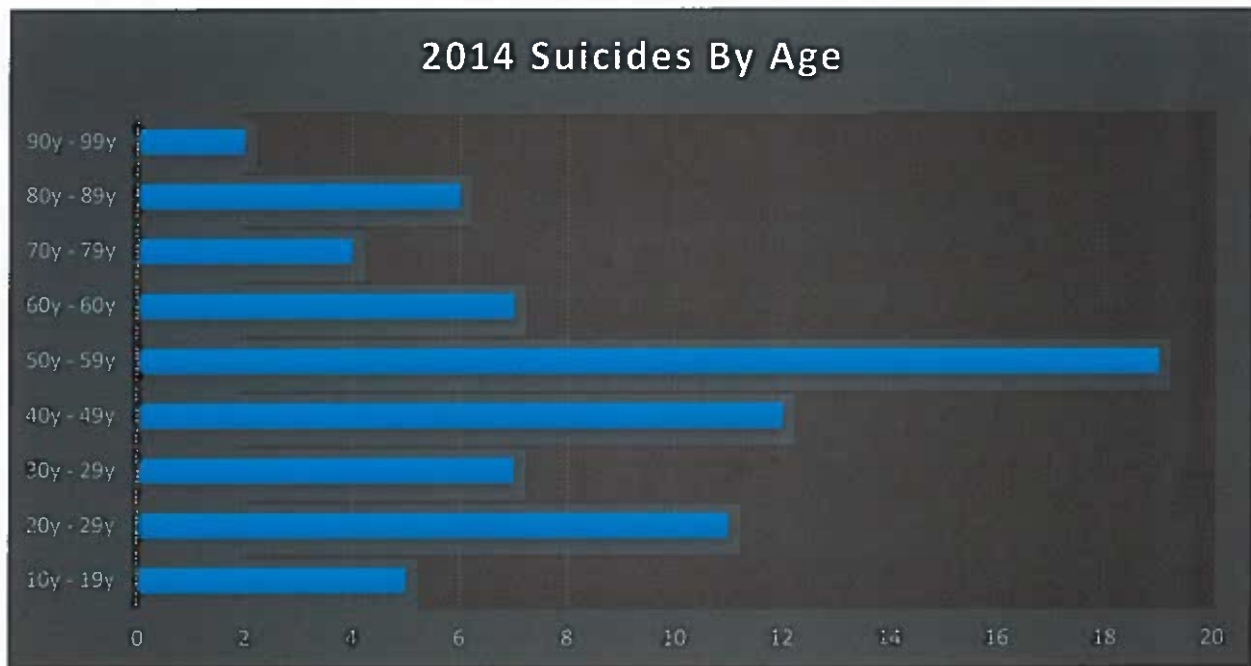
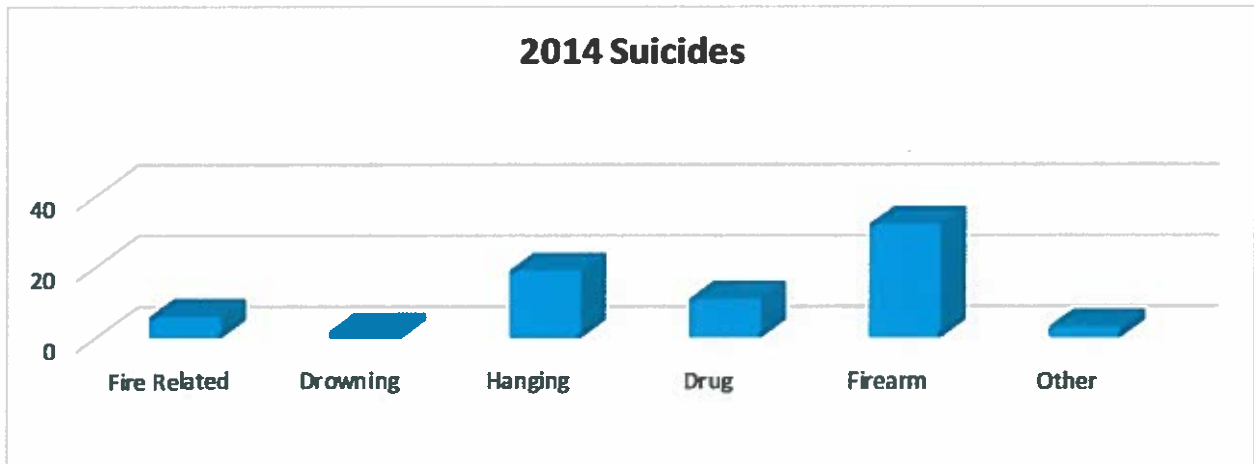
These deaths ranged from Motor Vehicle Accidents to Falls to Drug Overdoses. On average, accidental deaths make up 40% of our scene investigations. This is caused not only by the vast highway system in Lehigh County, but also the influx of critically injured parties, via the two Level One Trauma Centers within geographical boundaries of Lehigh County.

Please see the charts below that will depict some information regarding the demographics, breakdown of relevant circumstances, and sheer numbers of the accidental deaths our office investigates.



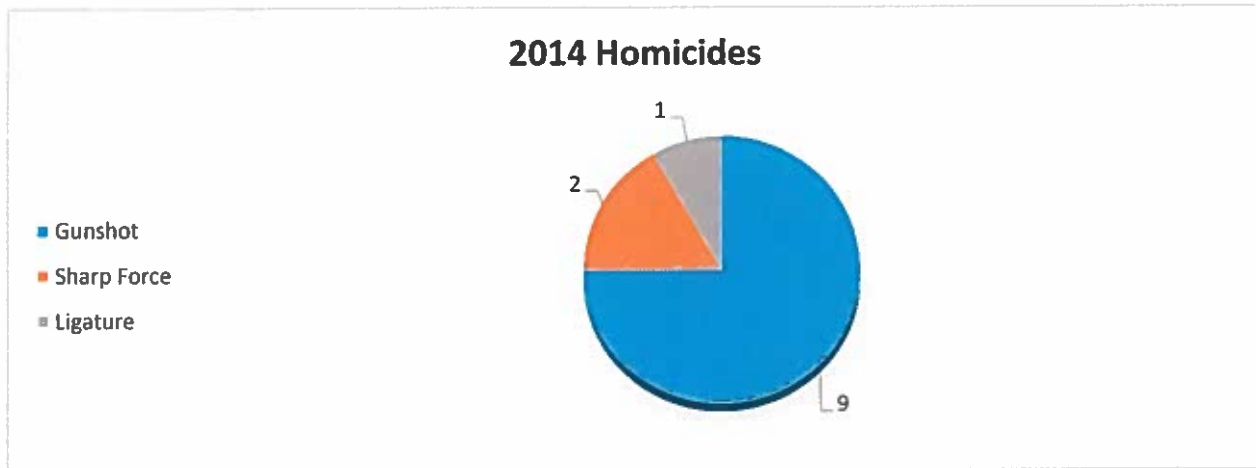
SUICIDE DEATH INVESTIGATIONS

In 2014, we investigated 73 completed suicide cases. Suicide deaths range in modalities from gun related to drug ingestions. The youngest being 11 years old and the oldest being 92 years old. The Lehigh County Coroner's Office has been involved with suicide prevention activities, shall remain an advocate for suicide prevention, and is currently in cooperation with the Allentown Health Bureau working towards programs to support and bring awareness to the resources available to those contemplating turning to suicide.



HOMICIDE INVESTIGATIONS

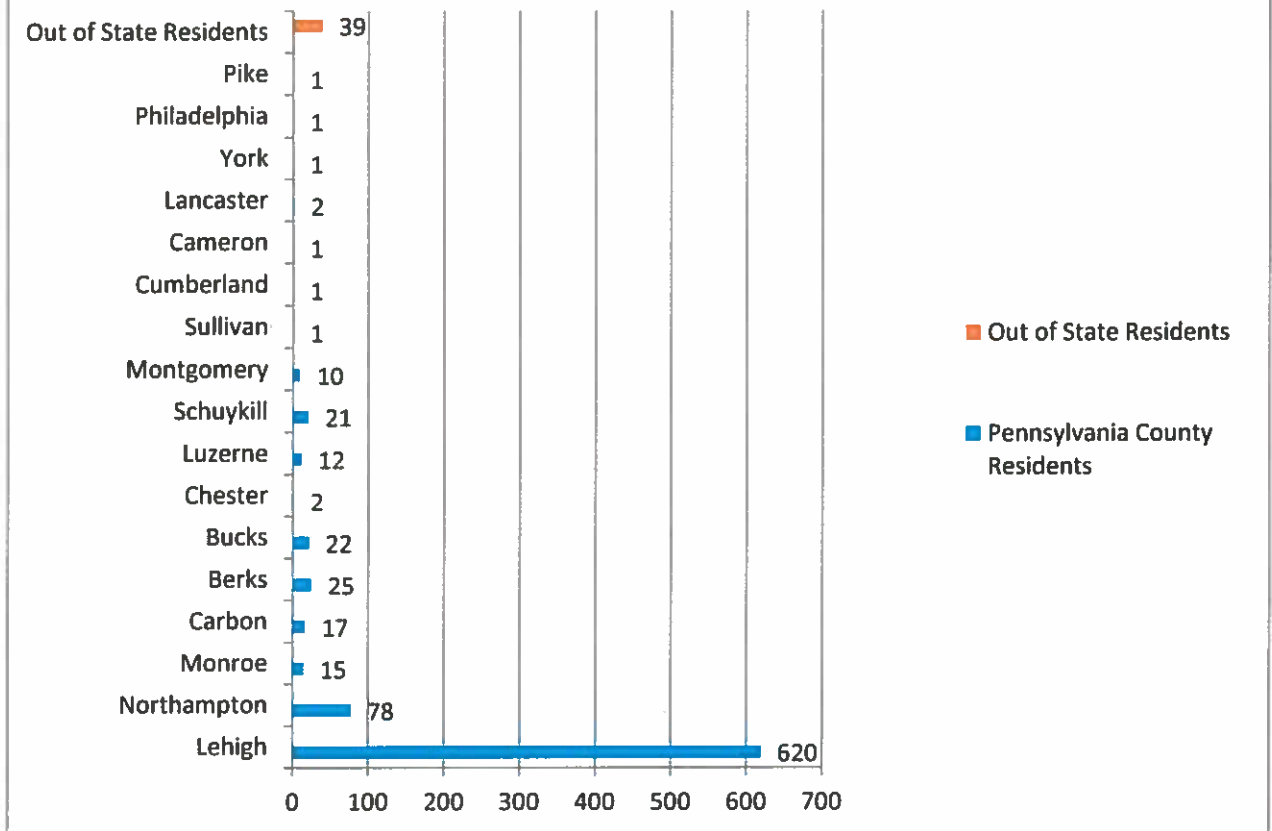
Homicide investigations are quite possibly the most sensationalized investigations for any Coroner or Medical Examiner's Office. These investigations also garner the most media attention. In Lehigh County in the year 2014, our office investigated and ruled 12 deaths Homicide, as you will see in the breakdowns depicted below. They include deaths resulting from firearms, assaults, and knife injuries. While we investigate Homicides from other counties based on the local availability of the health care systems, Homicides in Lehigh County outweighed the number of Homicides brought to the local medical facilities from other Counties.



In 2014, the Office of the Coroner investigated nine (9) Homicides from within Lehigh County. Eight (8) of them were from the City of Allentown. Two (2) homicides were from other municipalities outside of Lehigh County, but within Pennsylvania. One (1) homicide was from New Jersey.



Lehigh County Jurisdiction Deaths

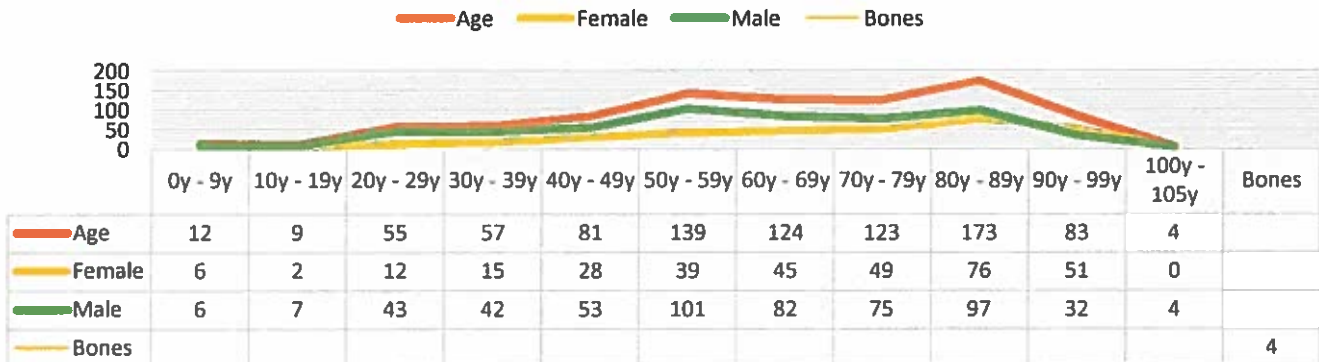


UNDETERMINED

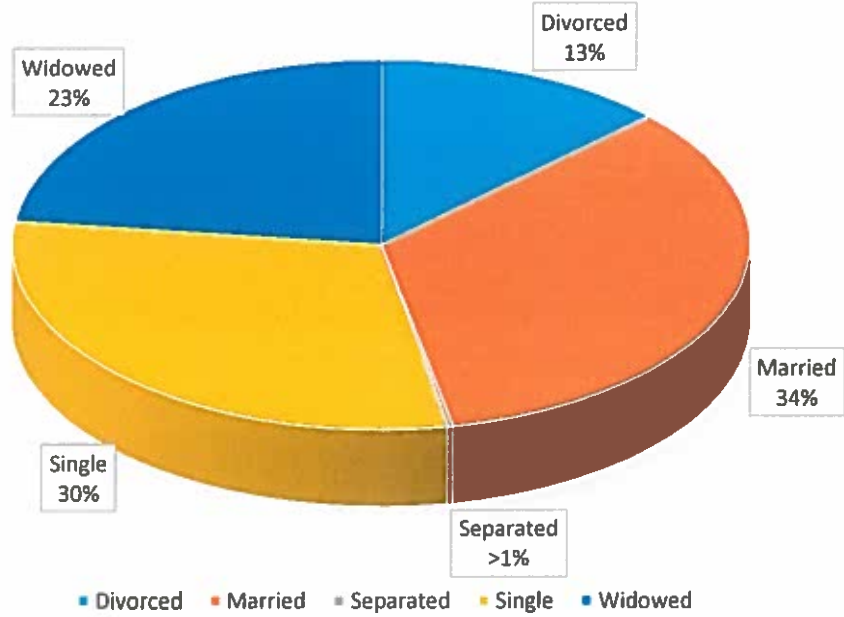
All possible efforts are made to determine both a Manner and Cause of Death for all deaths investigated by the Coroner's Office. In a very small percentage of the total cases (1.15%, 10/869 cases), the Manner of Death was unable to be classified, even with a complete autopsy, scene investigation, and toxicology testing.

COMPARISON STATISTICS

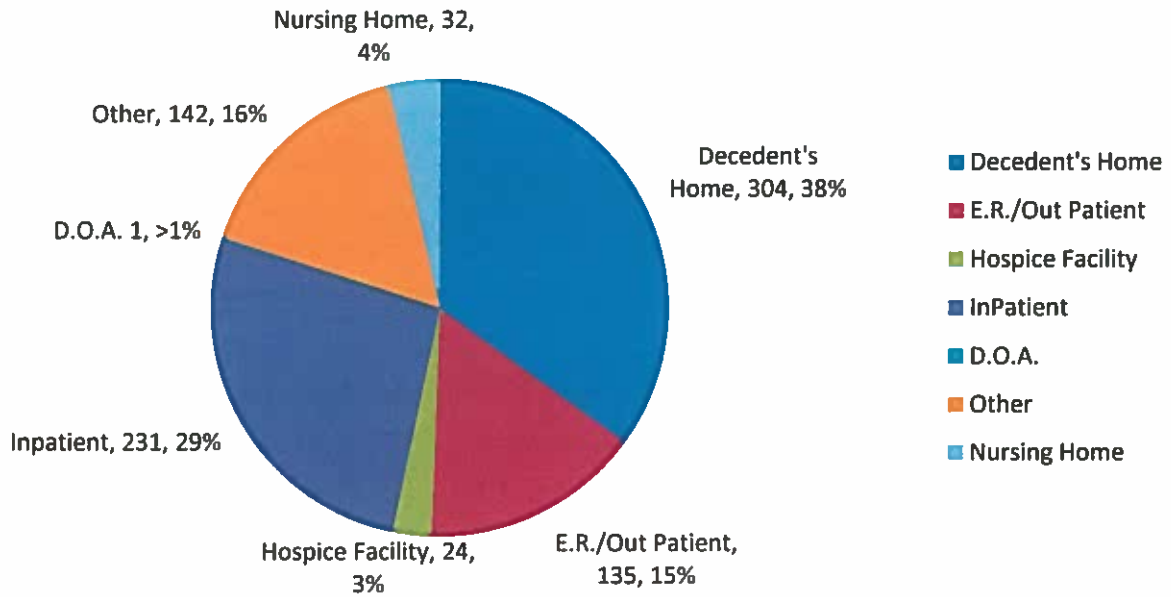
AGE GROUPS / MALE VS. FEMALE

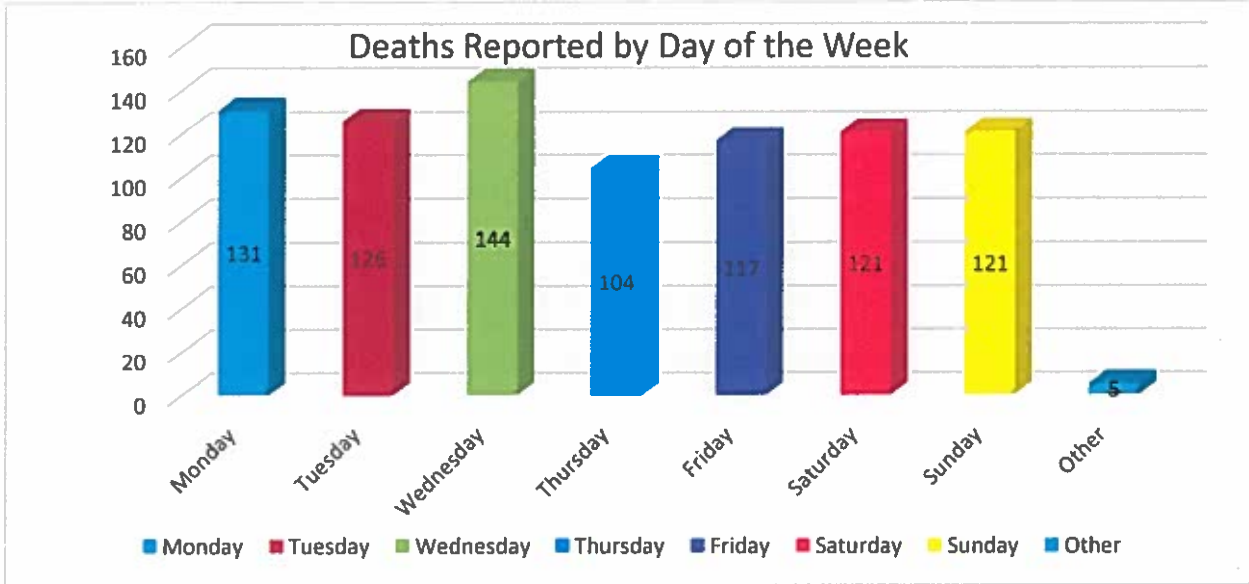


MARITAL STATUS

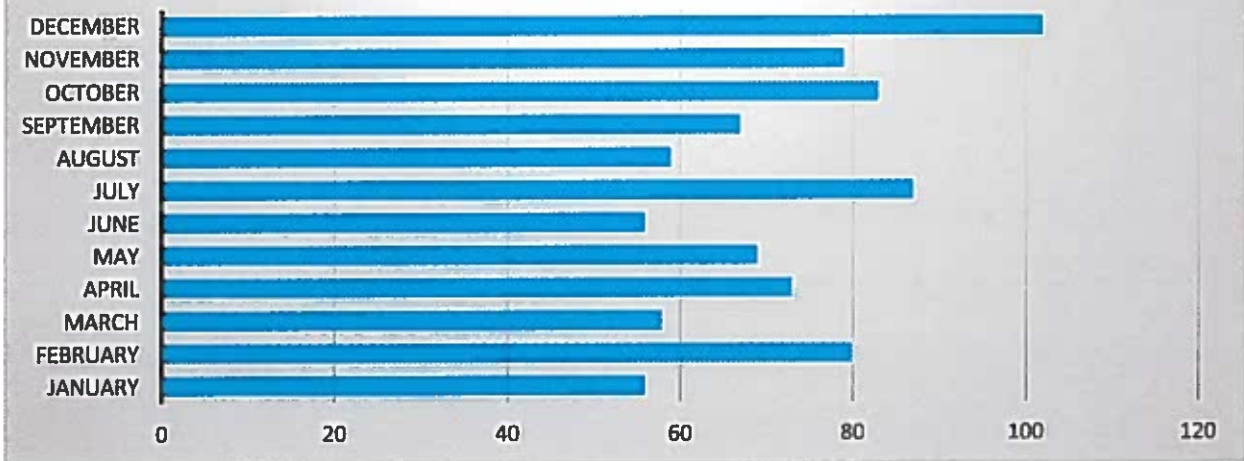


Locations of Death

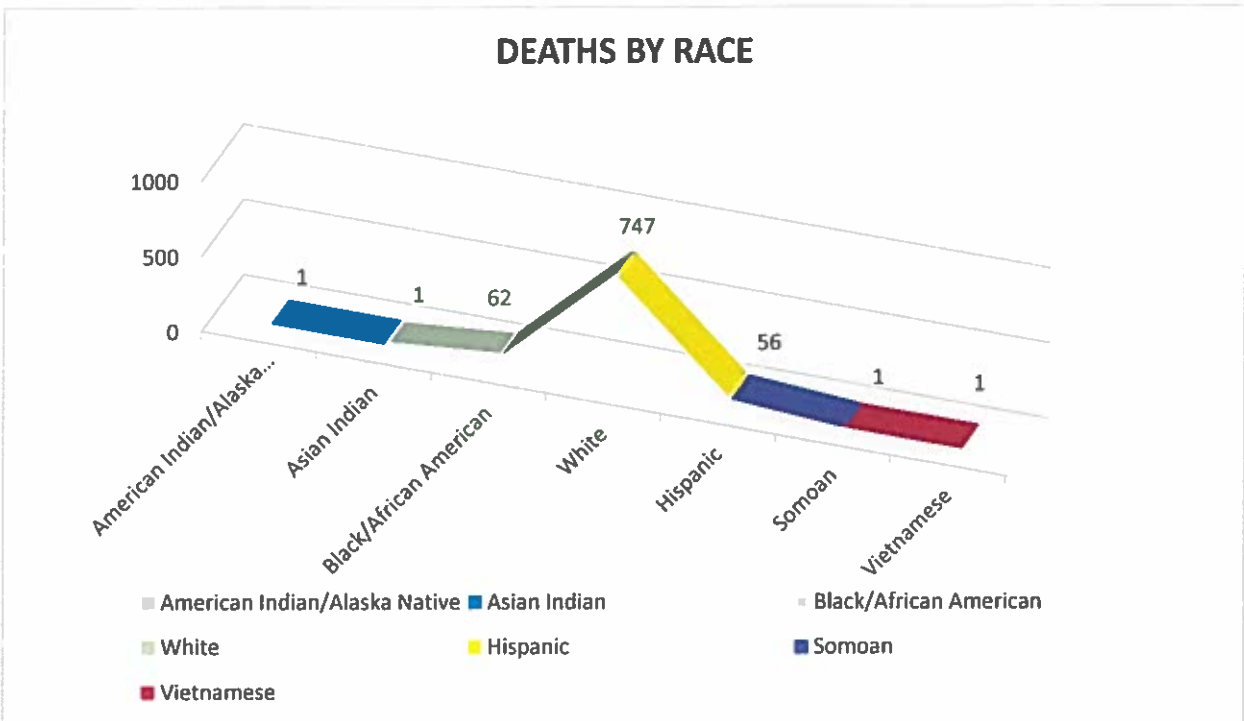




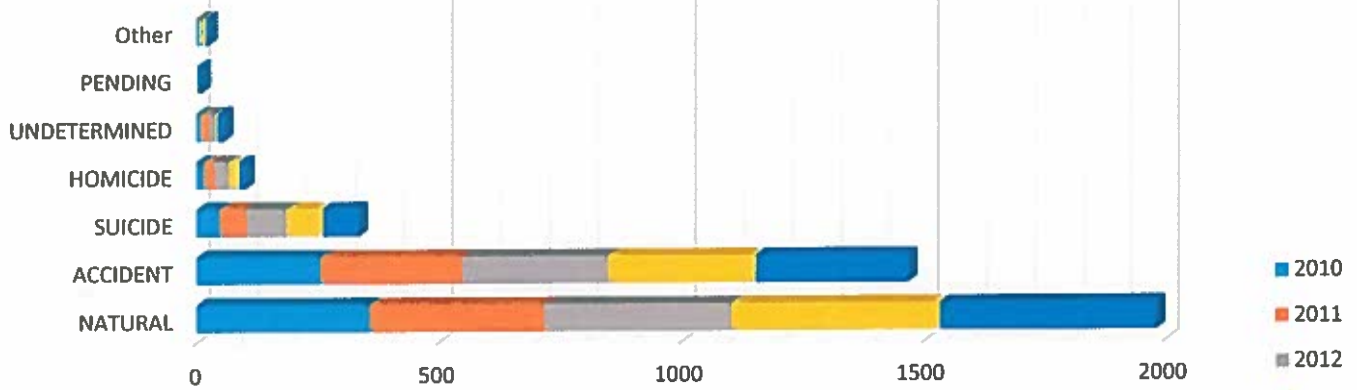
2014 Jurisdictional Investigations By Month



DEATHS BY RACE

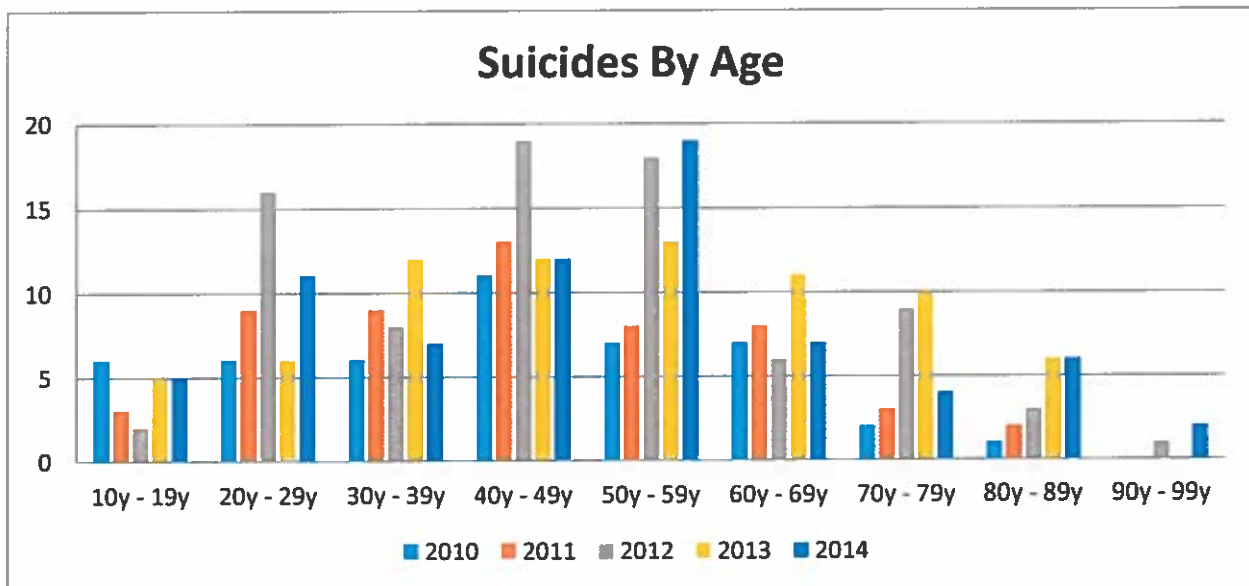


5 – YEAR TOTALS

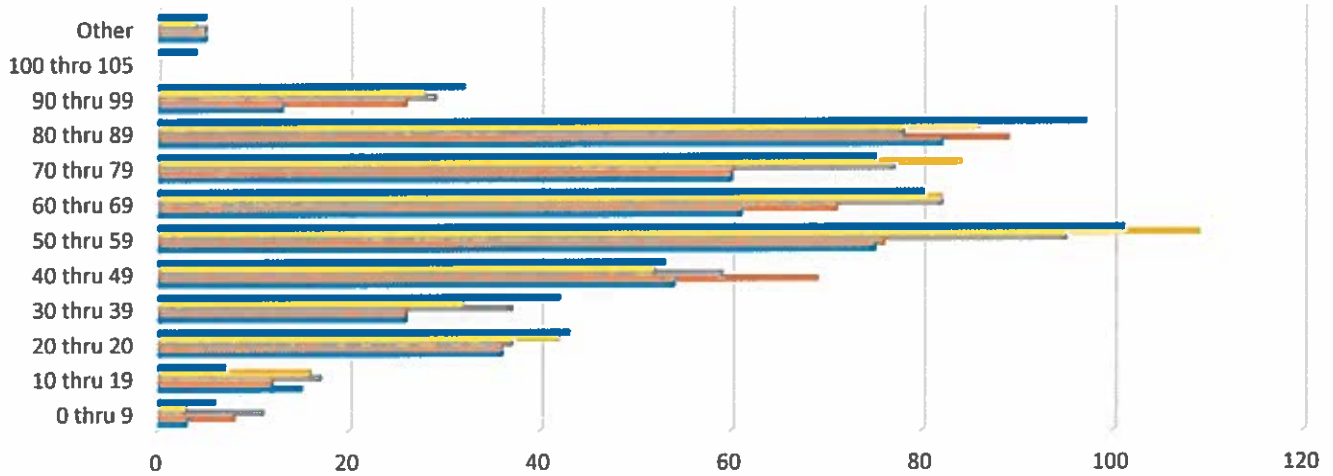


	NATURAL	ACCIDENT	SUICIDE	HOMICIDE	UNDETERMINE D	PENDING	Other
2010	356	255	48	15	8	2	5
2011	359	291	55	23	19	0	5
2012	386	300	82	29	13	0	5
2013	429	305	75	21	4	2	4
2014	448	313	73	12	12	6	5

TOTALS BY MANNER OF DEATH

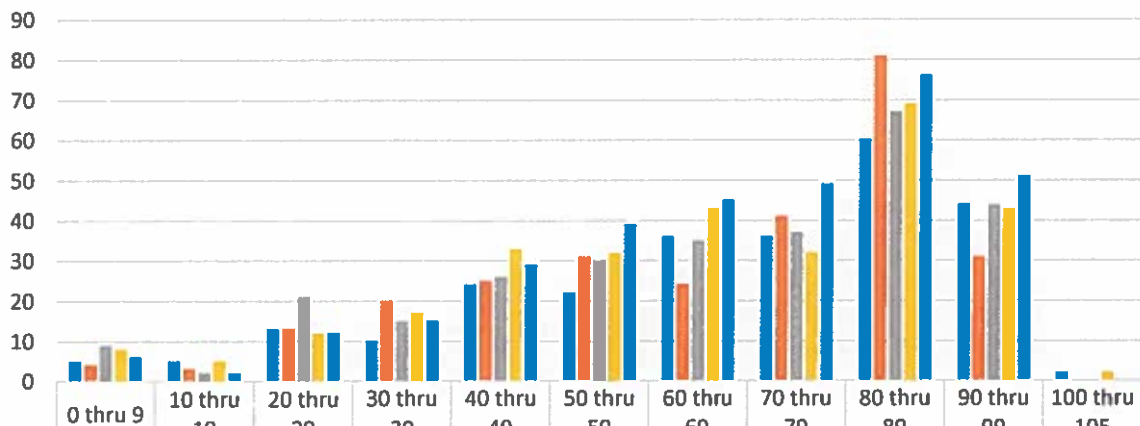


TOTAL MALE DEATHS BY AGE



	0 thru 9	10 thru 19	20 thru 29	30 thru 39	40 thru 49	50 thru 59	60 thru 69	70 thru 79	80 thru 89	90 thru 99	100 thru 105	Other
2014	6	7	43	42	53	101	80	75	97	32	4	5
2013	3	16	42	32	52	109	82	84	86	28		4
2012	11	17	37	37	59	95	82	77	78	29		5
2011	8	12	36	26	69	76	71	60	89	26		5
2010	3	15	36	26	54	75	61	60	82	13		5

TOTAL FEMALE DEATH BY AGE

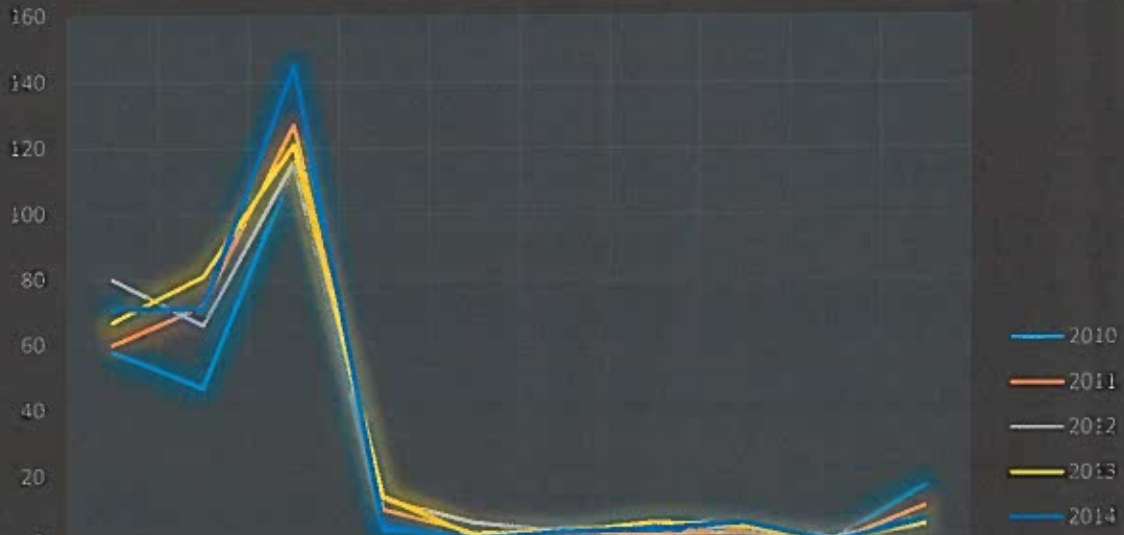


	0 thru 9	10 thru 19	20 thru 29	30 thru 39	40 thru 49	50 thru 59	60 thru 69	70 thru 79	80 thru 89	90 thru 99	100 thru 105
2010	5	5	13	10	24	22	36	36	60	44	2
2011	4	3	13	20	25	31	24	41	81	31	0
2012	9	2	21	15	26	30	35	37	67	44	0
2013	8	5	12	17	33	32	43	32	69	43	2
2014	6	2	12	15	29	39	45	49	76	51	0

■ 2010
 ■ 2011
 ■ 2012
 ■ 2013
 ■ 2014



ACCIDENTAL DEATHS



	Motor Vehicle Accident	Drugs	Falls	Fire/Burns	Exposure	Industrial	Choking	Water Related	Carbon Monoxide	Other
2010	58	47	115	4	2	4	5	2	1	17
2011	60	72	127	10	3	3	2	3	0	11
2012	80	66	116	13	6	3	6	4	1	5
2013	67	81	121	14	2	3	6	5	0	6
2014	71	71	145	5	1	3	4	6	0	7

2014 GRANT RECEIVED

In 2014, the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center received a Non-Matching \$25,000 grant from "PCCD" Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. This grant was for high quality digital photography equipment, which enabled the equipping of all full-time Deputies.

The majority of my staff have received formalized training in Crime/Death Scene Photography and the use of digital cameras.



THE NEW FACILITY

The "Open House" for the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center along with Cetronia Ambulance Corps was October 3, 2014



Accredited by the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners



BEING PROACTIVE

We believe in being “Proactive rather than Reactive”. This year, we are in the process of our third re-certification for the “IAC&ME” International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners. This Accreditation we have held since 2006 and were the second County in the Nation to obtain this Accreditation.

We have initiated the steps to begin working towards the Accreditation with “N.A.M.E.” National Association of Medical Examiners.

In February 2009, the National Academies of Science (NAS) report *Strengthening Forensic Sciences in the United States: A Path Forward* was released. This report revealed the weaknesses in the United States forensic science disciplines including that 'individual professional certification should be mandatory and that no person (public or private) should be allowed to practice in the forensic sciences or testify as a forensic science professional without certification'. It noted that 'competent death investigation requires that trained medicolegal death investigators attend scenes' and that 'in the future more lay death investigators will need to be trained and new training programs developed to assure competency'.



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON FORENSIC SCIENCE Accreditation of Medicolegal Death Investigation Offices

NIST
National Institute
of Standards
and Technology

Type of Work Product

Policy Recommendation issued by the Subcommittee on Medicolegal Death Investigation.

Recommendation

The National Commission on Forensic Science requests that the Attorney General of the United States approve a policy that recommends that all offices, facilities, or institutions performing medicolegal death investigation activities be accredited by the year 2020.

Statement of Issue

Accreditation demonstrates compliance with industry and professional standards and performance criteria and provides an independent measure of assurance to the tax-paying citizens of the community served. Unfortunately, many government bodies which fund forensic science or health and human services programs do not give priority to death investigation systems making it difficult for such systems to achieve accreditation.

Unlike traditional publicly-funded crime laboratories, most medicolegal death investigation offices, medical examiner and coroner offices are not accredited. Of the estimated 2,366 medicolegal death investigation offices in the United States, less than 100 are accredited by either the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) or the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners (IAC&ME), the only two accrediting bodies in the United States for medicolegal death investigation institutions.

<http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/ncfs/pages/attachments/2015/01/21/mdiaccreditationfinal.pdf>



Accredited by the *International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners*



IN CLOSING

My office will experience growth in responsibilities, duties, and an increased ability to perform the vital functions of our office with this new Forensic Center. This would not have been possible without support of the Lehigh County Administration and Board of Commissioners. My staff and I are prepared, anxious, and ready to use this new facility to the fullest potential.

The overwhelming response my staff and I have received with this new asset has been beyond even our expectations. The responses have been from the many Law Enforcement agencies throughout our County, District Attorney's Office staff, colleagues from other State Counties, and different community members.

Additionally, all of my full time staff have completed the process of being nationally certified by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators. There are only 5 part time investigators, with less than 2 years of experience, which are preparing for the certification. This again, shows the commitment, dedication, and professional standards that I employ in the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center.

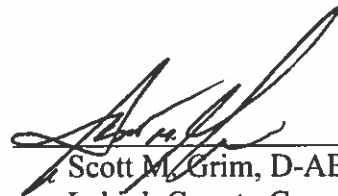
Thank you for taking time to read our annual report. This is provided to:

- County of Lehigh – Administration
- County of Lehigh Board of Commissioners
- County of Lehigh – Judiciary
- County of Lehigh – Row Officers
- Various boards and committees.

This is also available for public inspection on the website of the Office of the Coroner by navigating to the link provided. <http://www.lehighcounty.org/Departments/Coroner>

If you have any questions regarding this report or any operational issues of the Lehigh County Coroner's Office, please feel free to contact the office or me by calling (610) 782-3426.

Please note that this report has been furnished in electronic format. If you desire a printed version please contact me at my office number listed


Scott M. Grim, D-ABMDI
Lehigh County Coroner

****The numbers of cases in each category may change, due to continuous case finalizations and rulings.



