

# **LEHIGH COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE & FORENSICS CENTER**



**2015**

**ANNUAL REPORT**



## LEHIGH COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE & FORENSICS CENTER

4350 Broadway \* Allentown, PA 18104  
Phone: (610) 782-3426 Fax: (610) 820-8271

To the Citizens of Lehigh County,

I am pleased to share the 2015 Annual Report for the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center. Since our opening in late 2014 we have seen a continued increase in the number of deaths our office has investigated with a total of a 7.3% increase from the previous year. 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:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott M. Grim", is written over a horizontal line.

Scott M. Grim, D-ABMDI  
Lehigh County Coroner



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## INTRODUCTION

Lehigh County is located in southeastern Pennsylvania in the area known as the Lehigh Valley, with the city of Allentown as its county seat.

Lehigh County is positioned in the corridor between Philadelphia and New York City, with quick and easy access to both of these major metropolitan areas. The area is accessible via I-78, Rt.22, Rt.309, Rt.33 or Rt.476 (Pennsylvania Turnpike).

Lehigh County also has a thriving cultural scene, with stage theaters, art museums, and amusement park with world-class coasters and water slides, premier bicycle racing track, Class AAA minor league baseball, AHL hockey team, Lehigh Valley Zoo, historical sites, colleges and universities, and lots of arts and music festivals.

Lehigh County neighbors the East Coast's major markets. Regular commuters realize the ultimate convenience of our central location and transportation options. The Lehigh Valley International Airport provides both commercial and private air facilities. Lehigh Valley International Airport offers full-time customer service and non-stop flights to many U.S. cities. Our "super highway and railway" networks and strategic geographic locations help make these markets 100 percent accessible. One-third of the U.S. population lives within a comfortable one day's drive, and one-half of Canadian businesses are within 500 miles.

Our community is comprised of 347 square miles of rolling hills including over 18,000 acres of preserved farmland and a network of more than 17,000 acres of outdoor recreational parks that offer extensive leisure opportunities. The population is estimated at 360,000.

Lehigh County is home to 34 Nursing Homes/Care Facilities, 28 Hotels/Motels, 142 Apartment Complexes, and 10 Hospital with 2 Level 1 Trauma Centers.

Lehigh County's Department of Community and Economic Development is committed to creating a vibrant Lehigh County by focusing on economic growth, revitalization of our cities and boroughs, regional partnerships with our twenty five municipalities, and enhancing the quality of life of our community. The Department's grant and housing programs are designed to support high priority projects that enhance the quality of life, the arts and the community and our housing programs are designed to make housing safe, affordable and sustainable.

Lehigh County works in conjunction with Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC), community organizations, other economic development groups and the Workforce Investment Board to help enhance programs and create opportunities in the County.



## MISSION

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 & FORENSICS CENTER

The Lehigh County Coroner's Office is an independent, investigative agency 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, performs Forensic 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 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 to 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 charged with determining the Cause and 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 cause 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.
  - 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.



*The Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center*

*4350 Broadway, Allentown, PA 18104*



## LEHIGH COUNTY CORONER

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**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 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.

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## STAFF MEMBERS

### 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 a founding member and Supervisor of the Forensic Services Unit, A.F.I.S./I.A.F.I.S. Operator/Coordinator, 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. Andy is an Adjunct with Northampton Community College's Northeast Forensic Training Center.

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**1<sup>ST</sup> 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.





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**Morgue Manager Raymond Anthony, D-ABMDI:** Ray has 18 years of experience with the Lehigh County Coroner's Office. In addition, Ray has 23 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.

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**Deputy Michael Bartholomew, D-ABMDI:** 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 has achieved National Death Investigation certification through the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators.

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**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.

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**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.

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**Deputy/FTO 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. Jack successfully completed the Field Training Officer training and assists in the training of new Deputy Coroners. 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.

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**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.



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**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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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 Diplomat 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.

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**Gabrielle Riley, Morgue Technician:** Gabrielle started with the Lehigh County Coroner's Office as a part-time Morgue Technician in December 2014 and has recently transitioned to full-time. 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.

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**Marianne Granitz, Administrative Assistant:** Marianne has been with the Coroner's office for 6 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.

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## **PART TIME STAFF**

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**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 Patrolter for many years.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**Deputy Rebecca Saborsky:** Rebecca became a Deputy Coroner in March 2014. She attend the Coroner's Basic Education Course in November 2015 and received her certification. 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.



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**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, Lehighon Ambulance as an EMT, and is in his senior year at American Public University where he is majoring in Public Health.

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**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.

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**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".

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**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.



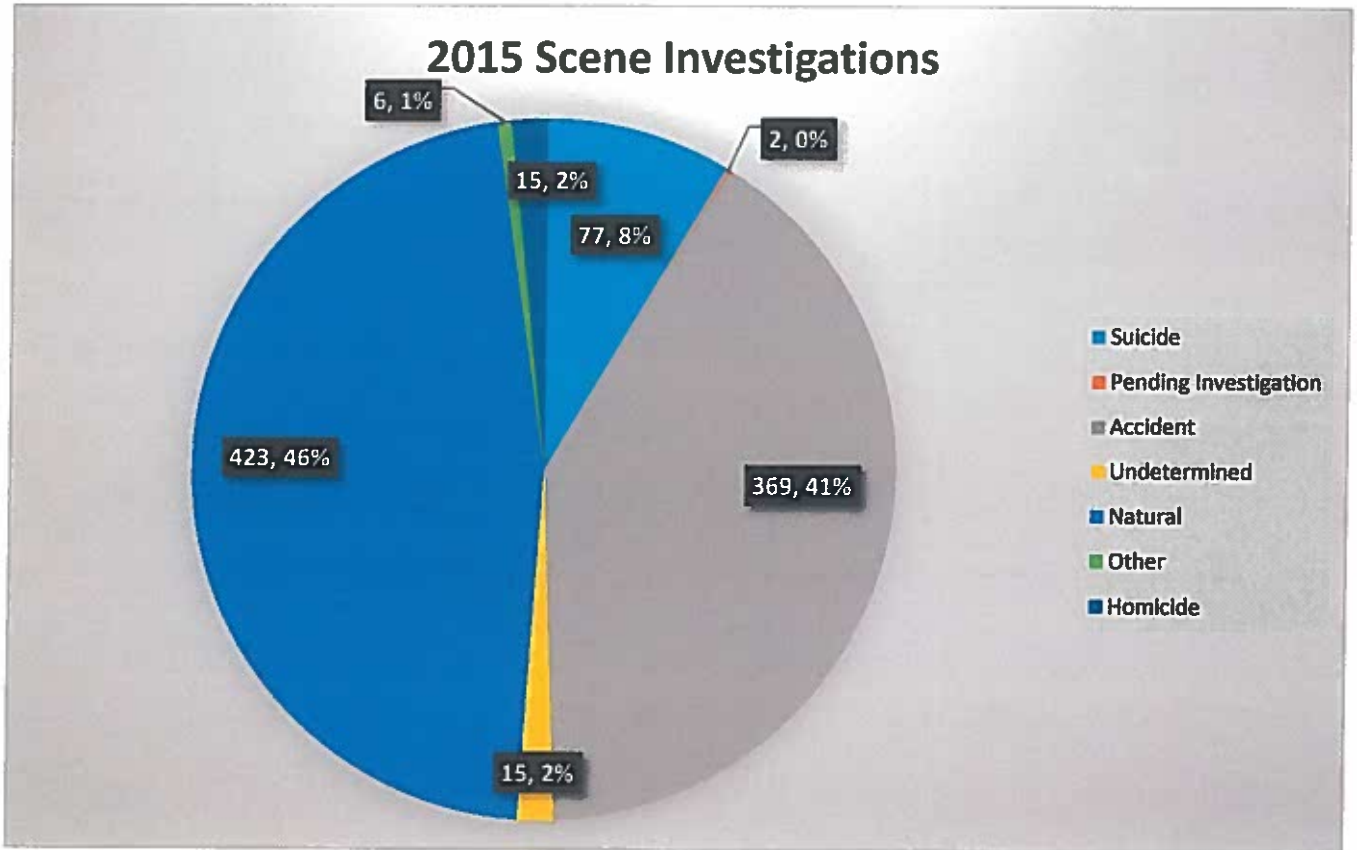


## CAUSE AND MANNER OF DEATH

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 have died within the boundaries of the County, as a result of sudden, unattended, violent or suspicious circumstances.

**CAUSE OF DEATH:** The official determination of the disease or injury and the sequence of events responsible for the occurrence which leads to an individual's demise.

**MANNER OF DEATH:** The classification of the way in which the cause of death came about. There are 5 manners of death.



**NATURAL:** Death caused by a natural disease process.

**ACCIDENT:** Death due to an unfortunate incident.

**SUICIDE:** Death at one's own hand.

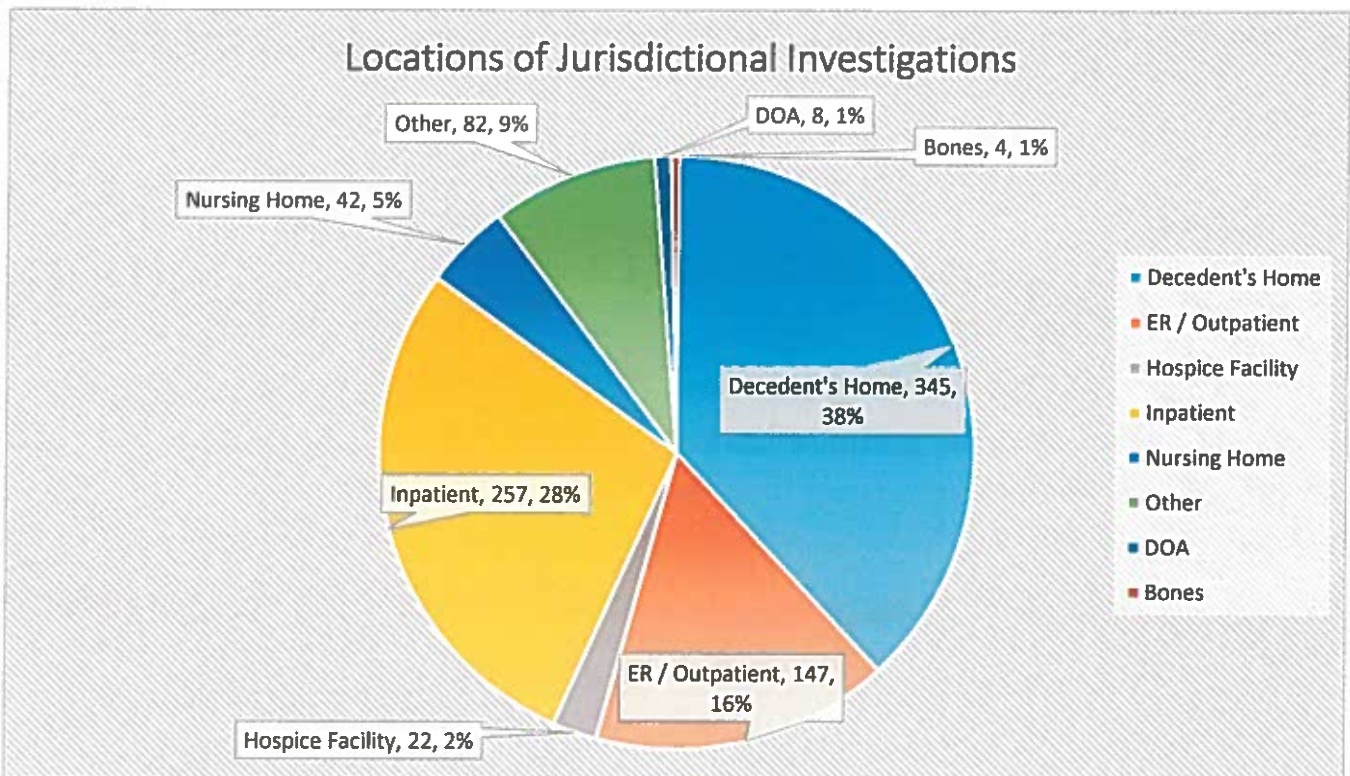
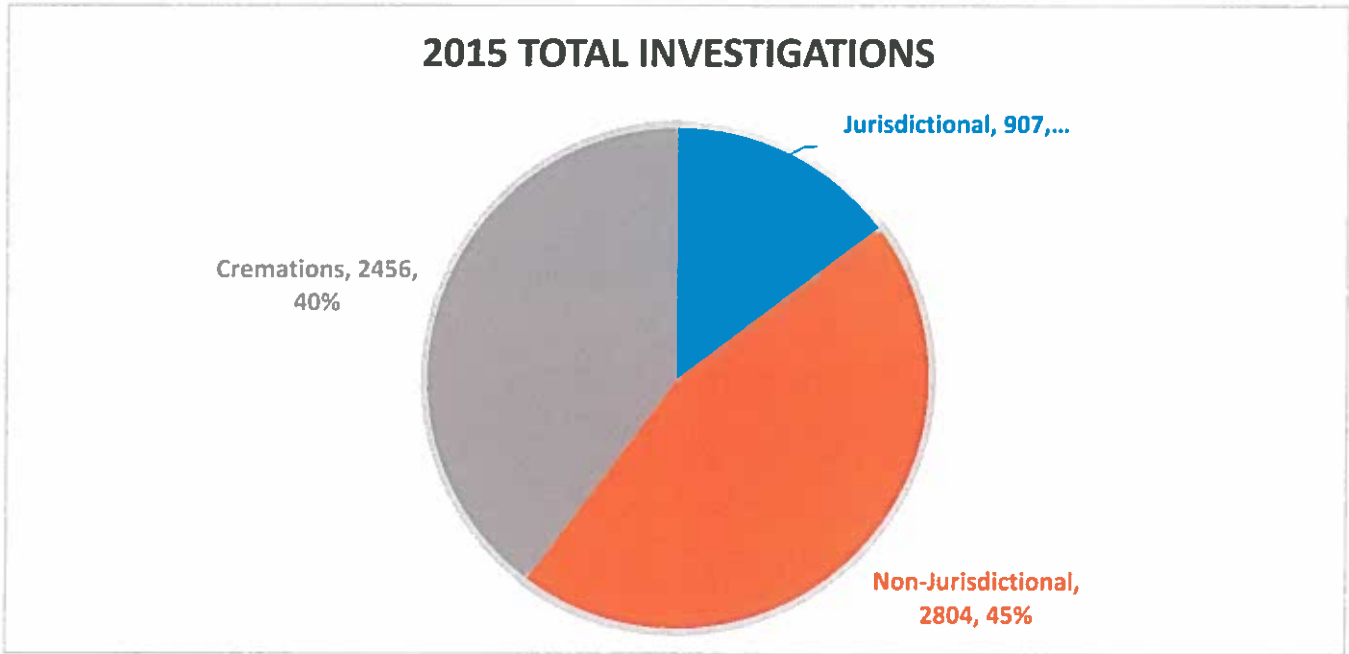
**HOMICIDE:** Death at the hands of another.

**COULD NOT BE DETERMINED:** Manner assigned when there is insufficient evidence, or conflicting/equivocal information (especially about intent), to assign a specific manner.

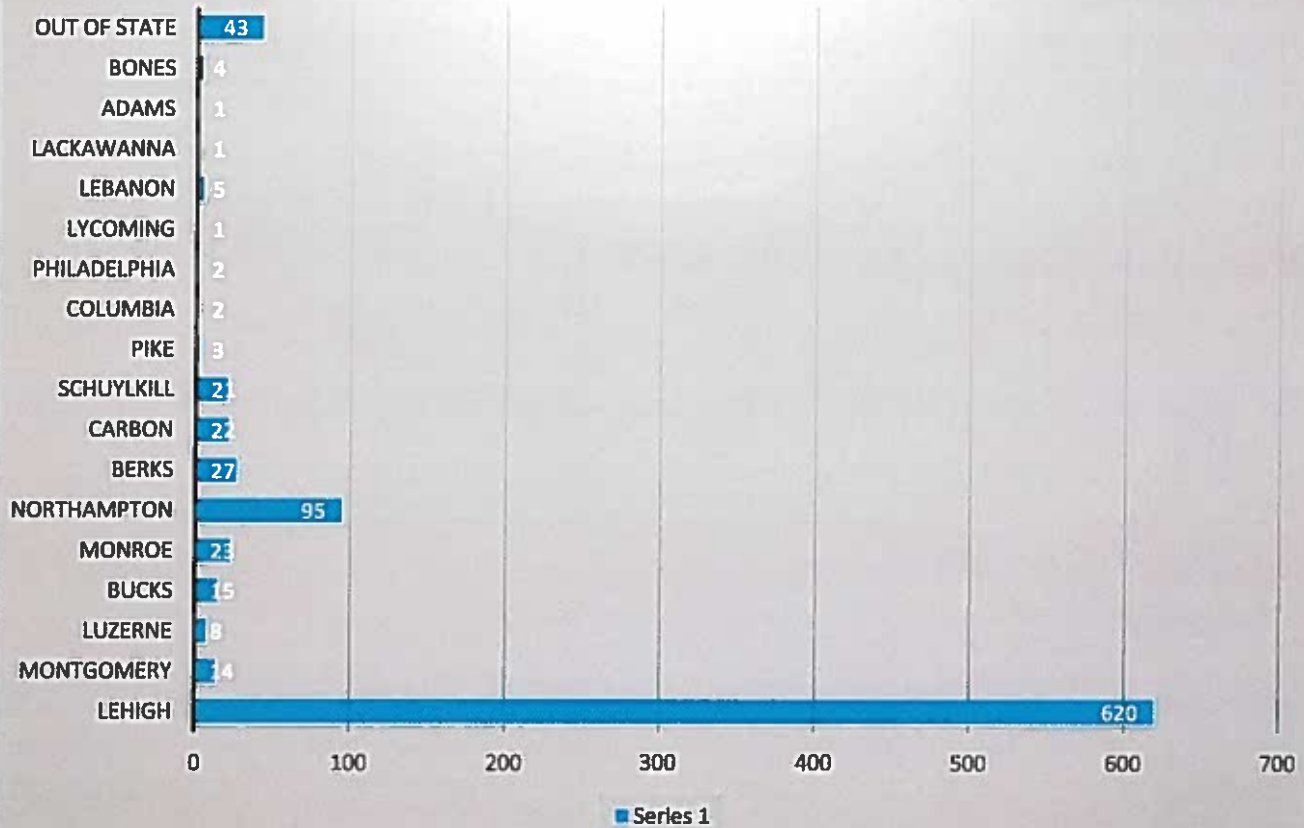
**PENDING INVESTIGATION:** Manner of Death assigned when the investigation is ongoing. A death certificate is issued to permit for the final disposition of the body.



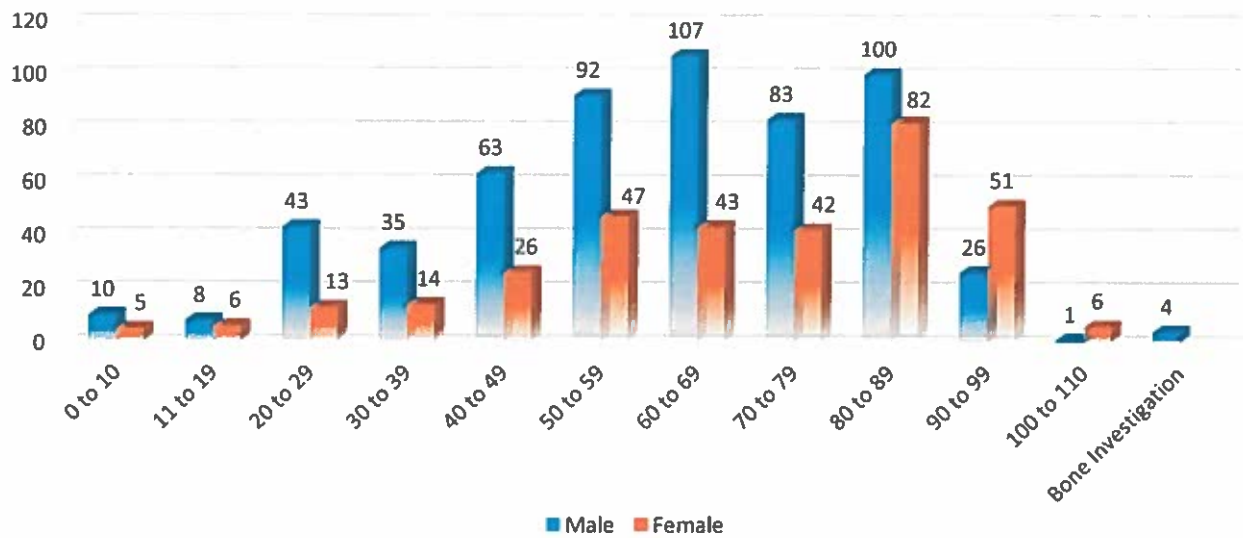
In 2015, there were a total of 6167 investigations reported to our office. Of these investigations, 2804 deaths did not require scene investigation or external examinations. Additionally, 2456 of them were authorizations for cremation. 907 of the death investigations required the Office of the Coroner to provide scene investigations as well as external examinations. Autopsies were not performed where scene investigation, circumstances, medical history, and external examination provided enough detail for death certification.



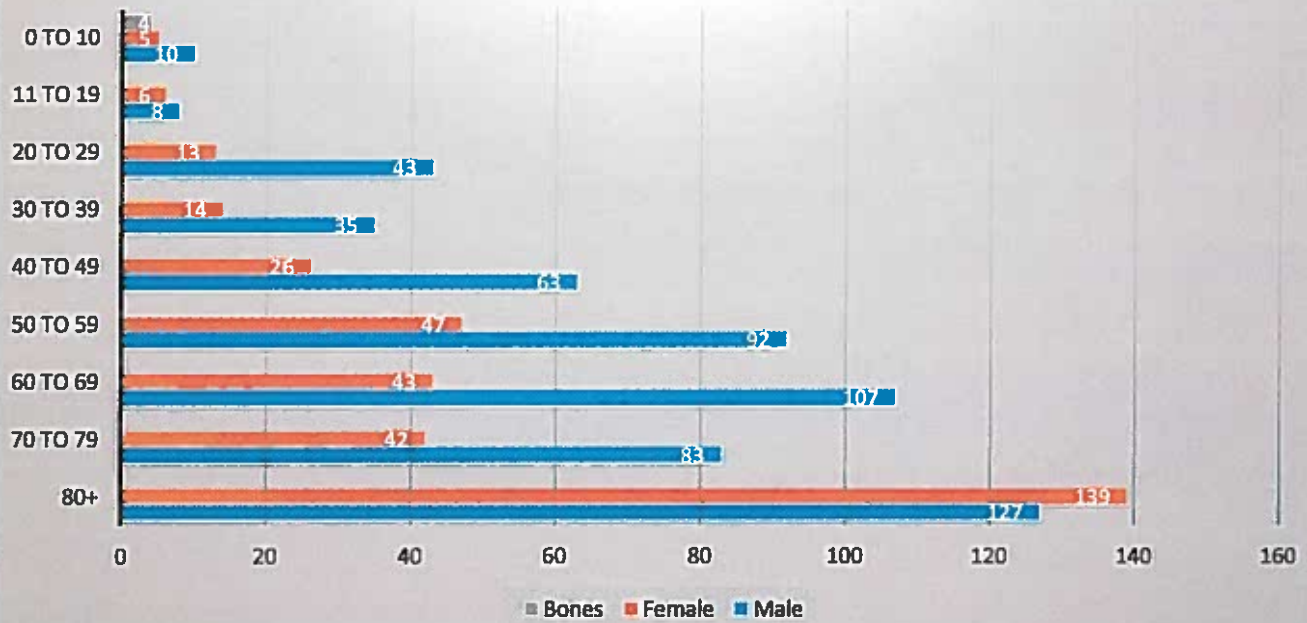
## Jurisdictional Residency of Decedents



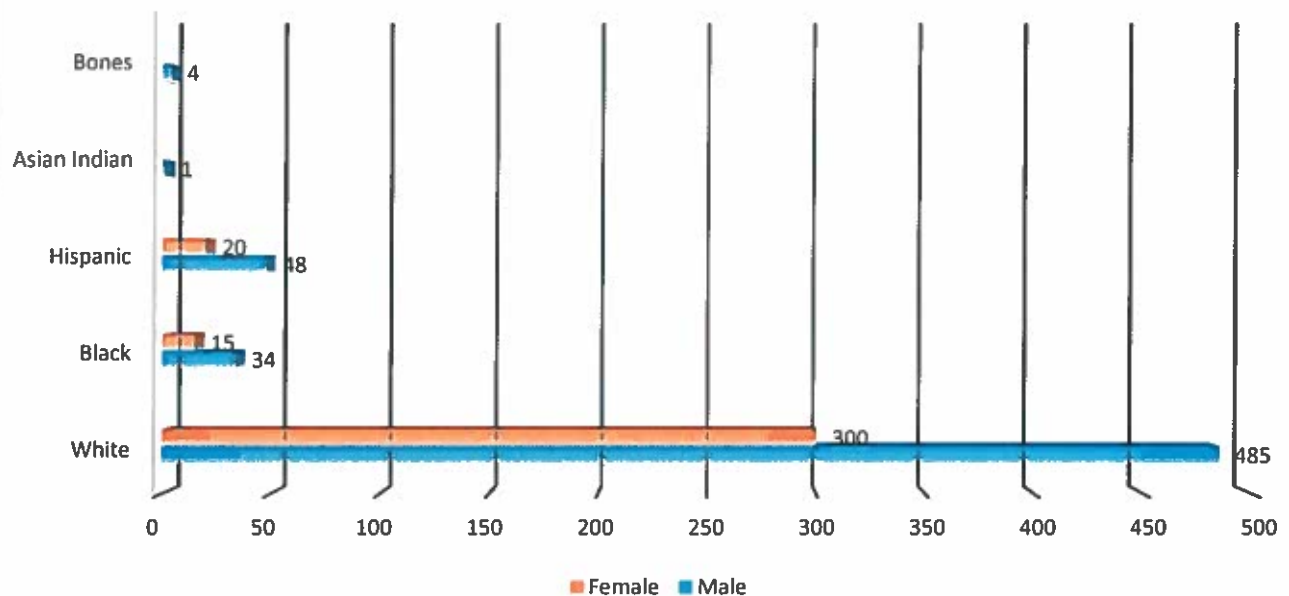
## THE SEX OF DECEDENTS



## Sex of Decedents by Age in Jurisdictional Investigations

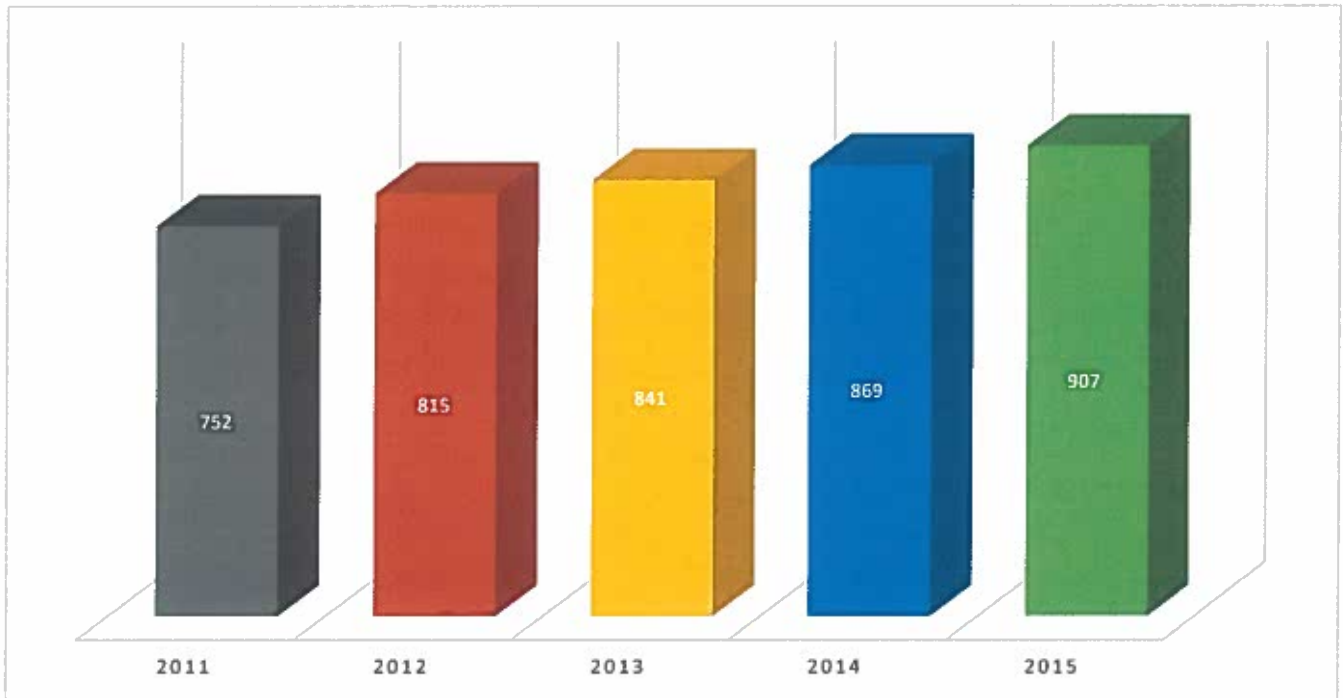


## RACE OF DECEDENTS IN JURISDICTIONAL INVESTIGATIONS

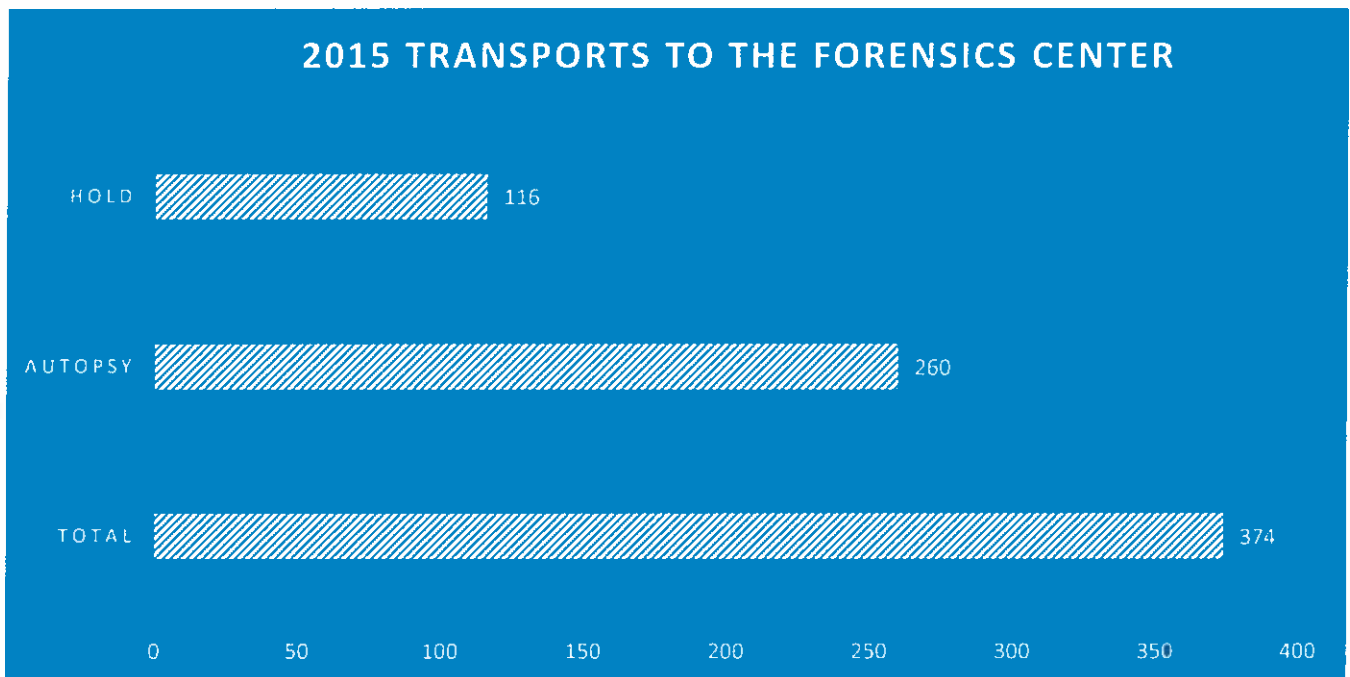




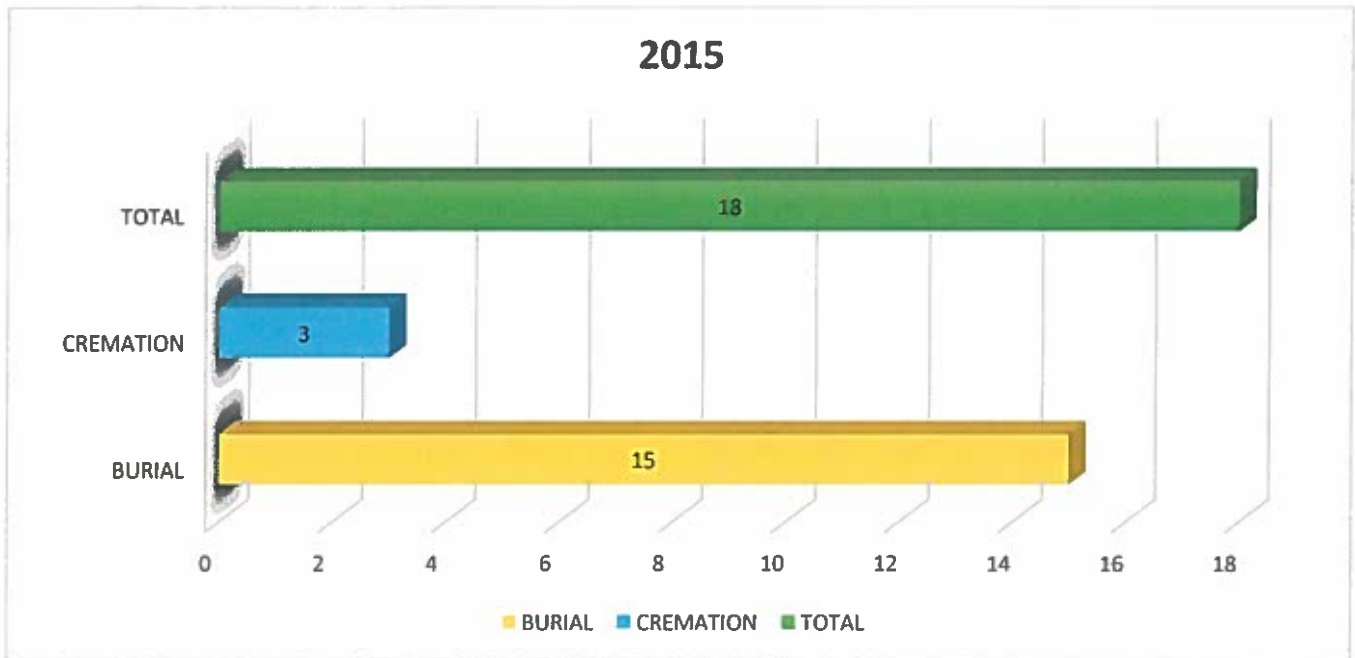
**EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS**



**2015 ANNUAL CADAVER STATISTICS**

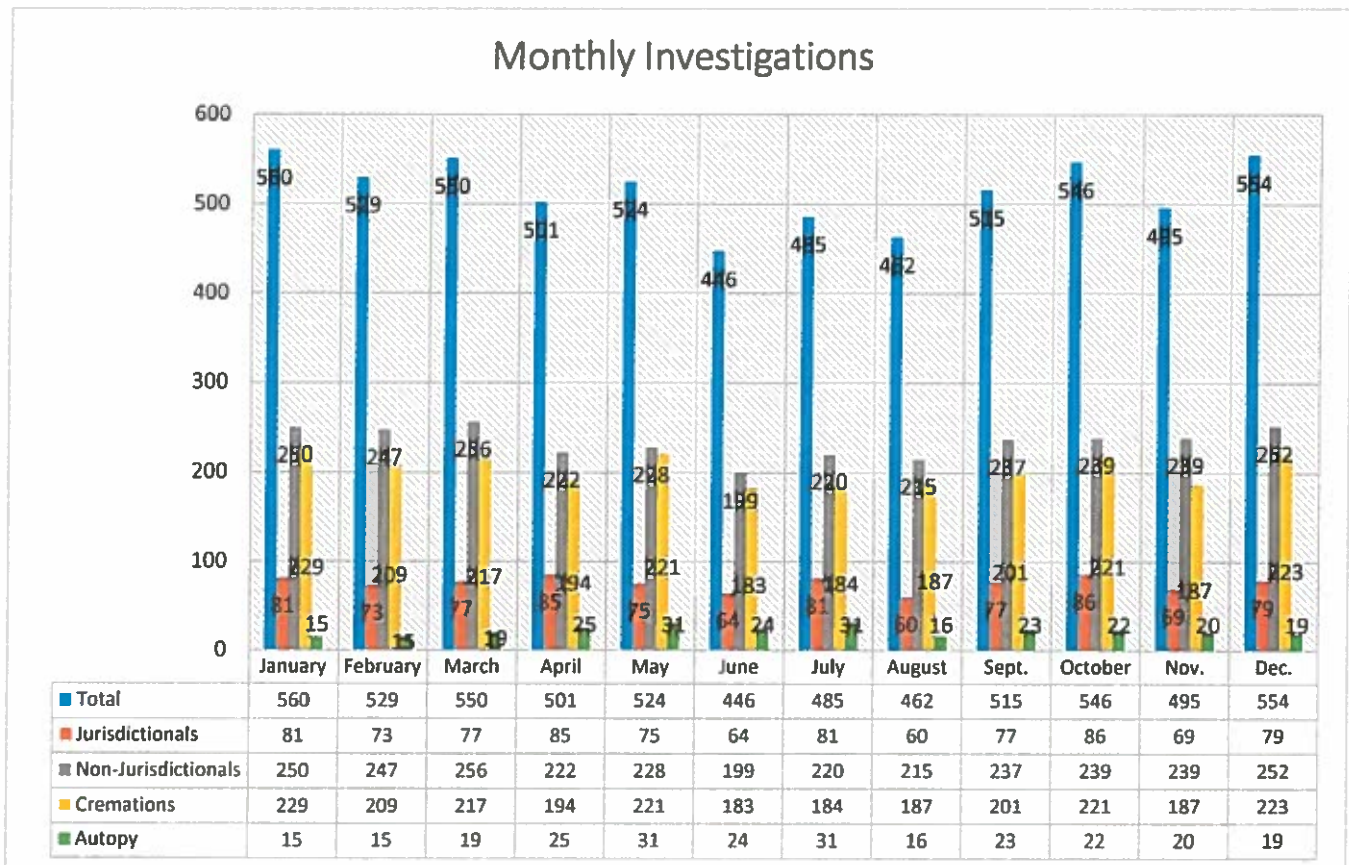


**COUNTY DISPOSITIONS OF CADAVERS**

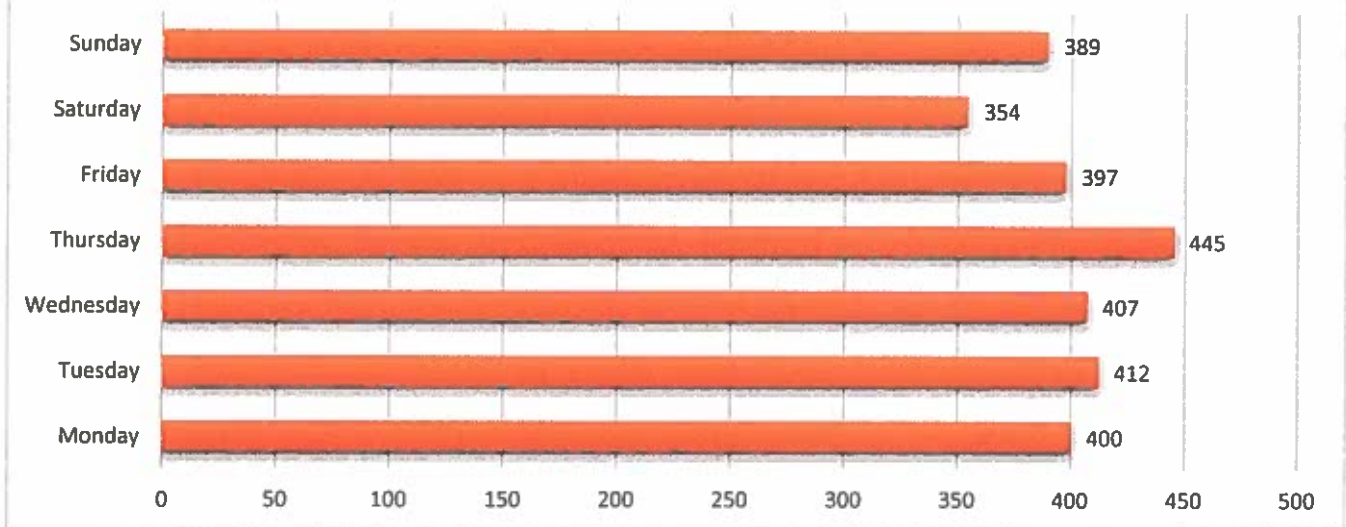


**NOTE:** There were no County Exhumations conducted during the 2015 calendar year.

**2015 INVESTIGATION TOTALS**



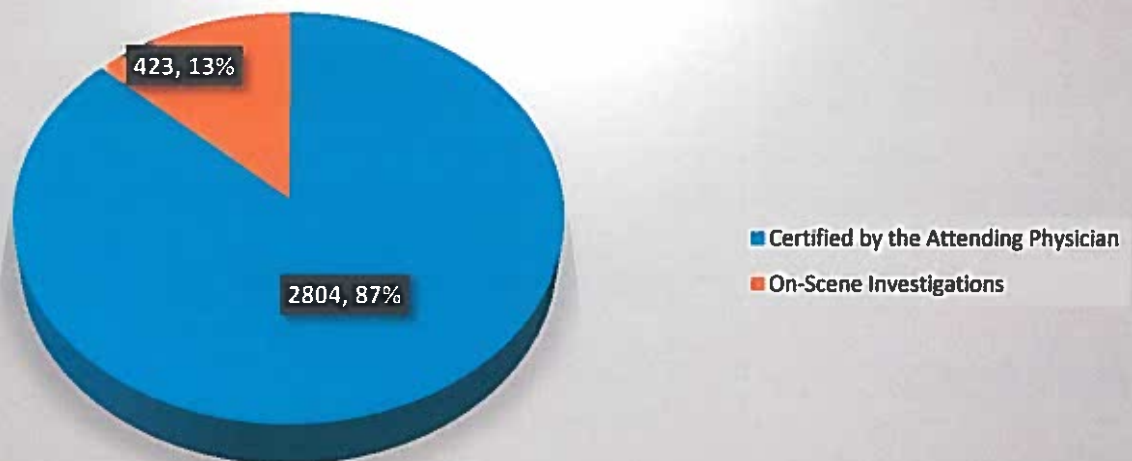
## Average Daily Non-Jurisdictional Investigations

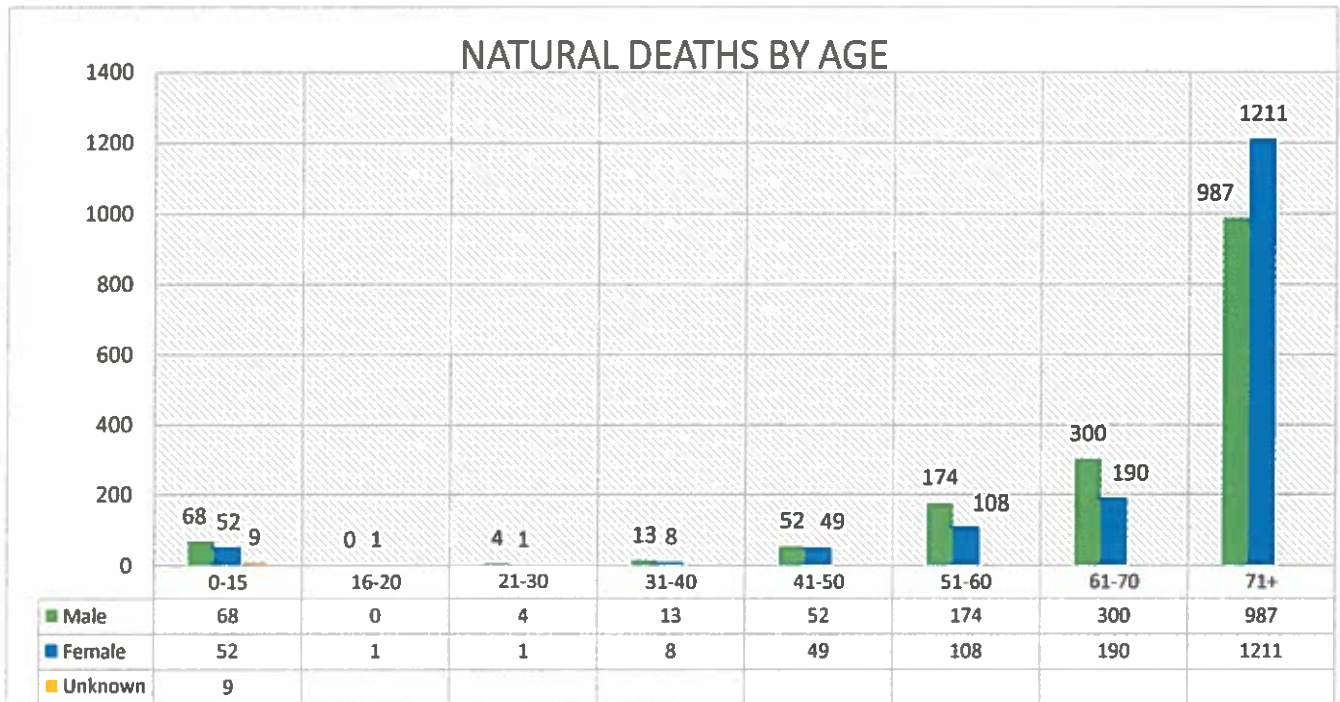


### 2015 NATURAL DEATH INFORMATION

A vast majority of the deaths investigated by the Coroner's Office are determined to be natural deaths. In 2015, there were 3227 deaths that were reported to our office and ruled natural. 423 of these deaths required a scene investigation and external examinations of the deceased. There were 2804 deaths that were reported but certified by the deceased's attending physician and not requiring a scene investigation. 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. Of the 423 Jurisdictional investigations conducted, attending Physicians Certified 167 of these cases. If the attending physician opts not to certify the death, our office certifies and issues the death certificate. 21 of the 423 Jurisdictional investigations required an autopsy to be performed. The youngest being 32 5/7 weeks old and the oldest being 106 years old.

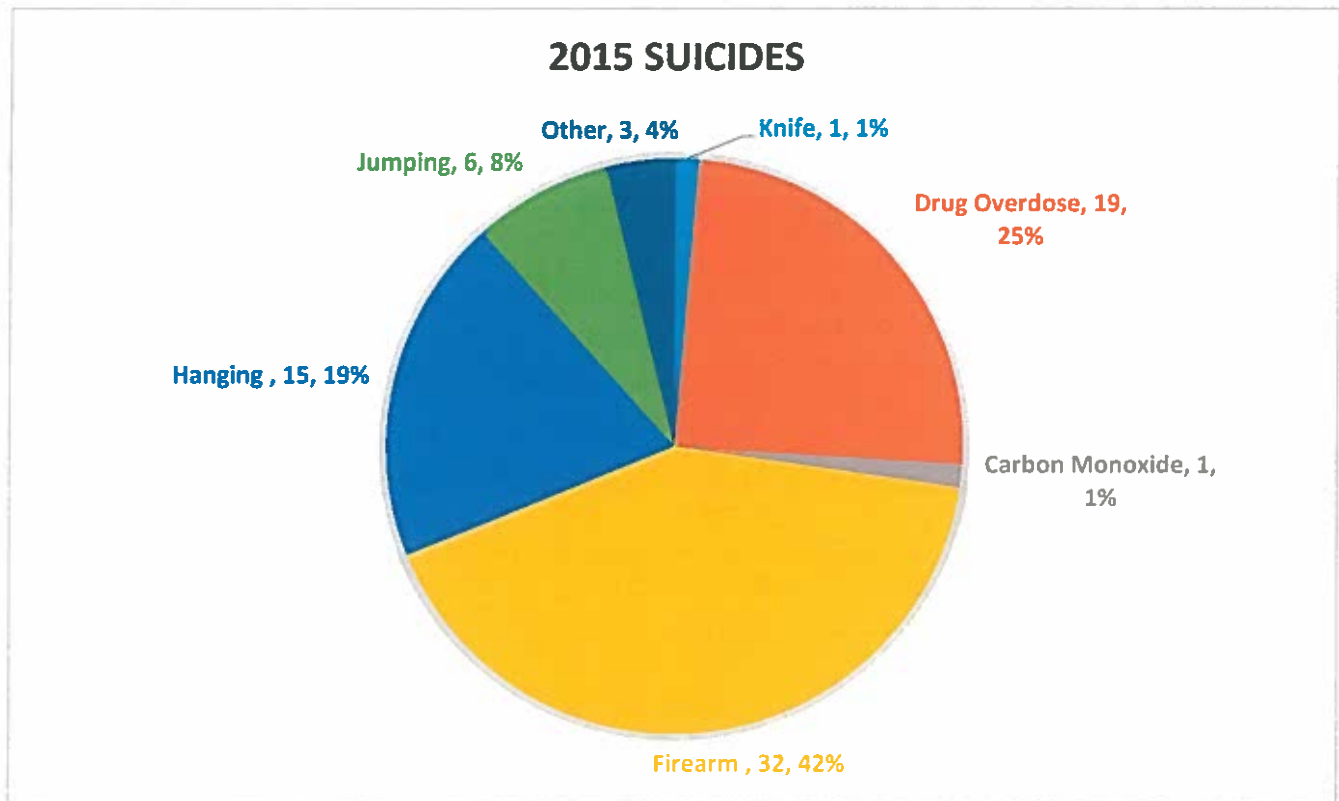
## Natural Deaths





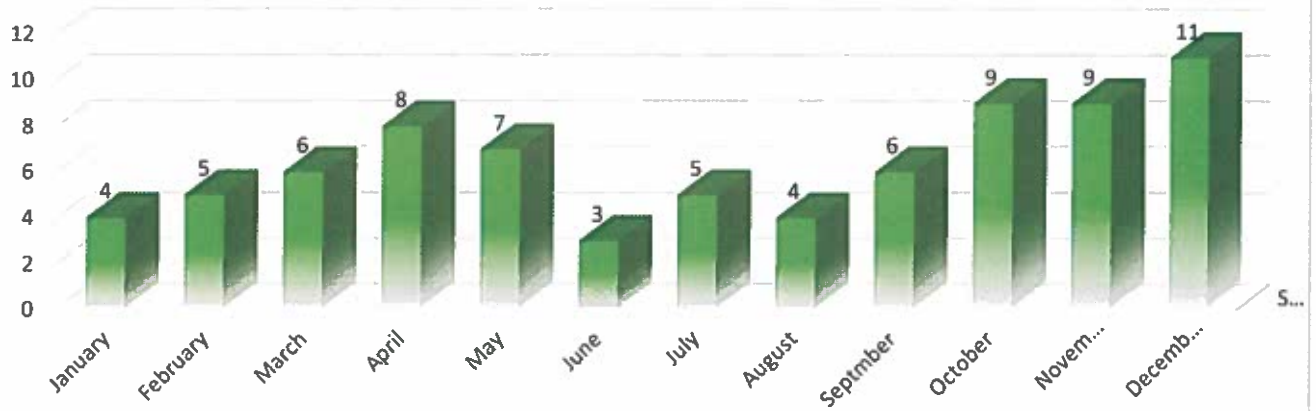
### 2015 SUICIDE INFORMATION

Suicide is death cause by an intentional action to end one's life. Suicide deaths can range from gun related incidents to drug ingestions. During the 2015 year, there were 77 deaths by suicide. There were 1 carbon monoxide, 15 hangings, 19 drug overdoses, 32 deaths by firearm, 1 death by knife, 6 deaths by jumping and 3 deaths by other means.

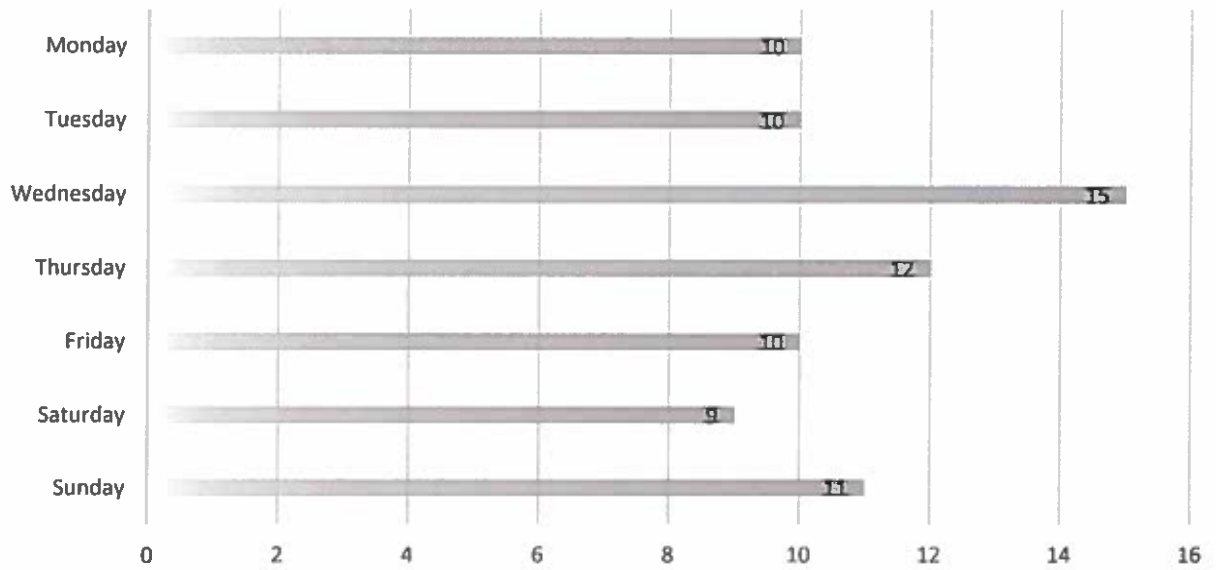




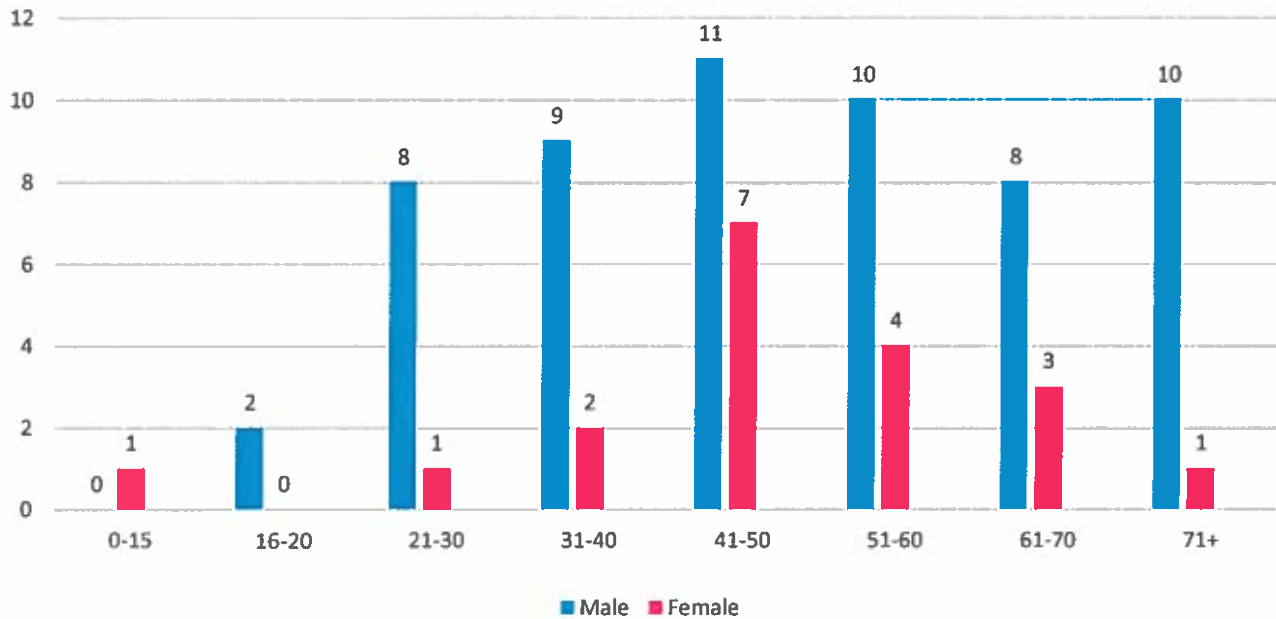
## SUICIDE BY MONTH



## SUICIDE BY DAY

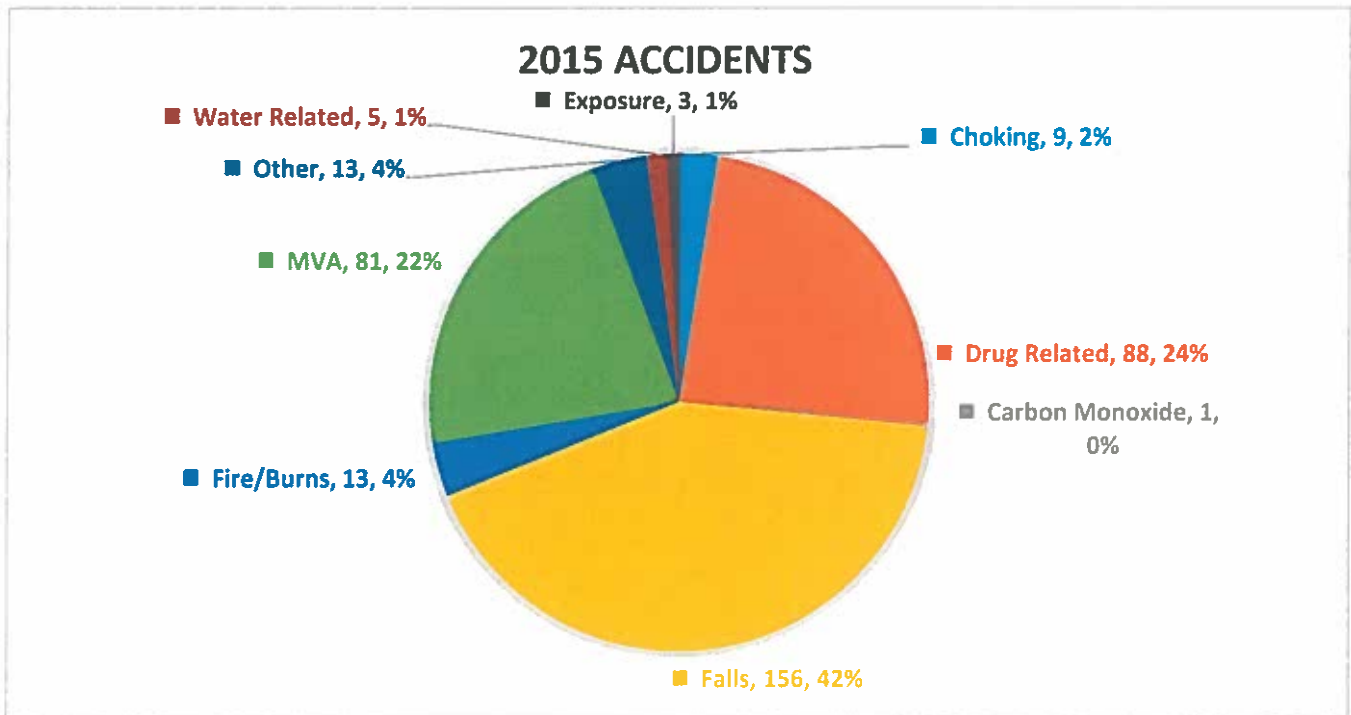


## SUICIDE BY AGE AND GENDER

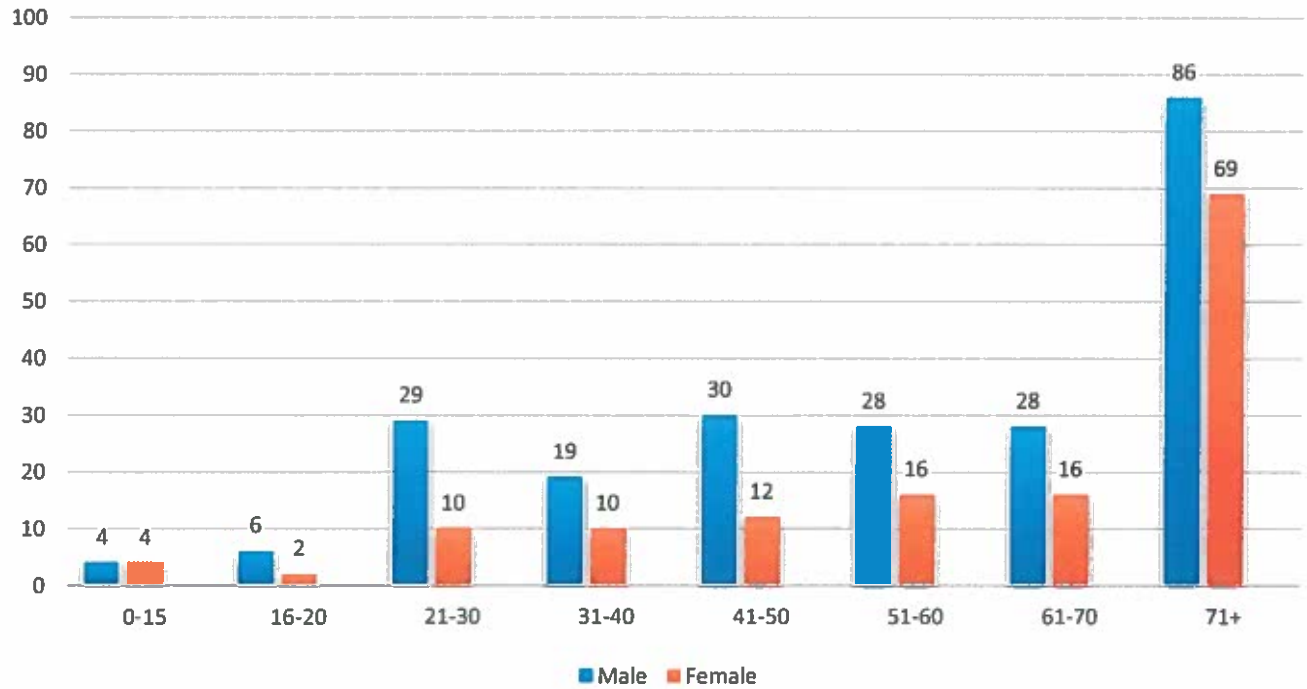


### 2015 ACCIDENT DEATH INFORMATION

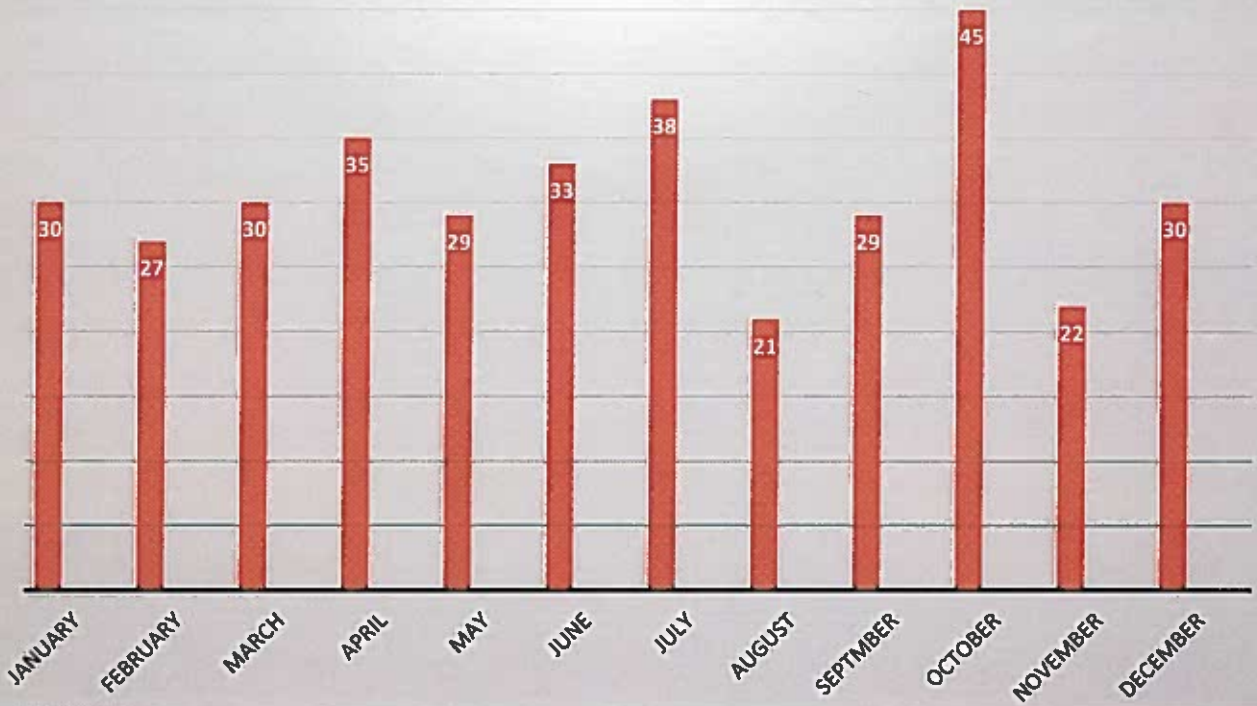
Accident deaths are due to an unfortunate incident. These deaths can range from falling to choking to motor vehicle accidents. During the 2015 year there were 369 deaths ruled accident. The youngest accident death being 5 months old and the oldest accident death being 103 years old.



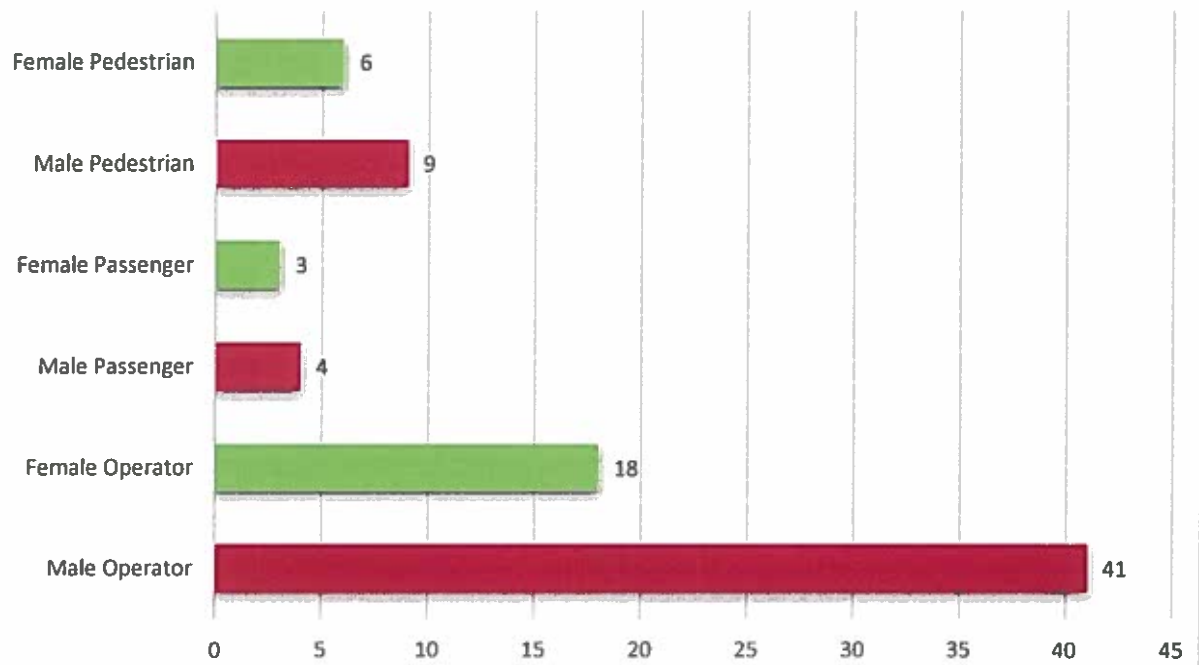
## ACCIDENT DEATHS BY AGE AND GENDER



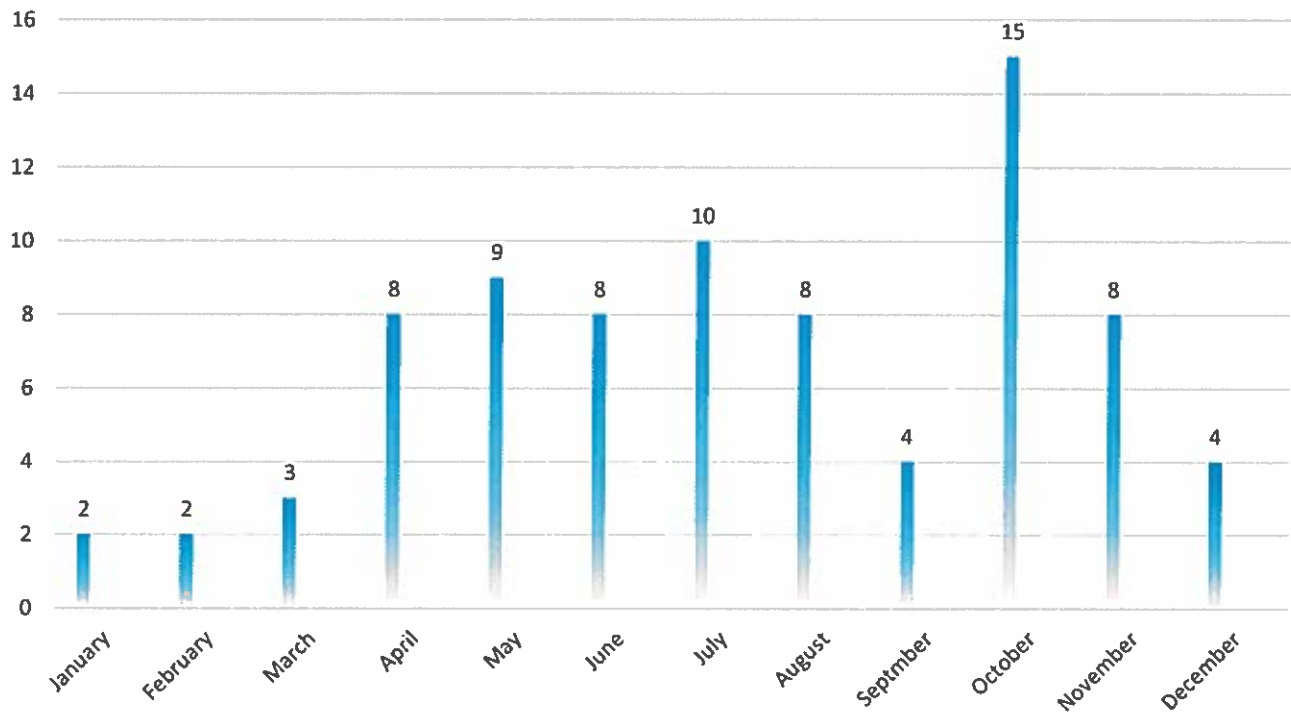
## ACCIDENT DEATHS BY MONTH



## MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT DEATHS BY GENDER



## MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT DEATHS BY MONTH



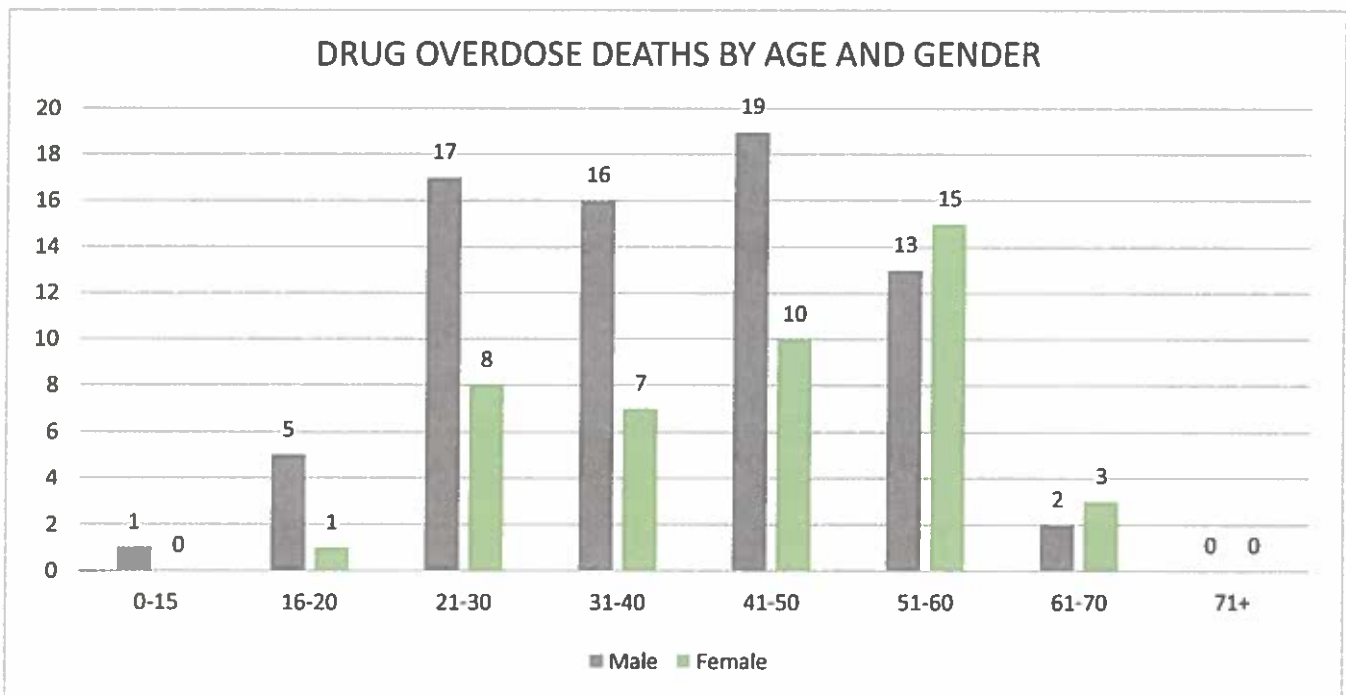


## MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT DEATHS BY DAY

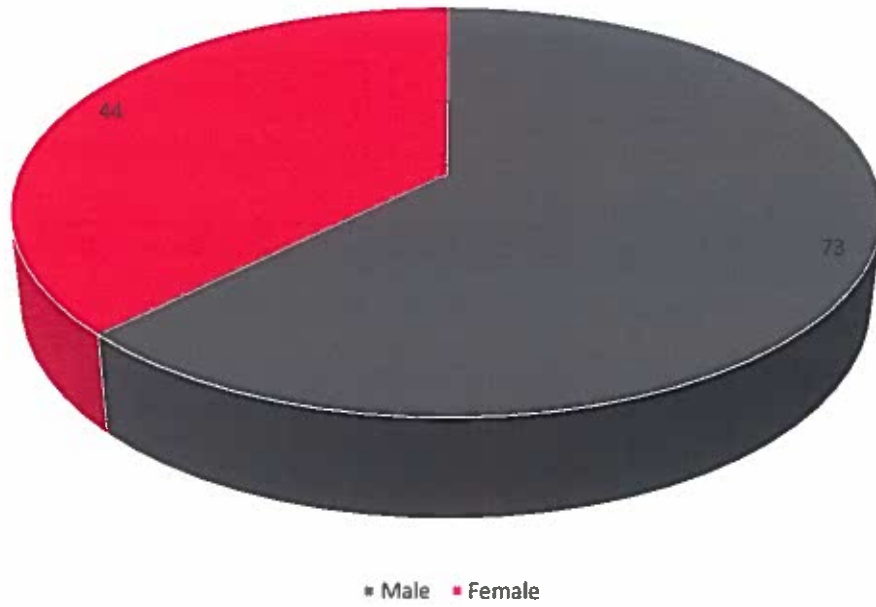


## 2015 Drug Deaths – Demographic Statistics

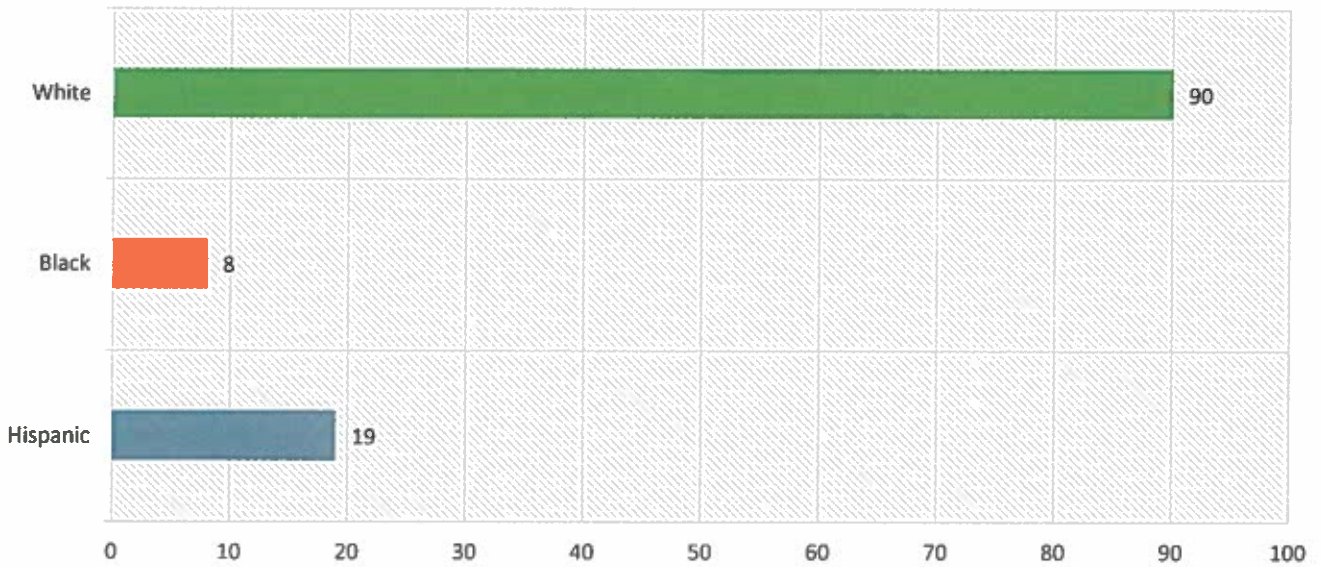
### DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS BY AGE AND GENDER



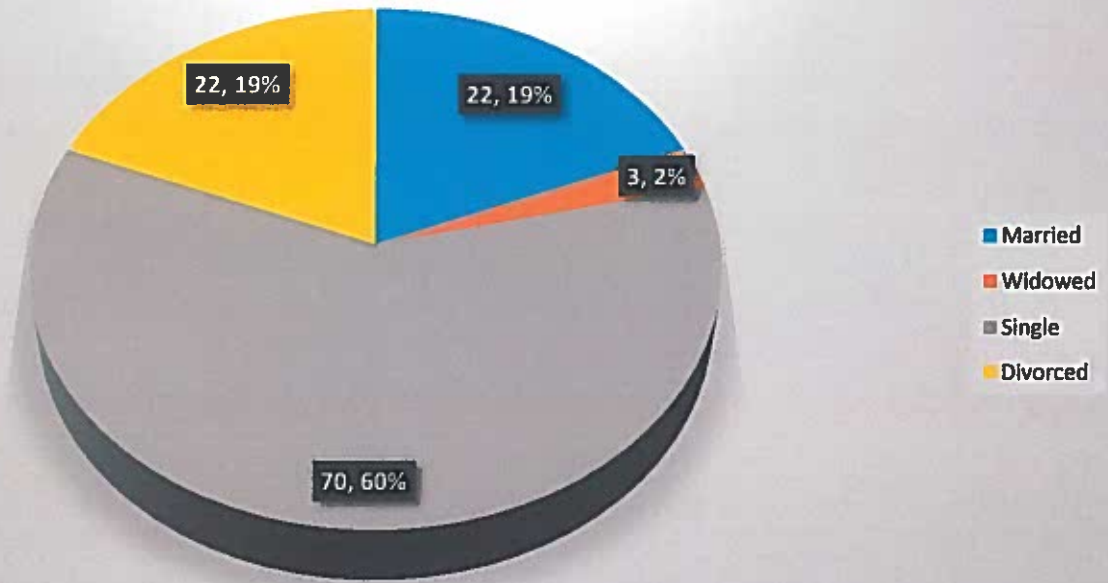
### Sex of Drug Related Deaths



### Race of Drug Related Deaths



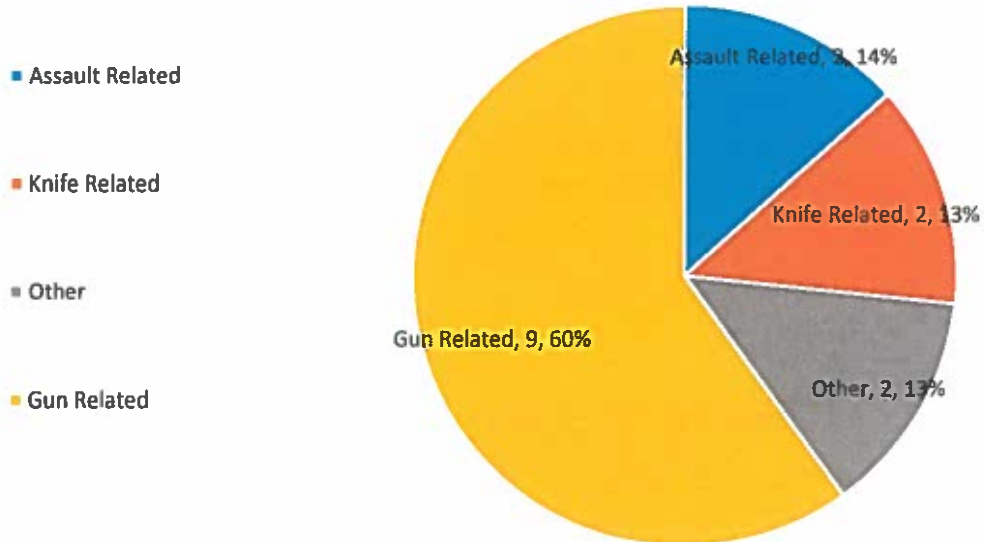
## Marital Status of Drug Related Decedents



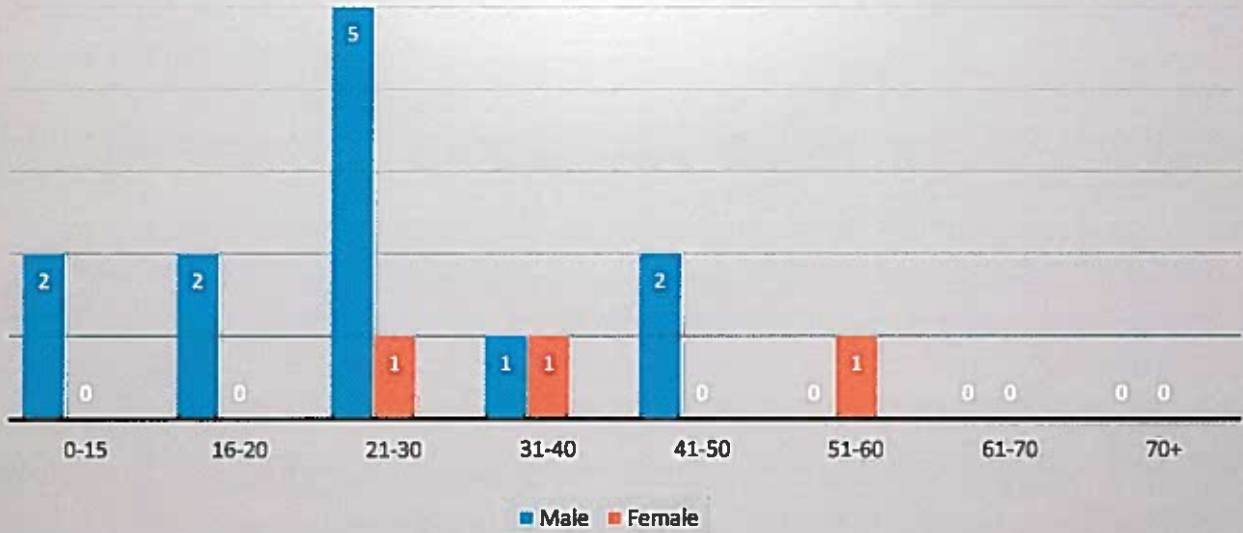
### 2015 HOMICIDE INFORMATION

Homicide is death resulting from injuries inflicted by another person. 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. During the 2015 year, there were 15 homicides. The youngest death being 1 years old and the oldest death being 54 years old.

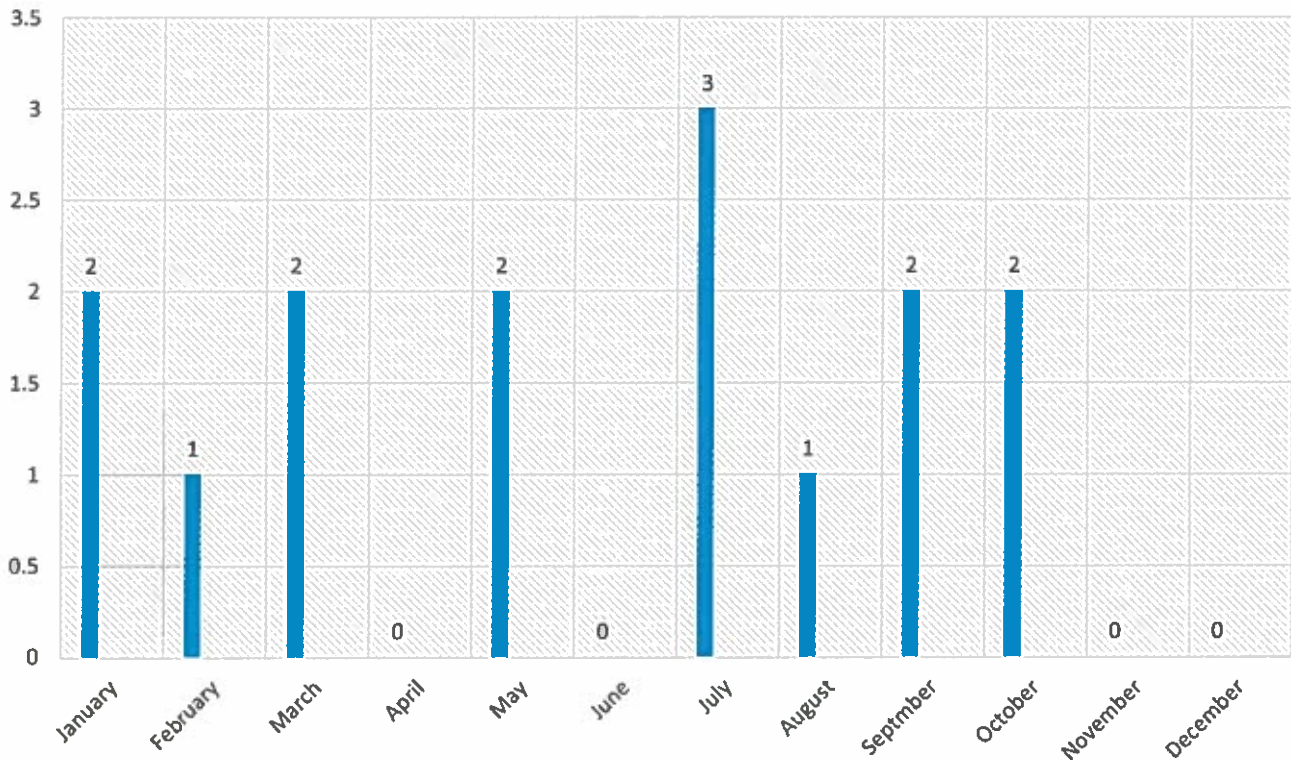
### 2015 HOMICIDE



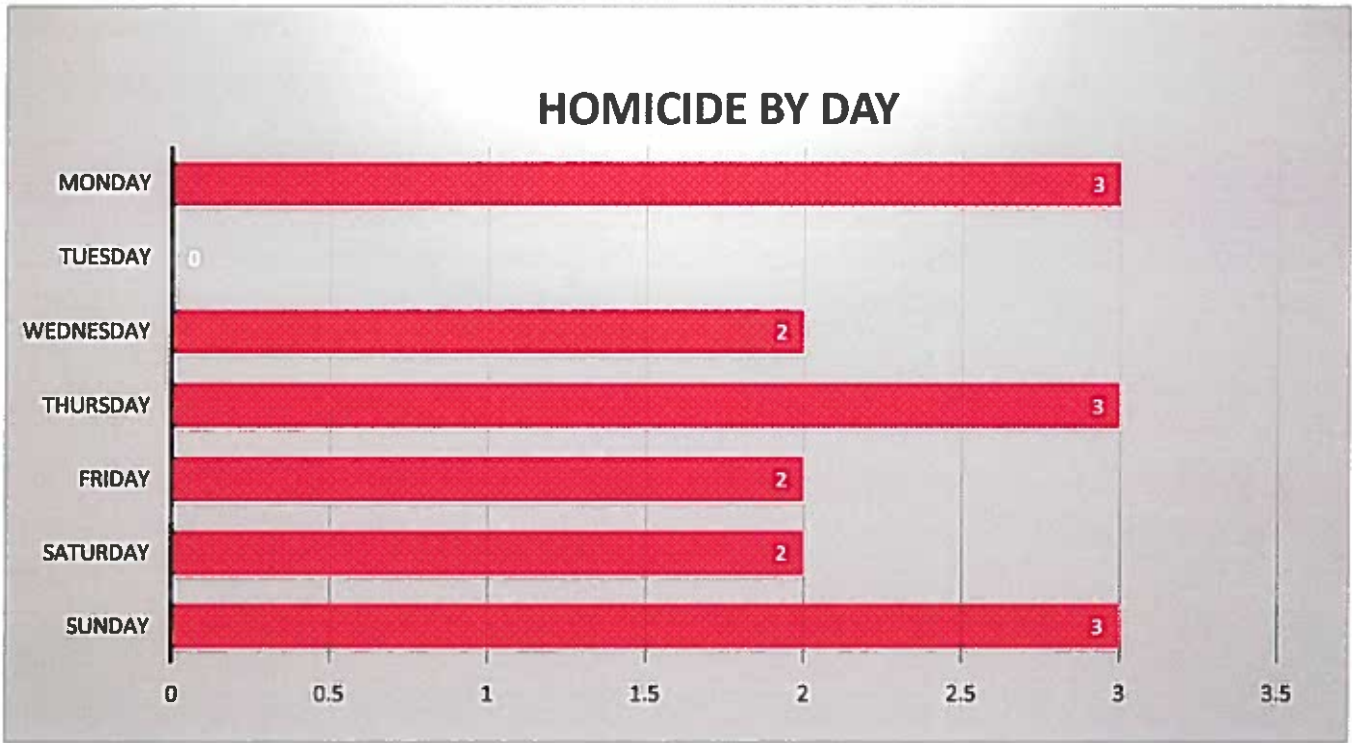
## HOMICIDE BY AGE AND GENDER



## HOMICIDE BY MONTH

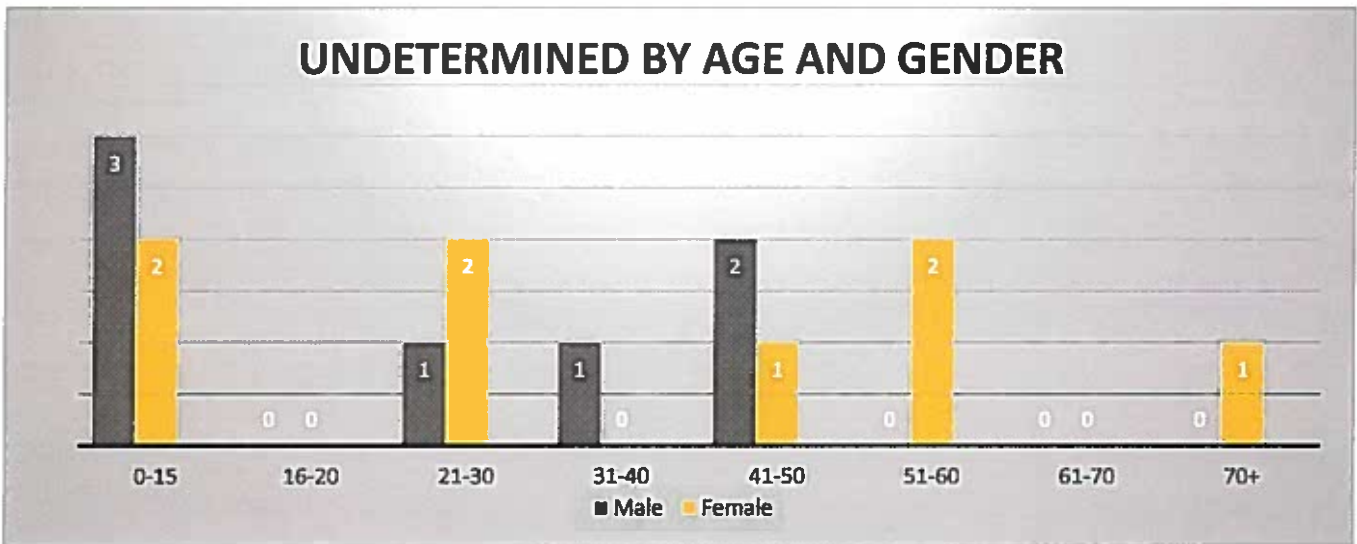






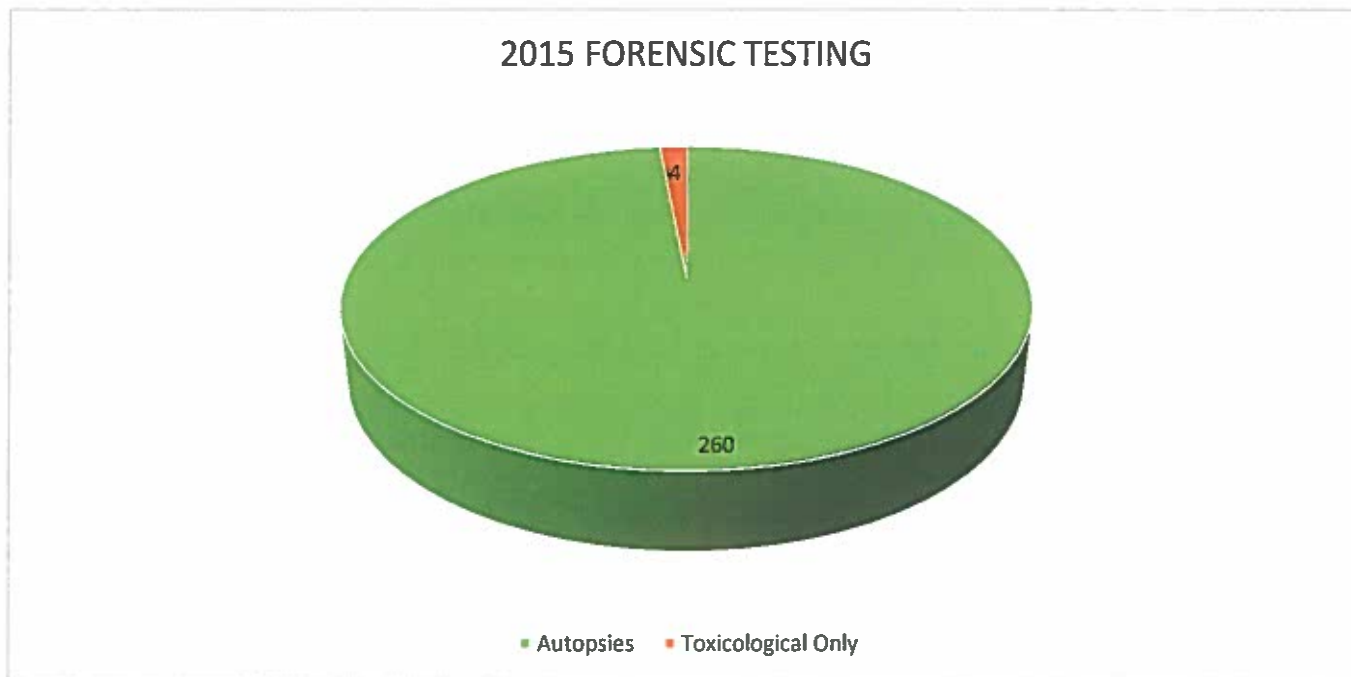
**2015 COULD NOT BE DETERMINED INFORMATION**

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, the Manner of Death was unable to be classified even with a complete autopsy, scene investigation, and toxicology testing.



### FORENSIC AUTOPSY

There were 260 autopsies in the 2015 year, which toxicological studies are a standard. Only in 4 investigations, a toxicological only test was performed. For 2015, all decedents had been identified.



### ORGAN PROCUREMENT

The Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center supports Organ Donation and works with the regional Organ Procurement organizations to fulfill the wishes of the recently deceased and their families. During 2015, the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center assisted with 101 organ procurements.



**GOALS OF INTERNSHIP:**

The internship is designed to ultimately benefit both the intern and the Coroner's Office. Students are afforded the opportunity to gain academic credit, while simultaneously receiving the practical work experience in a Forensic setting. Employers can not only benefit from the skills and assistance of the interns, but they can also enjoy the advantage of being able to evaluate possible future employees first hand.

Internships are appropriate for advanced undergraduate or graduate students attending facilities that have a structured, in-house internship program. This way, the internship can be conducted under the joint supervision of an on-site advisor and a school faculty member. Both parties agree on the internships objectives and assignments, while jointly evaluating the intern's performance during and after their experience. Internships are even more substantial to the student and the employer if they are taken close to the student's date of graduation. This type of planning makes the student more open for the possibility of employment, should the opportunity present itself.

**STUDENT ELIGIBILITY & EXPECTATIONS:**

As with any internship opportunity, there are certain qualifications that the individual must meet in order to be considered for an internship at the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center: The individual must be a student that is enrolled at an undergraduate or graduate facility with an official internship program, where the student will receive academic credit for time spent under supervision of their advisor at the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center.

Undergraduate students must be of at least junior status, and should have a GPA of 3.0 or greater.

It is important to understand that an accepted intern will, in time, be working directly with a designated supervising Deputy on investigations. The same expectations for the Intern will be demanded as with all members of the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center to carry themselves in a respectable and courteous manner.

**2015 Interns:**

Hannah Gardner	DeSales University	Criminal Justice
Lauren Nebhut	DeSales University	Forensic Biology & Forensic Psychology
Rachel Tallarico	Massachusetts Maritime Academy for Emergency Management	
Elizabeth Sorrentino	Dequesne University	Biology
Maryanne Lutz	DeSales University	Criminal Justice



## 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 we 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/mdiaccrreditationfinal.pdf>





**IN CLOSING**

My office has experienced 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 the continued support of the Lehigh County Administration and Board of Commissioners.

The overwhelming response my staff and I have continued to receive 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 Deputy Coroners 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

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Scott M. Grim, D-ABMDI  
Lehigh County Coroner

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



Jurisdictional Cases	Monthly Statistics												Total		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec			
<b>Total (Cases Only)</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>907</b>		
Natural	39	38	37	39	35	27	34	34	36	29	38	37	423		
Accident	30	27	30	35	29	33	38	21	29	45	22	30	369		
Suicide	4	5	6	8	7	3	5	4	6	9	9	11	77		
Homicide	2	1	2	0	2	0	3	1	2	2	0	0	15		
Undetermined	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	3	0	0	1	15		
Other	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	6		
Pending	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2		
<b>Non-Jurisdictionals</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>2804</b>		
Cremation	229	209	217	194	221	183	184	187	201	221	187	223	2456		
Autopsy	15	15	19	25	31	24	31	16	23	22	20	19	260		
Tox Only	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	4		
Consult Only	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		
D.A. Ordered In County Autopsy	2	1	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	13		
Out of County	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2		
Unidentified Bodies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Organ Donation	10	5	8	5	14	5	12	9	3	10	10	10	101		
<b>Monthly Totals</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>6167</b>		
Breakdown other than Natural Deaths	Accident												Undetermined		
	MVA	81	Industrial											Other	
	Falls	156	Choking												
	Fire / Burns	13	Water Related												
	Exposure	3	Drug												
	Other	13	Carbon Mon												
	Total 369														
	Other														
	Burial/Crypt	Fetal Death										Homicide Breakdowns			
	Bones/Remains	(no Manner)													
Other	Other														
Total 6															
Gun												Homicide Breakdowns			
Asphyxia															
Hanging															
C O															
Train															
Total 77															
Burns												Homicide Breakdowns			
Jump Knife															
Drug															
Other															
Total 15															
Fire												Homicide Breakdowns			
Gun															
Knife															
Drug															
Child															
Total 5															
In County												Homicide Breakdowns			
Out of County															
In A town															
Total 15															