

Lehigh County Coroner's Office  
& Forensics Center

2017 Annual Report

CORONER SCOTT M. GRIM, D-ABMDI





## 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 2017 Annual Report for the Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center. The number of investigations increased by 3.77% since 2016. Since the opening of the Forensics Center in 2015, we have seen a 9.49% increase in the number of deaths our office has investigated. 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".

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Scott M. Grim, D-ABMDI  
Lehigh County Coroner



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# Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center

## 2017 Annual Report

Tab 1

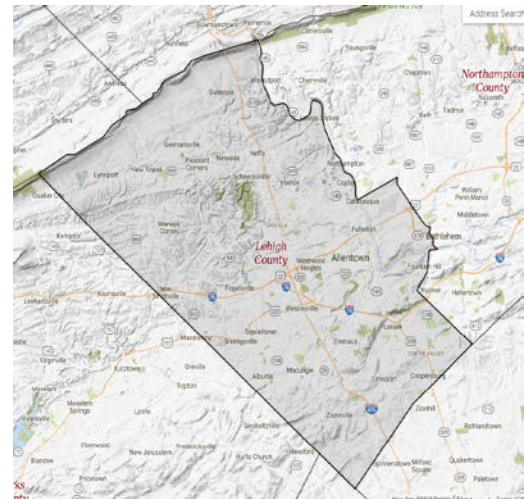
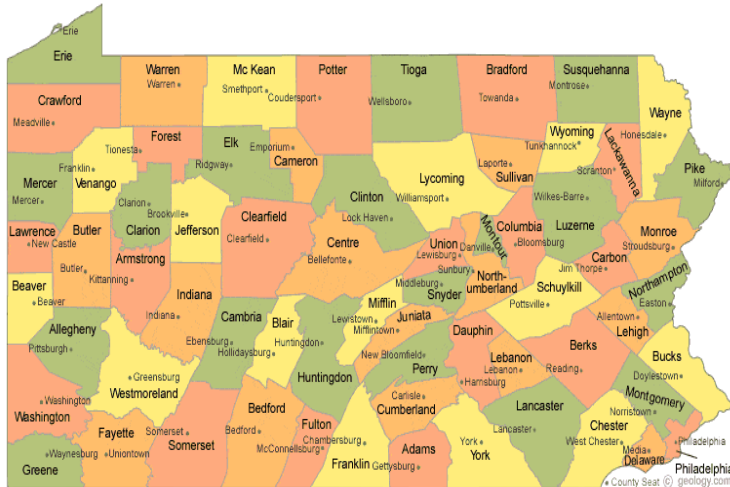
### IN THIS SECTION:

- INTRODUCTION
- MISSION STATEMENT
- PURPOSE OF THE CORONER'S OFFICE & FORENSICS CENTER
- THE LEHIGH COUNTY CORONER AND STAFF
- PENNSYLVANIA STATE CORONERS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

## 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 345.17 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 366,494<sup>1</sup>. Lehigh County is the 11<sup>th</sup> most populated County in Pennsylvania from 2010 to 2016, Lehigh County has seen an increase in the population of 3.9%<sup>2</sup>.

The population demographics<sup>3</sup> of Lehigh County are 83.8% White, 9.1% Black/African American, .8% American Indian or Alaska Native, 3.6% Asian, .2% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 2.5% Multi-Racial.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mcall.com/news/local/mc-nws-lehigh-valley-census-estimate-2017-story.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/geo/chart/lehighcountypennsylvania,PA/PST120216#viewtop>

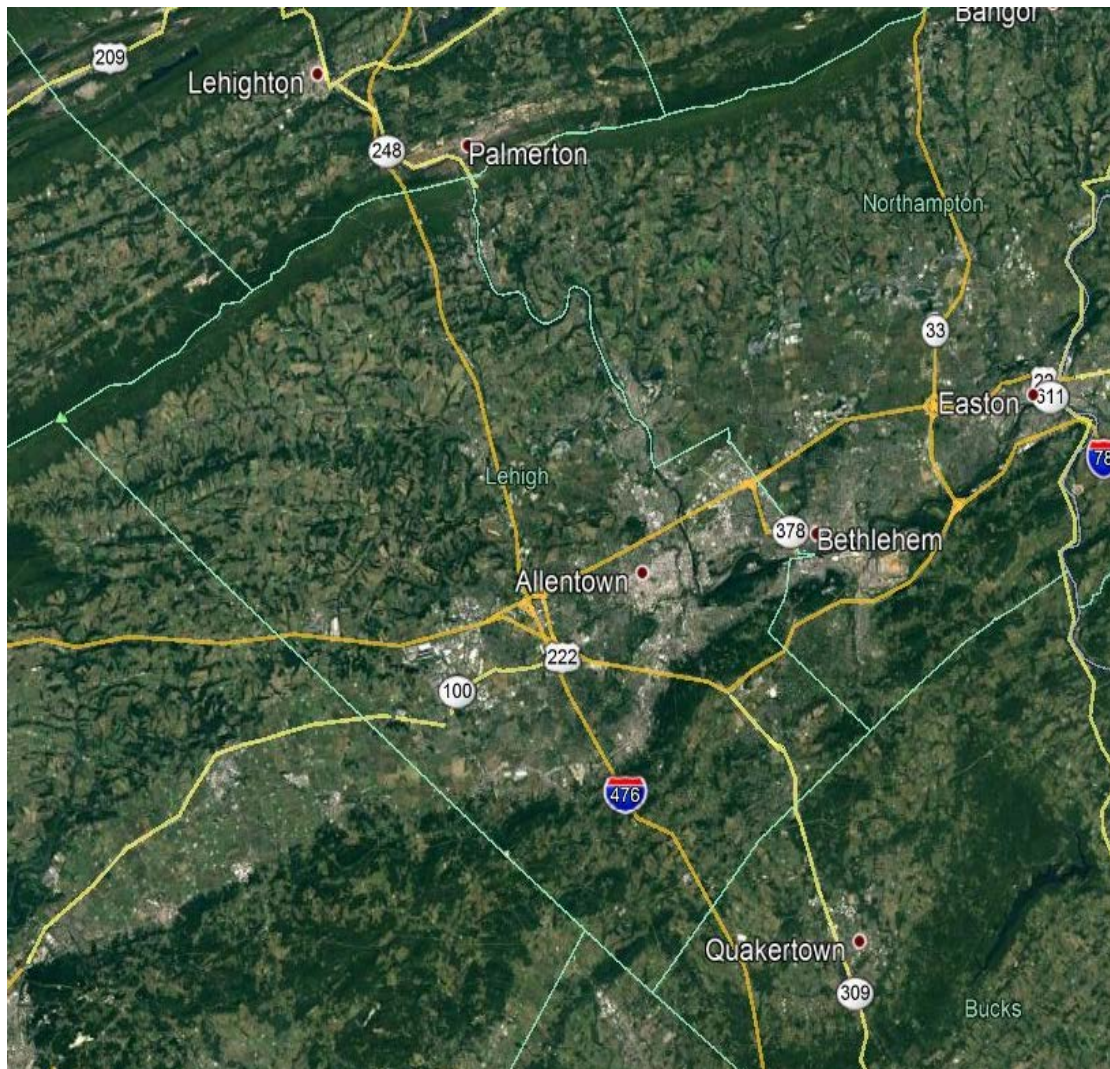
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lehighcountypennsylvania/PS>



Lehigh County is home to 44 Nursing Homes/Care Facilities<sup>4</sup>, 28+ Hotels/Motels, 143 Apartment Complexes, 27 major office buildings, 25 major industrial parks<sup>5</sup>. Lehigh County is home to 10 Hospitals with 2 Level 1 Trauma Centers and network affiliations with multiple surrounding Counties.

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.



<sup>4</sup> <https://www.seniorhomes.com/c/pa/lehigh-county/nursing-homes/>

<sup>5</sup> Please note as the growth of Lehigh County continues to prosper, these numbers are continuously increasing



## 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



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## 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 Statutory Mandate from 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.



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**The Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center**  
**4350 Broadway, Allentown, PA 18104**

The Office of the Coroner, the District Attorney's Office Ballistics Lab and Emergency Management Special Operations Team have adopted the Consolidated Collaborative Approach to maximize efforts and reduce costs at the Forensics Center. This idea has garnered attention from many First Responders that have visited our facility.



**BALLISTICS AND TOOL MARK LABORATORY**



**SPECIAL OPERATIONS TEAM**



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





## LEHIGH COUNTY CORONER

**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.

Scott 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, Past Vice President & Past President of the Pennsylvania State Coroner's Association, and was active on the Legislative, Strategic Planning and Act 122 Committees. He also served as the Past Secretary and Board Member to the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators and is a Founding Board Member and Secretary/Treasurer of the Society for Medicolegal Death Investigators. Further, he has held Board Membership on the National Institute of Justice Steering Committee for Forensic Death Investigations, the Scientific Working Group of Medicolegal Death Investigations and the Pennsylvania State Attorney General's Medical-Legal Advisory Board on Child Abuse. Currently, he is a member of the Pennsylvania State Child Death Review Team's Executive Board, the Lehigh and Northampton County's Child Death Review Teams, Lehigh County Suicide Prevention Task Force and Lehigh County Heroin and Opioid Prevention Task Force.

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## STAFF MEMBERS

### FULL TIME STAFF

**Chief Deputy Andrew H. 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 the Emergency Response Team, 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 and testified as an expert in Lehigh and Northampton Counties and US 3<sup>rd</sup> Circuit and testified in Crime Scene Investigation, Crime Scene Processing, Latent Print Identification, Bloodstain Pattern Analysis, and Crime Scene Reconstruction. Andy served two years as an Advisory Member on the Scientific Working Group for Medicolegal Death Investigations – SWGMDI Death Scene Investigations Sub-Committee. 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 III, 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 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. Mike has achieved National Death Investigation certification through the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators.

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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. He obtained his certification as a Diplomat with The American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators. Dan has been a Certified Police Officer since 1993 and currently works for the Slatington and Coplay Police Departments. 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 is one of two Trainers 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. Craig obtained his certification as a Diplomat with The American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators. 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 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 and obtained his certification as a Diplomate with The American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators. 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 has served the Lehigh County Coroner's Office since November 2001. Jason received his Basic Coroner's Certification in 2003. In 2012 he obtained his Diplomate with the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators. Jason has served with the Slatington Volunteer Fire Department for 12 years and is now the 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 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.

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**Deputy Gabrielle Riley:** Gabrielle has been with the Lehigh County Coroner's Office starting as a part-time Morgue Technician in December 2014. The position transitioned to full-time, and she was sworn as a Deputy in 2016. Gabrielle received her Basic Coroner's Certification in 2017. Gabrielle has completed courses at the Lehigh Carbon Community College and also works as an Eye Recovery Trainer with Sightlife.

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**Deputy Cassandra Schiffner:** Cassandra has been with the Lehigh County Coroner's Office since January and received her Basic Coroner's Certification in 2017. Cassandra had previously worked at the Lehigh County Central Booking Center and as an Orthodontics Assistant. Cassandra also works at the Venel Institute as an Assistant.

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**Deputy Jackie Seidman:** Jackie started working with Lehigh County in 1997 as part time Intake Officer at Lehigh County Prison. She moved into the position of part time work crew supervisor working in the Juvenile Probation Department in 2002. After earning her bachelor's degree in Sociology/Social Work at East Stroudsburg University in 2007, she became a full time Juvenile Probation Officer specializing in Substance Abuse and After-care services. Jackie transitioned into the Coroner's Office as a Deputy Coroner in September 2016 and received her Basic Coroner's Certification in 2017.

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**Maryann Lutz, Morgue Technician:** Maryanne has been working for Lehigh County Coroner's Office since July 2016 as the morgue technician. Maryanne graduated from DeSales University with her Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Criminal Justice. Her Masters Externship helped her earn the current position she holds at Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center. Maryann received her Basic Coroner's Certification in 2017.



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**Marianne Granitz, Administrative Assistant:** Marianne has been with the Coroner's Office for 8 years and with the County a total of 13 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**

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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 Dickinson:** Kelly started with the Lehigh County Coroner's Office as a Part-Time Deputy in May of 2015. Kelly brings over 20 years of Emergency Medical Services experience with 15 of those years as a Paramedic serving Lehigh County.

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**Holli Johnson, RT:** Holli is a recent graduate of Northampton Community College. She received her Associate's Degree in Radiologic Science in 2016. She has been a member of the ARRT since 2016. Holli currently works for St. Luke's Fountain Hill and enjoys the complexity and challenges in the Emergency Department. Her love for forensics earned her a position here at Lehigh County Coroner's Office.

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**Heather Newman, RT, (AAS) (R):** Heather graduated from Northampton Community College in 1993 with an Associate's Degree in Radiologic Science. She has been ARRT registered for 24 years. Heather has worked at St. Luke's Hospital in Fountain Hill for 24 years, first as a General Diagnostic Technologist, than as a Clinical Instructor, and now as an Operating Room Radiologic Technologist. Heather previously worked at Venel Institute as a Radiologic Technologist/ Laboratory Assistant from 2013-2015. Heather has been a part-time Deputy Coroner for the Northampton County Coroner's Office for three years.

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**EvaMarie Poliquin, MBA, RT:** EvaMarie has been with the Lehigh County Coroner's office since Sept. 2014. She has been a Registered Radiologic Technologist for 25 years and has worked for Lehigh Valley Health Network for the last 20 years. Her experience with forensic radiography has spanned her entire career. In addition to her radiography experience, she is a Certified EMT and CPR Instructor. She recently completed her graduate studies in Business and Public Health. In her downtime she enjoys spending time with her family and traveling.

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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 Police Officer for the Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority Police Department.

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**Deputy Jason Smith:** Jason has been with the Coroner's Office since 2014 and successfully completed the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Coroner's Basic Training Course and received his certification in 2016. Jason also attended a Medicolegal Death Investigators Class sponsored by St. Louis University in 2017. Jason brings over 20 years of Emergency Medical Services experience to the Coroner's Office having worked at various EMS Agencies throughout Carbon, Lehigh, and Northampton Counties. Jason is still very active in the field of Emergency Services and is currently the Deputy Director of the Eastern PA EMS Council, a nonprofit organization granted by the PA



Department of Health, Bureau of EMS responsible for the development, maintenance, and improvement of EMS within a 6-county Region.

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**Deputy Rachel Tallarico:** Rachel started part-time with the Lehigh County Coroner's Office in October 2017, after doing two internships with the office. Rachel is currently enrolled at Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science pursuing a license in Funeral Directing and Embalming. Rachel was previously a Military Police Officer with the Massachusetts Army National Guard and attended the Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

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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 and successfully completed the Coroner's Education Course later that year. He is also a Diplomate with the American Board of Medical Death Investigators. Ed retired in 2016 as a Sergeant from the Allentown Police Department, Traffic Bureau Supervisor after serving since 1992. Ed is a Full Time Security Officer with the Allentown School District and recently was elected to serve on the Allentown City Council.

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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". In 2014 Chris was also qualified as an expert witness in Northampton County Court of Common Pleas.

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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) Detective and is currently a Sergeant on Patrol. 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. Jason is now certified as a Defensive Tactics Instructor Trainer with The Human Factors Research Group (HFRG) formally PPCT.

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## **A LOSS TO OUR OFFICE**

Each year, the Pennsylvania State Coroners' Association takes turns hosting their Annual Training and Business Conference in different counties. This helps to broaden training perspectives and showcase different aspects and characteristics of the hosting county.



This past year, The Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center hosted the 2017 Pennsylvania State Coroners' Association Annual Conference in the memory of Deputy Coroner Wendy Brantley, who passed away on August 11, 2017 after fighting a courageous battle with cancer. The conference was held at the Holiday Inn Conference Center, Fogelsville, from September 25th through the 30th. 46 of the 67 Pennsylvania Counties were represented during the week.

Monday and Tuesday were open to First Responders (Coroners, Police and Fire Personnel) for training on the following subjects; "The Criminal Justice System in the Digital Age", "Interviewing Techniques and Collaborating with Law Enforcement", and "From the Death Scene Investigation to Court".

Wednesday through Friday was training and assorted business meetings for the various County Coroner's Offices represented and the Pennsylvania State Coroners' Association. Training courses presented were; "Forensic Odontology and Death Investigations", "Gang Awareness", "Recognizing and Identifying Drugs & Investigator Safety", "Interoperability Between Agencies Before it Hits the Fan", "Property, Medication and Evidence Management: Best Practices for the Coroner's Office", "The Media – Relationships Between the News and the Coroner's Office", "Cold Case Homicides", and "Victimization and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder within the Coroner's Office". We concluded the week with a tour of our new facility.





# Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center

## 2017 Annual Report

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- CATAGORIES OF INVESTIGATIONS
- MANNERS OF DEATH
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  - SUICIDE
  - ACCIDENT
  - HOMICIDE
  - COULD NOT BE DETERMINED

Tab 2



## 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, Accident, Suicide, Homicide and Could not be determined.

## CATAGORIES OF INVESTIGATIONS

### **JURISDICTIONAL INVESTIGATIONS**

Jurisdictional Investigations demand that the Coroner's Office Investigator responds to the place of death. Whether the death occurred in a public place, hospital or private home, the law requires the Coroner or his staff shall have a 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. Examples of this would be: a shooting victim from the streets of another city, who was flown to one of our hospitals and dies as a result of his wounds, an automobile accident that occurs in another county and the occupant is transported to one of the Lehigh County hospitals and dies or an unattended house death of an elderly individual in New Tripoli.

All of these cases require varying degrees of investigation and coordination with law enforcement entities from within or from outside of Lehigh County. All investigational information must be gathered, to ensure the facts of the death are known, including what occurred to place the decedent into this loss of life situation. If it is necessary to conduct a post mortem examination (autopsy) it is the responsibility of this Office to schedule and attend that procedure. In addition to notifying and coordinating the autopsy time with the District Attorney, Law Enforcement entities, Forensic Pathologists and our staff, we must be present to photograph the autopsy as well as fingerprint and preserve evidence from the procedure. In addition, our investigator is responsible for obtaining a complete medical history of both the present event and all past medical history which might have some relationship to the death. The investigator must then document thoroughly all the information gathered through the investigation in a written report. They must also itemize and categorize all evidence obtained and secure the evidence until the case is resolved or until it can be turned over to the investigating law enforcement entity.

Finally, the Investigator must identify, locate and notify the next of kin of the death and then coordinate the release of the remains to the funeral home selected by the family member. During the investigation any personal property on or around the deceased must be gathered and secured until the next of kin or their representative can collect it. This requires our investigators to collect and itemize the personal property that is gathered during the investigation. The property is either returned to the next of kin at the scene or brought back to our office where it is secured until collected by the responsible party.





## **NON-JURISDICTIONAL INVESTIGATIONS**

These cases are reported to the Coroner's Office by Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Hospice Units or Medical Facilities. In most cases the deaths are due to a natural disease process and either a Physician, Physician's Assistant or Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner will be certifying the Death Certificate. Non-Jurisdictional cases requires less of an investment in time than a jurisdictional case. These cases must be reported if the death occurred within twenty-four hours of admission to the hospital or nursing facility. These cases do not fall under the scope of Jurisdictional Investigations and are usually reported by the Physician or Registered Nurse caring for the individual during his/her illness.

Reporting of Non-Jurisdictional cases to the Coroner's Office is important because a review of the case information is assessed by our investigators to ensure it is a non-jurisdictional case and not a jurisdictional case which requires a more in depth review. An example of this is a decedent that died of a systemic infection. The infection alone is a natural death and the physician may sign the death certificate as such. However after some questioning of the reporting agency it is discovered that the decedent was injured in an auto accident twenty (20) years ago and has been disabled and confined to a bed from the original incident. Another scenario might be that a decedent who was shot five years ago in an attempted homicide. He has remained unconscious since the shooting and dies of one of the complications of the injuries that occurred when he was shot. If the information goes unreported and the death certificate certified as one of the complications rather than due to the gunshot, the criminal may go unpunished.

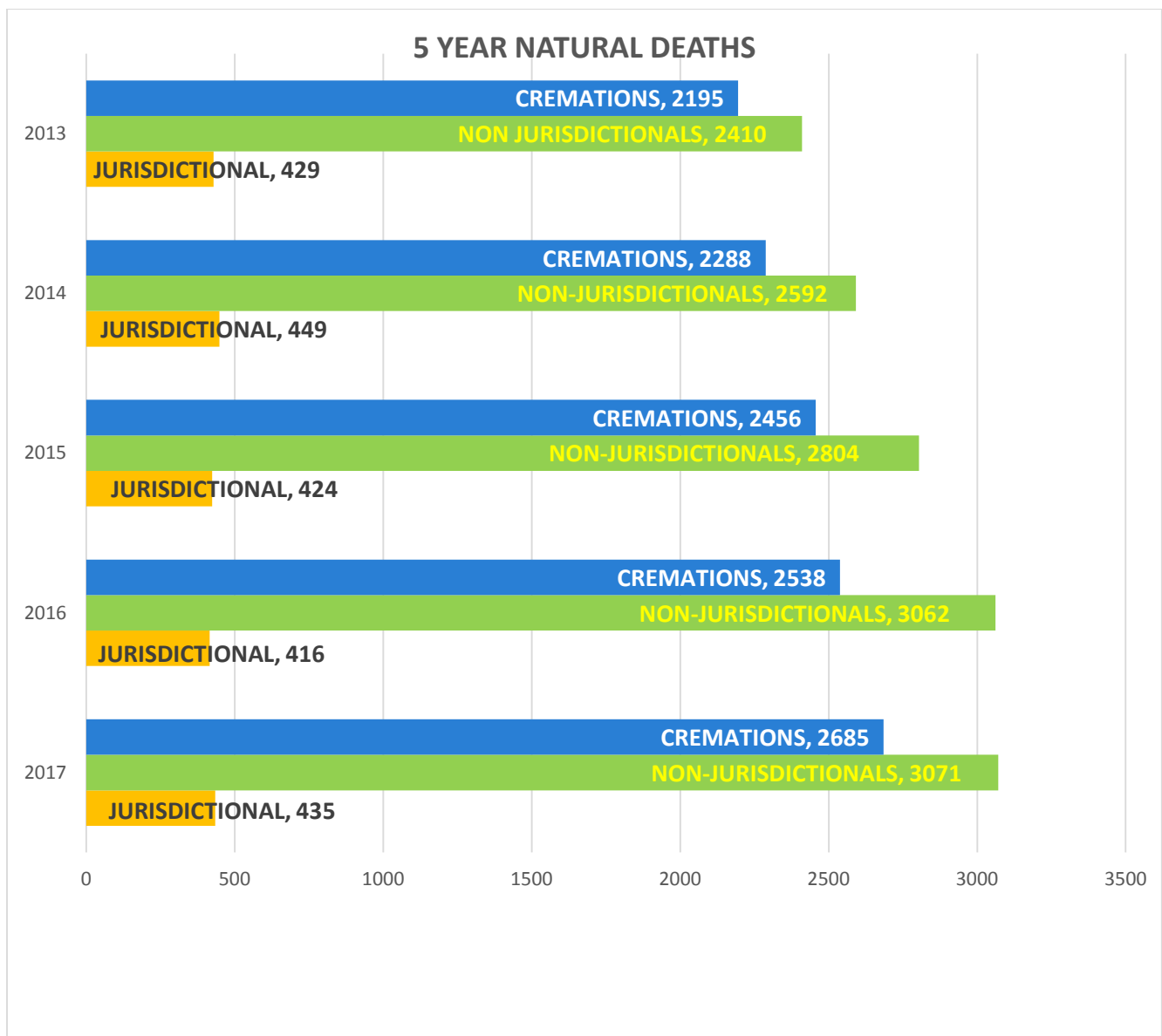
## **CREMATION AUTHORIZATIONS**

Deaths of any person whose body will be cremated, buried at sea or otherwise disposed of, so as thereafter unavailable for examination must be reported to the Coroner's Office before the aforementioned procedure can take place. The Coroner's Office must investigate the circumstances surrounding the death and then give authorization to the Funeral Director to proceed with the final arrangements for the deceased. This assures that all causes and manners are verified before the final disposition of the body. Thus preventing dispositions before the case is investigated.



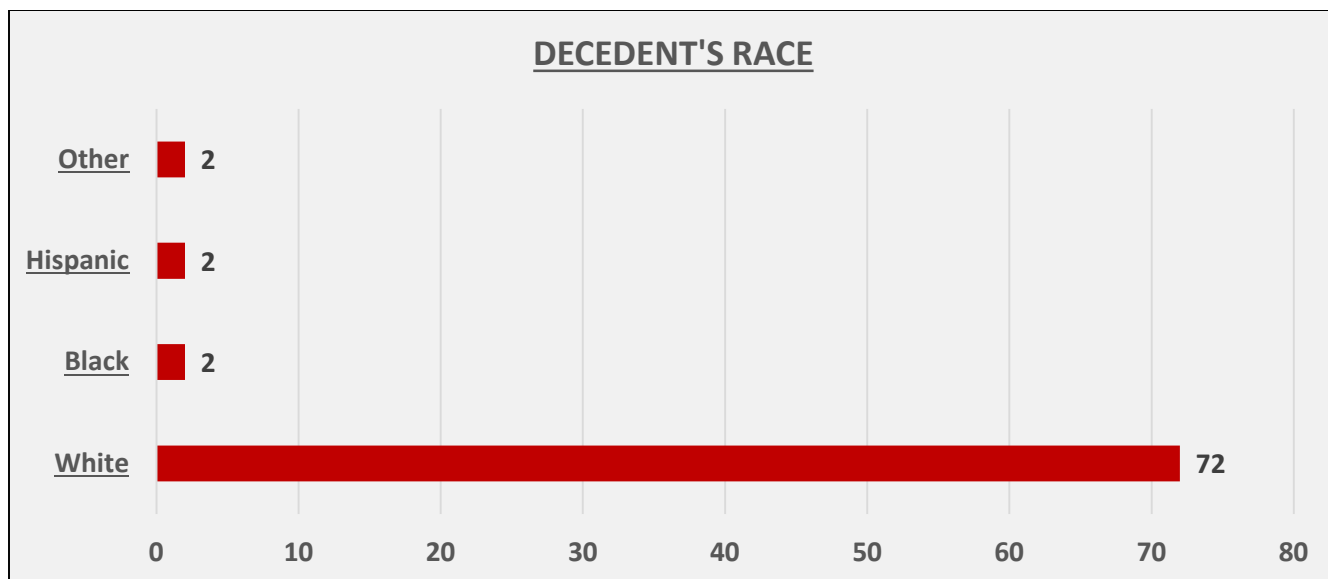
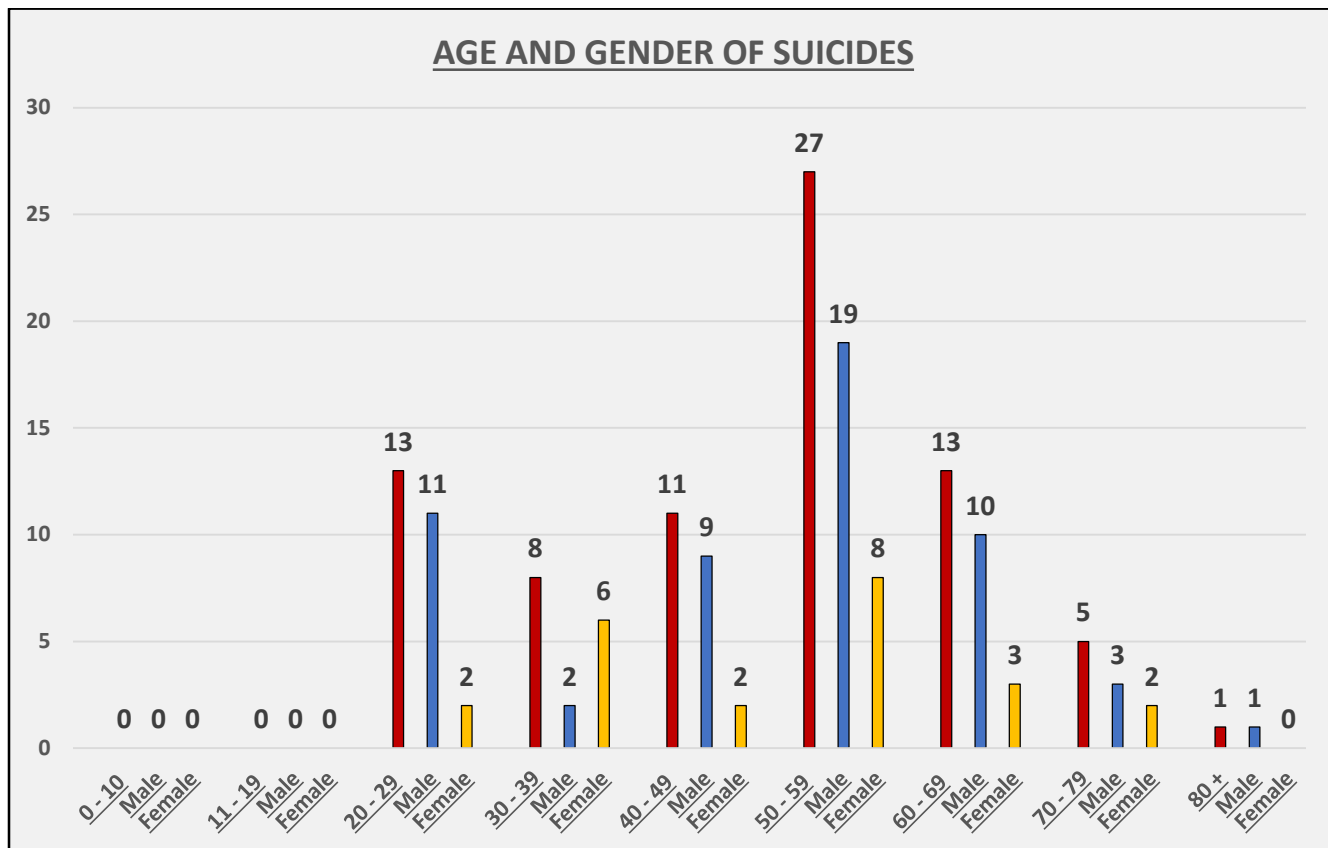
## 2017 NATURAL DEATH INFORMATION

A vast majority of the deaths investigated by the Coroner's Office are determined to be natural deaths. In 2017, there were 3,948 deaths that were reported to our office and ruled natural. 435 of these deaths were unattended and required our office to take Jurisdiction in the death, which consists of an investigation and external examination of the decedents. There were 3,071 attended deaths that were reported, but certified by the decedent's attending physician and not requiring a scene investigation. There had been 442 Natural deaths reported as a Request for Cremation Authorization. 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 435 Jurisdictional investigations conducted, attending Physicians certified 172 of these cases. If the attending physician opts not to certify the death, our office certifies and issues the death certificate. Autopsies were required to be performed in 83 of the 435 Jurisdictional investigations.

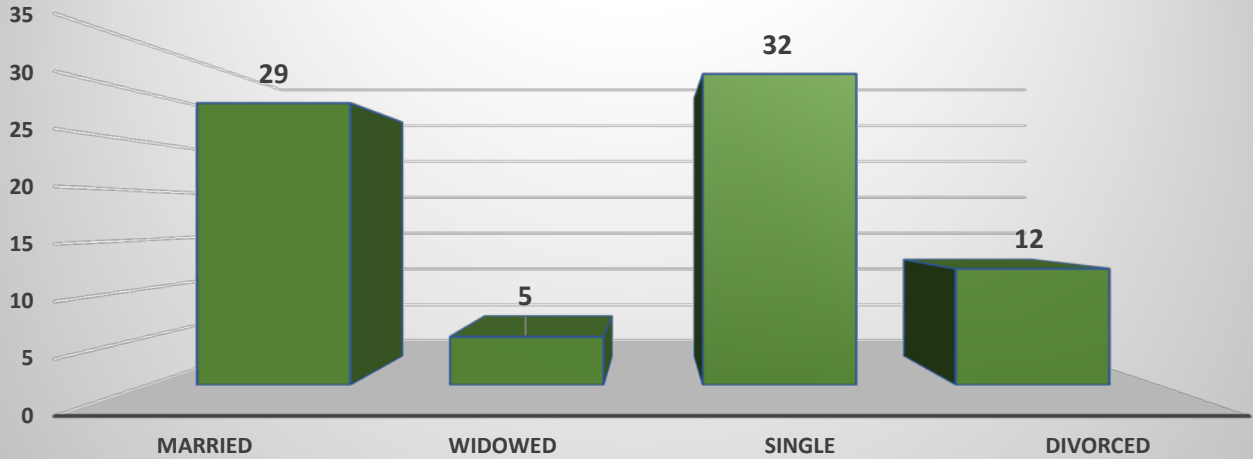


## 2017 SUICIDE INFORMATION

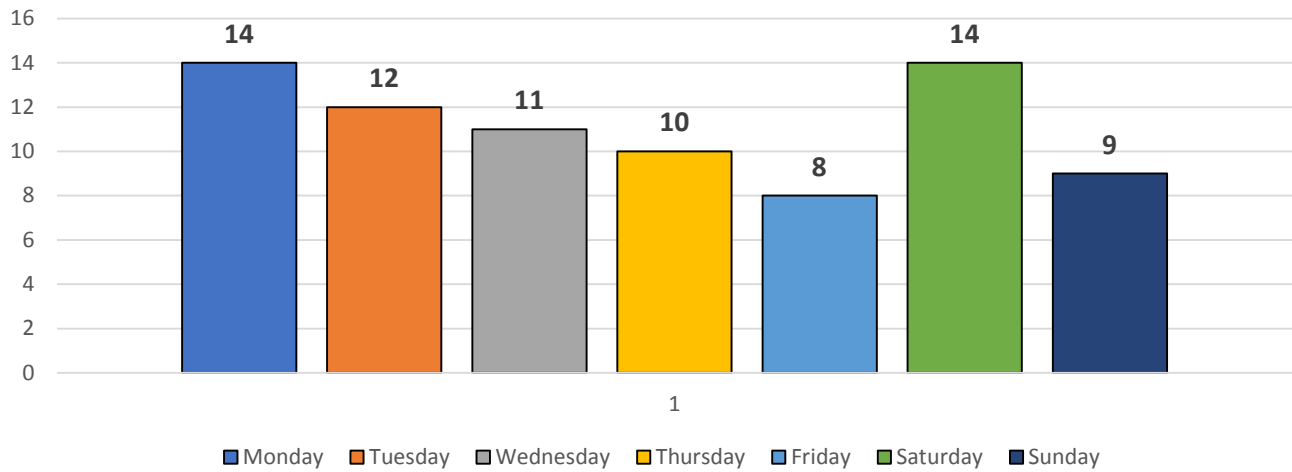
Suicide is death caused by an intentional action to end one's own life. Suicide deaths can range from gun related incidents to drug ingestions. During the 2017 year, there were 78 deaths by suicide. There was 1 carbon monoxide, 17 hangings, 19 drug overdoses, 1 asphyxia, 1 jumping, 1 burn, 36 deaths by firearm, 1 death by knife and 1 death by other means.



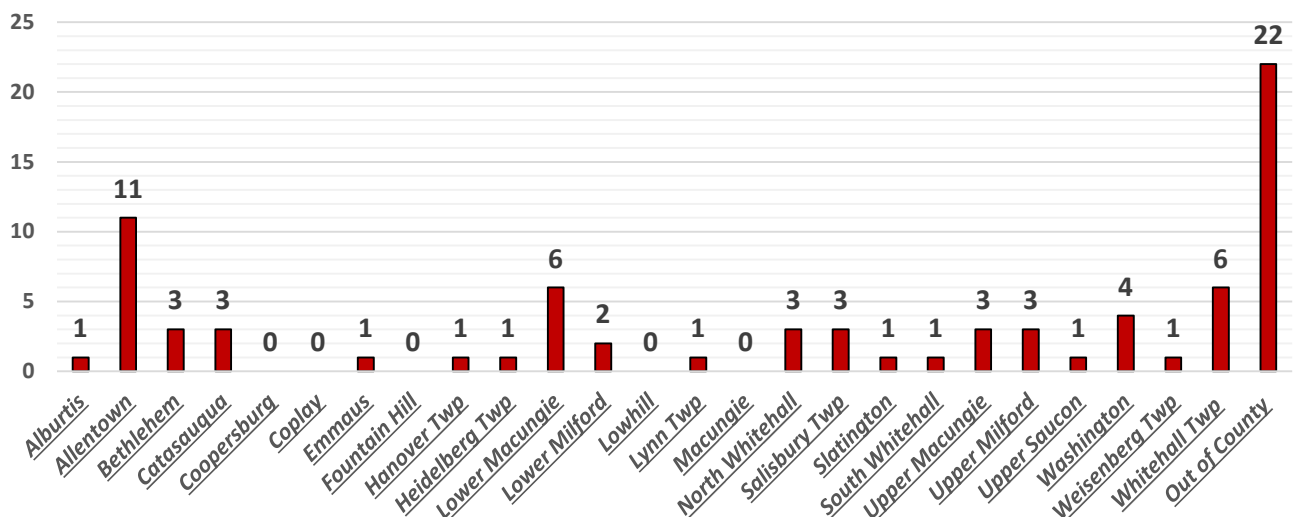
### MARITAL STATUS OF SUICIDES

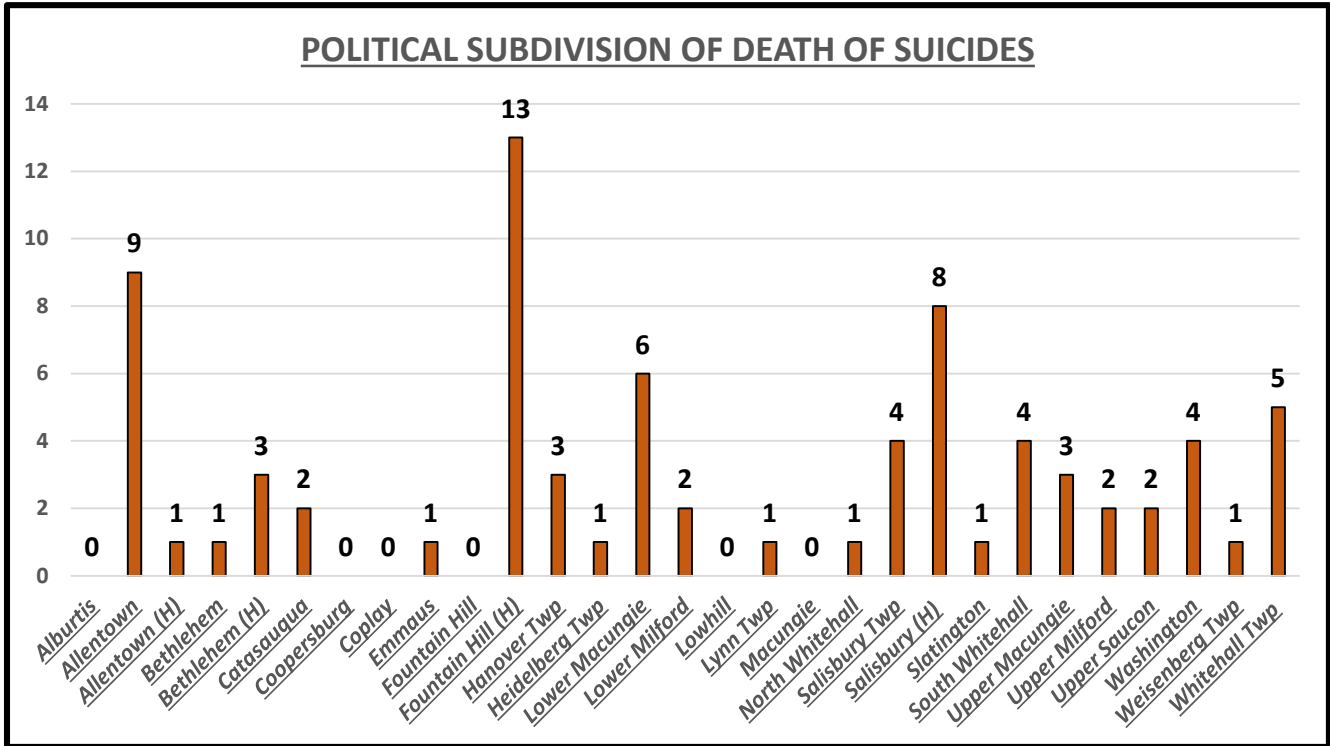


### DAY OF WEEK OF SUICIDES

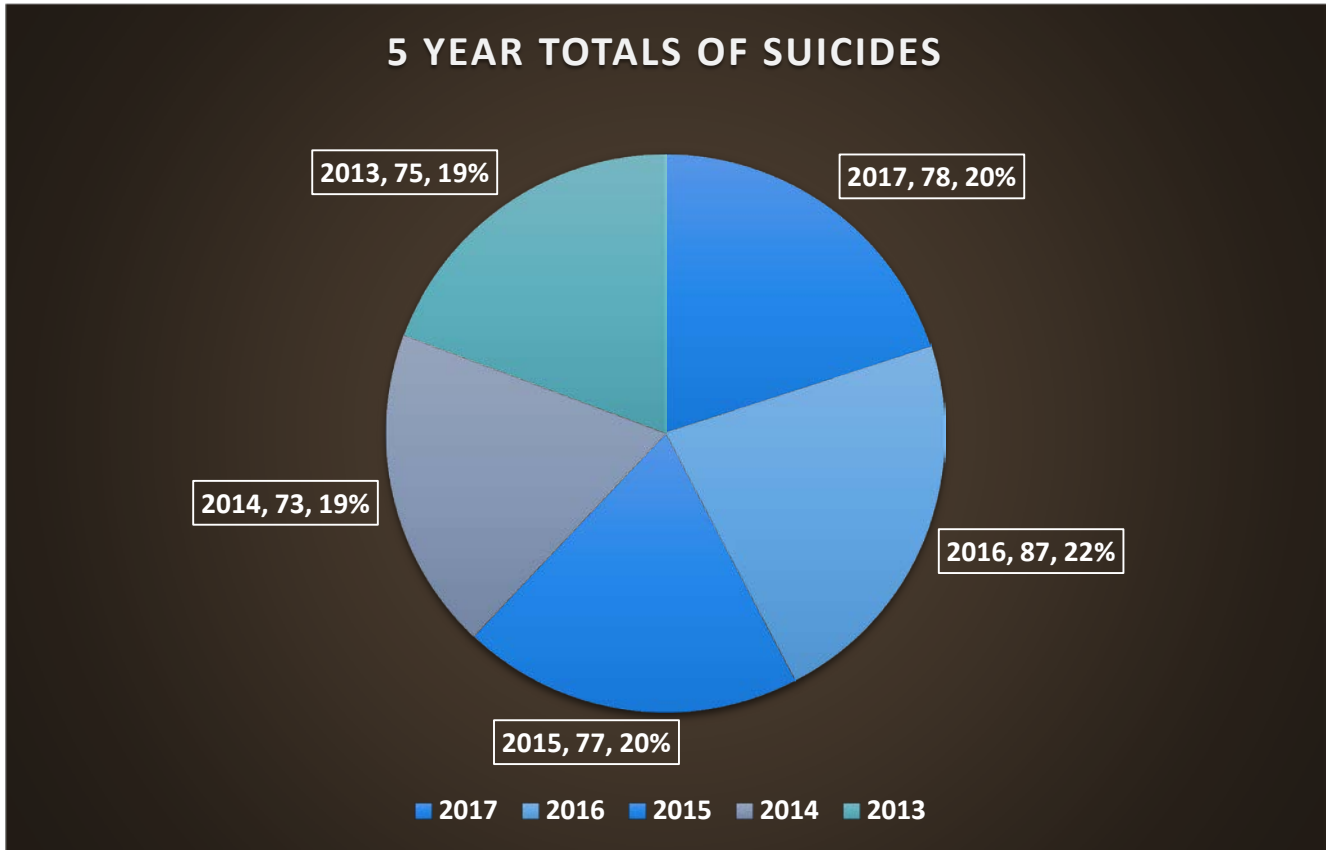


### POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF RESIDENCY OF SUICIDES

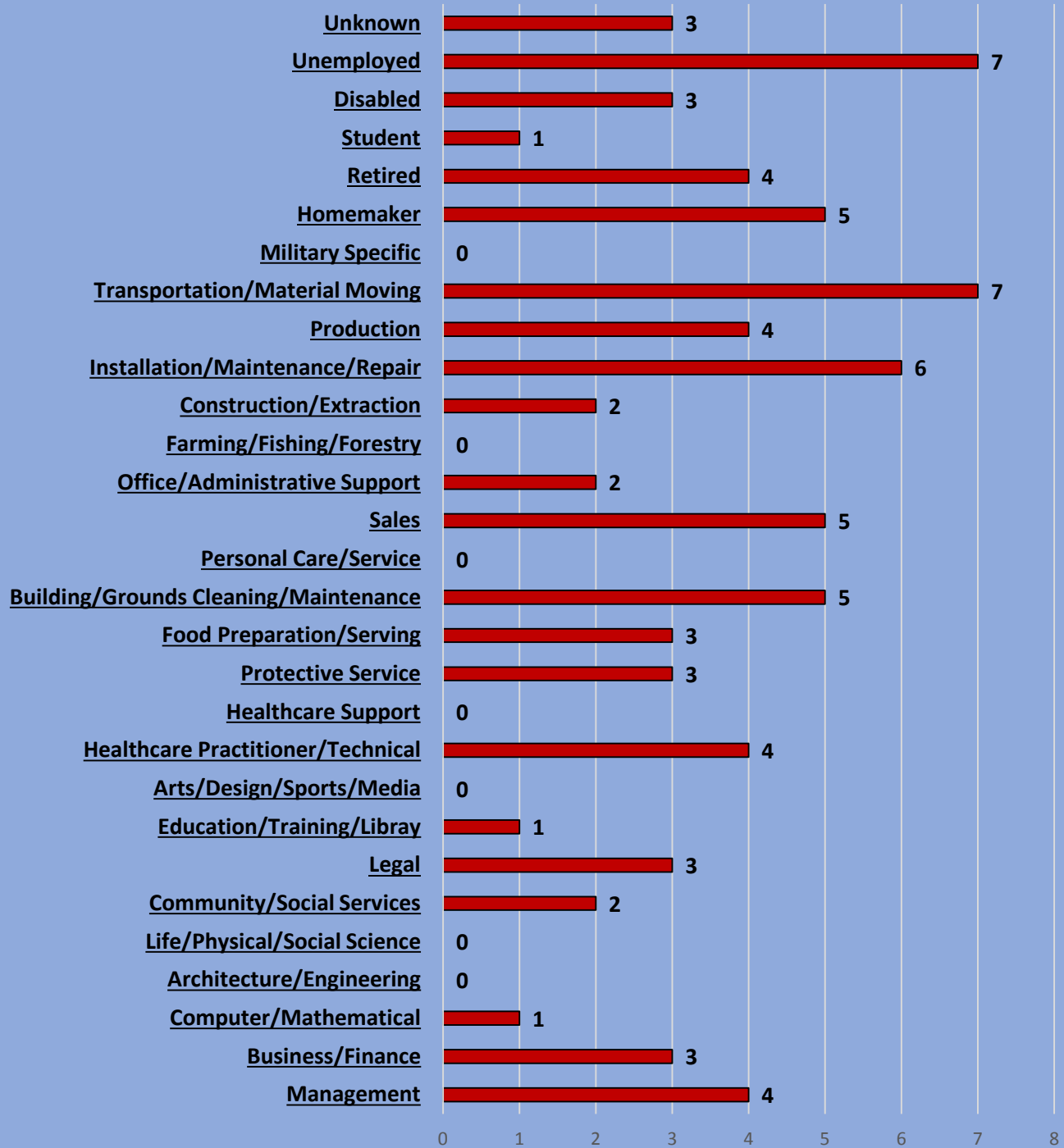




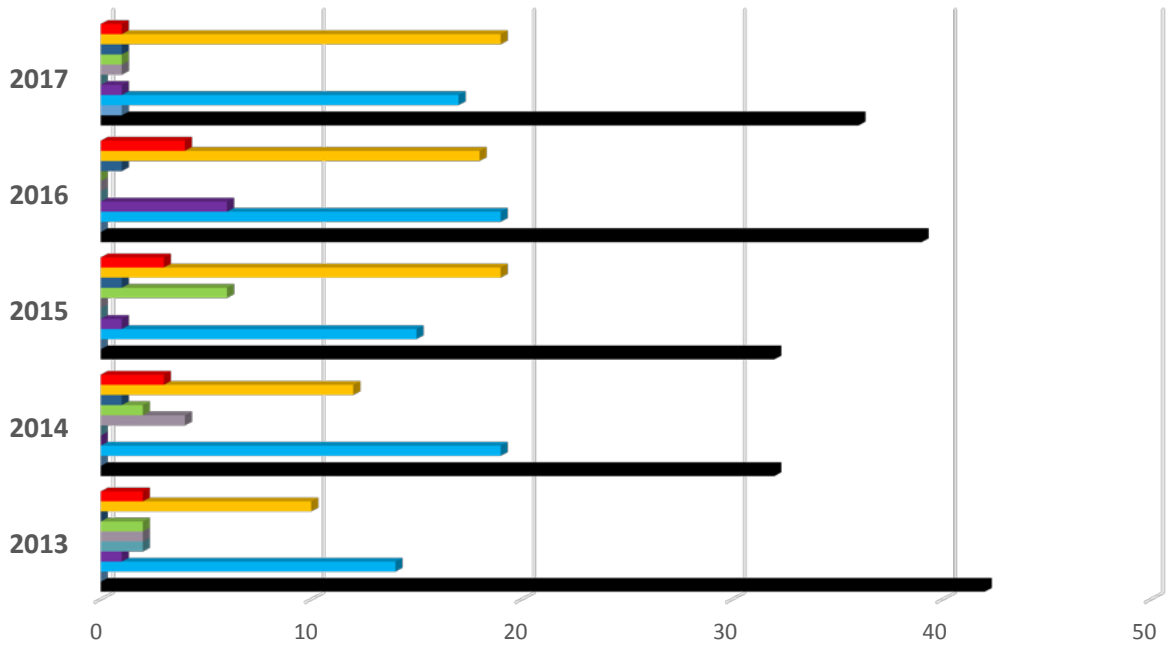
(H) Denotes Hospital location as place of death



## EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS OF SUICIDES



## 5 YEAR TREND OF SUICIDES

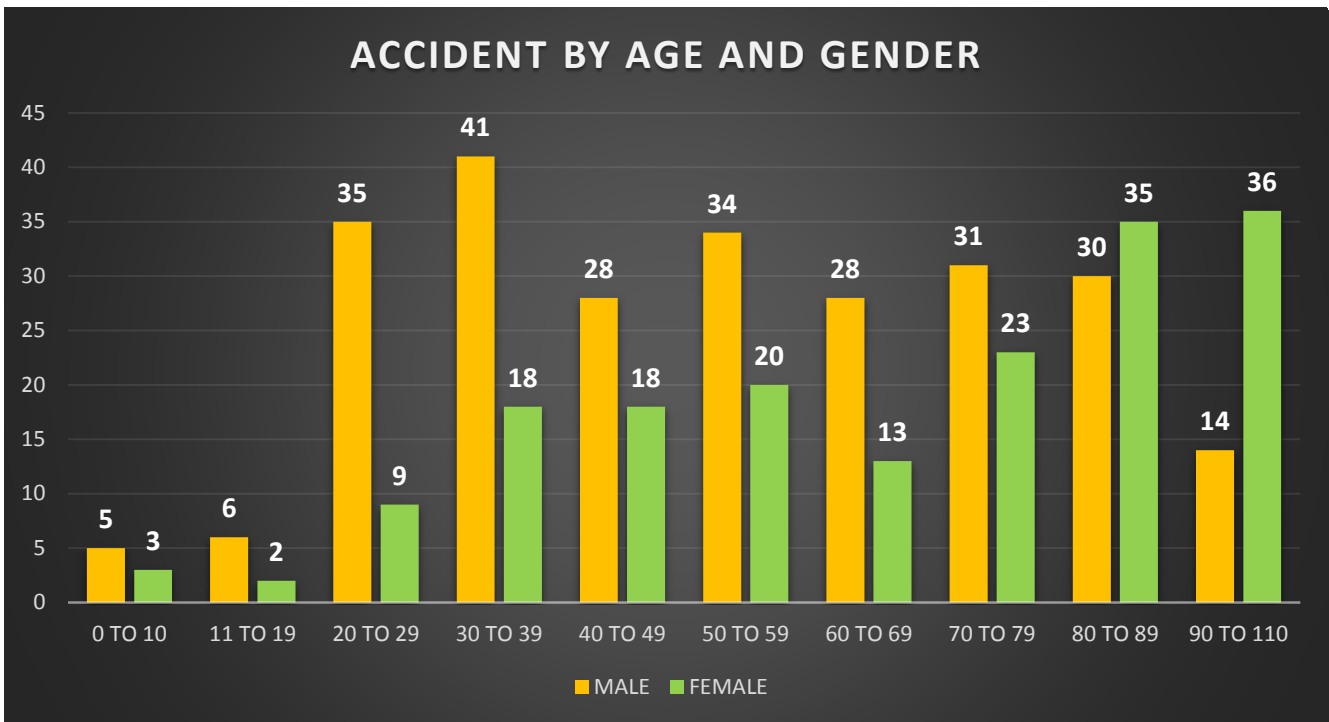
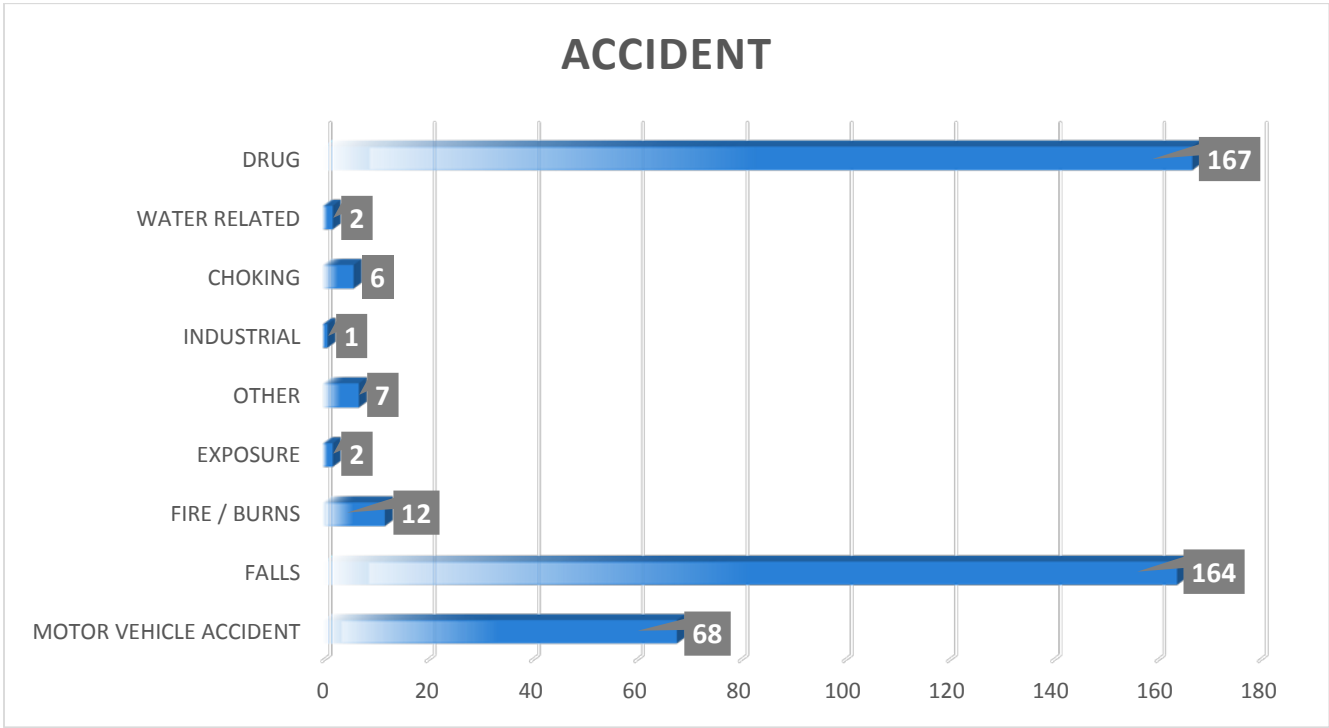


	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
■ OTHER	2	3	3	4	1
■ DRUG	10	12	19	18	19
■ KNIFE	0	1	1	1	1
■ JUMP	2	2	6	0	1
■ BURNS	2	4	0	0	1
■ TRAIN	2	0	0	0	0
■ C.O.	1	0	1	6	1
■ HANGING	14	19	15	19	17
■ ASPHYXIA	0	0	0	0	1
■ FIREARM	42	32	32	39	36



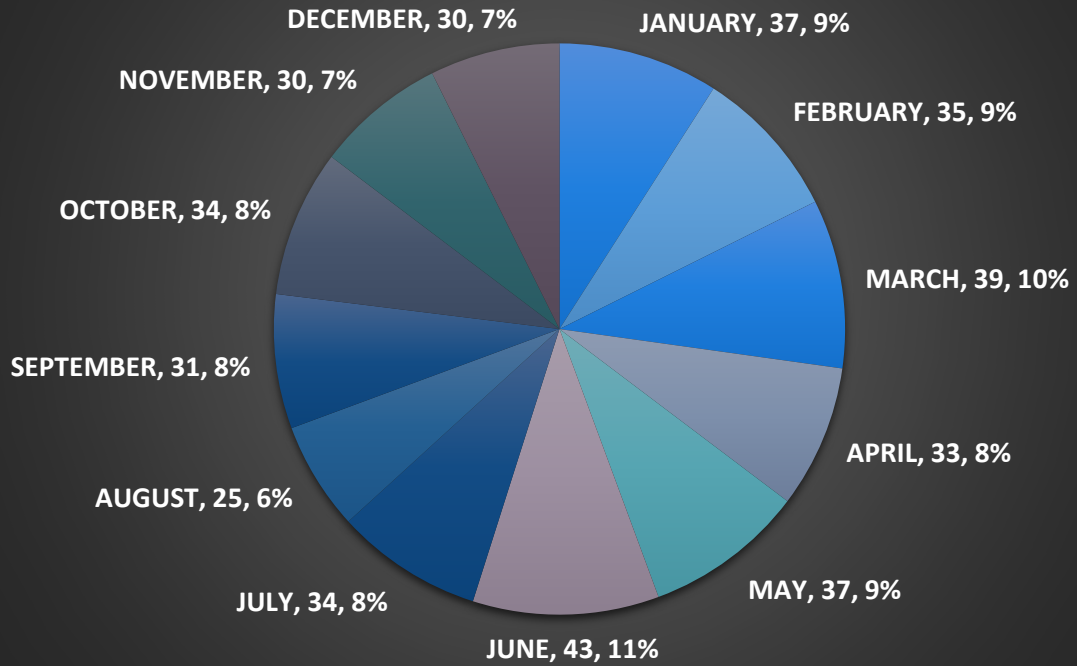
2017 ACCIDENT DEATH INFORMATION

Accident deaths are due to an unfortunate incident. These deaths can range from falling to choking to motor vehicle crashes. During the 2017 year there were 429 deaths ruled accident.

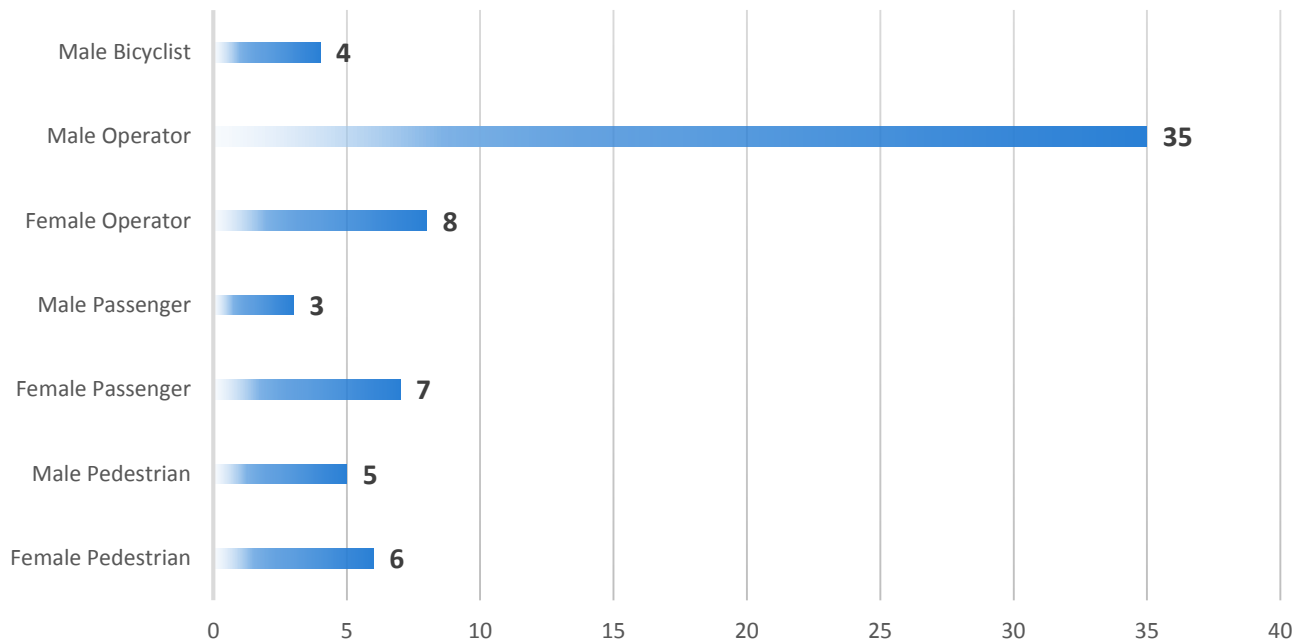




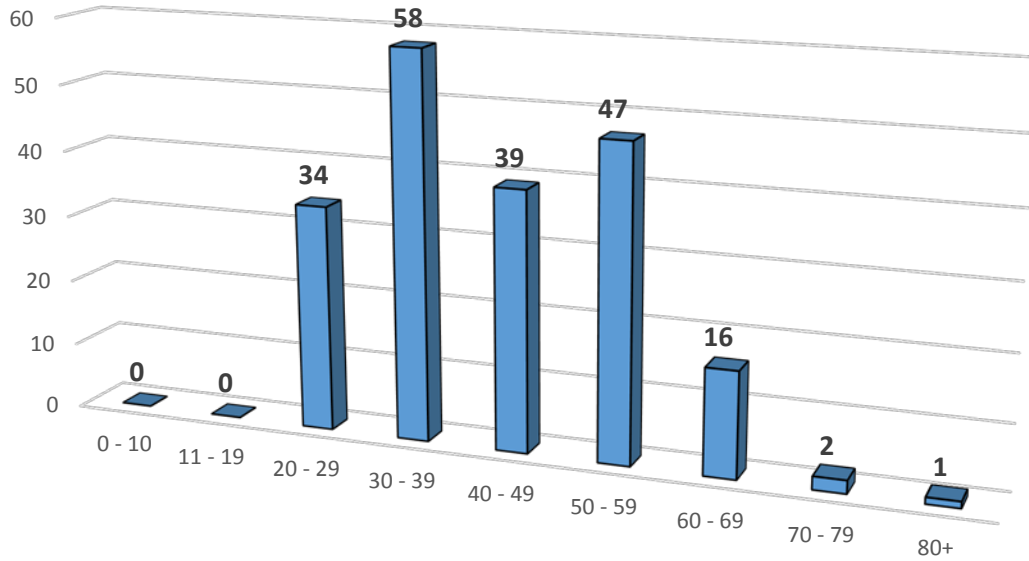
## ACCIDENT DEATH BY MONTH



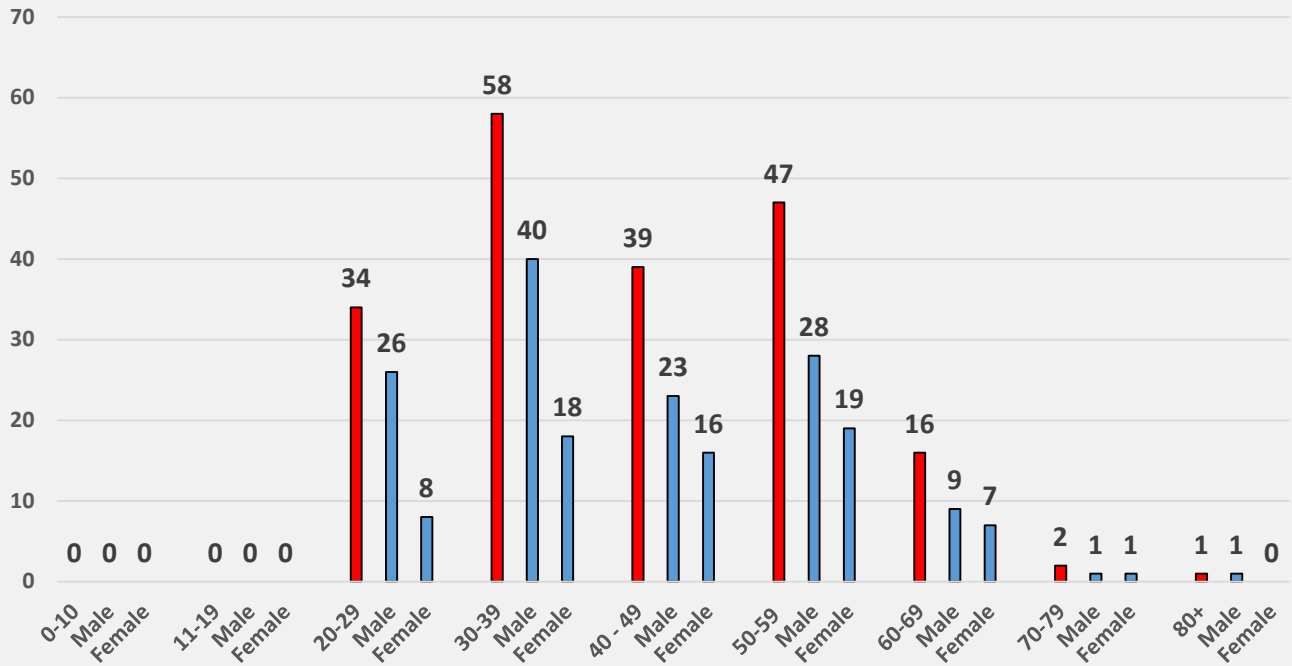
## MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS BY GENDER

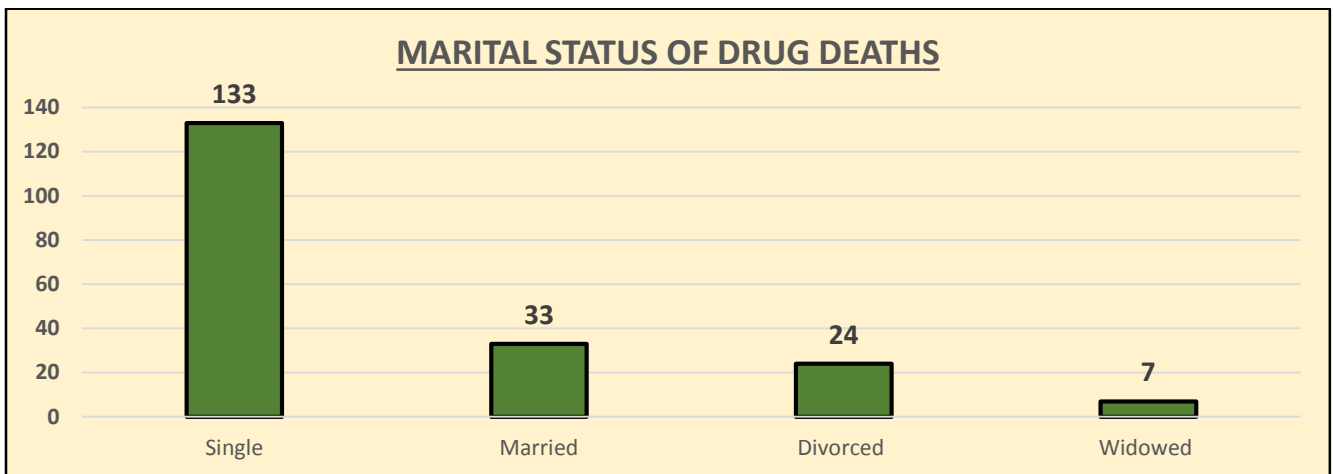
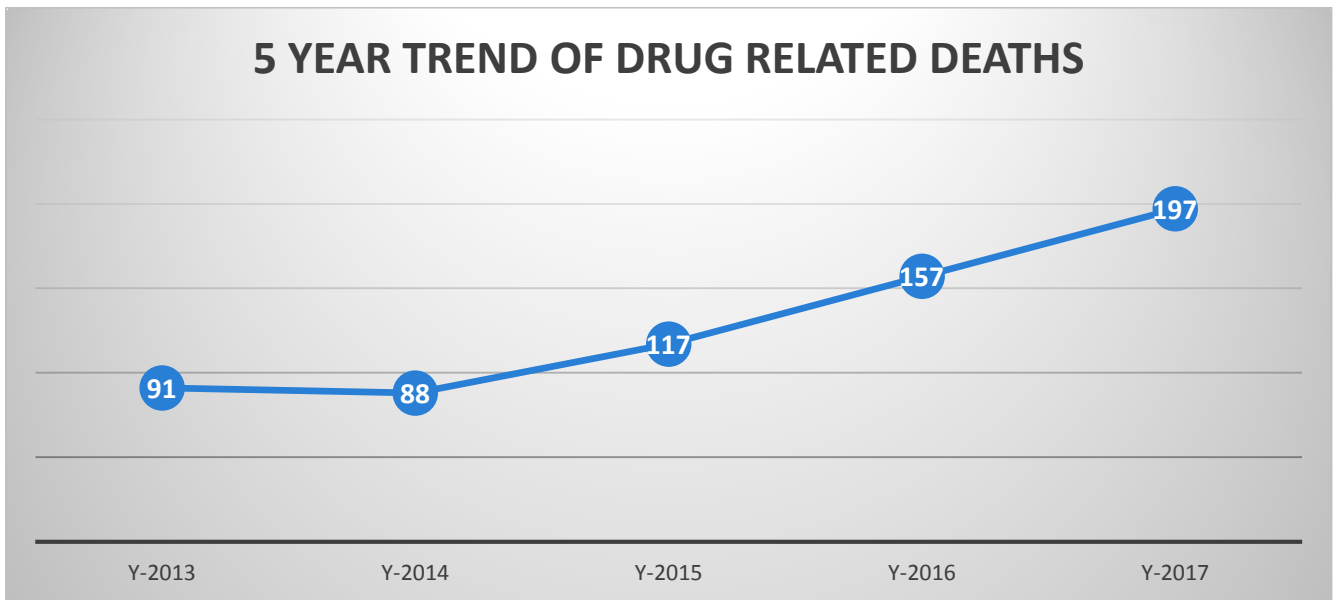
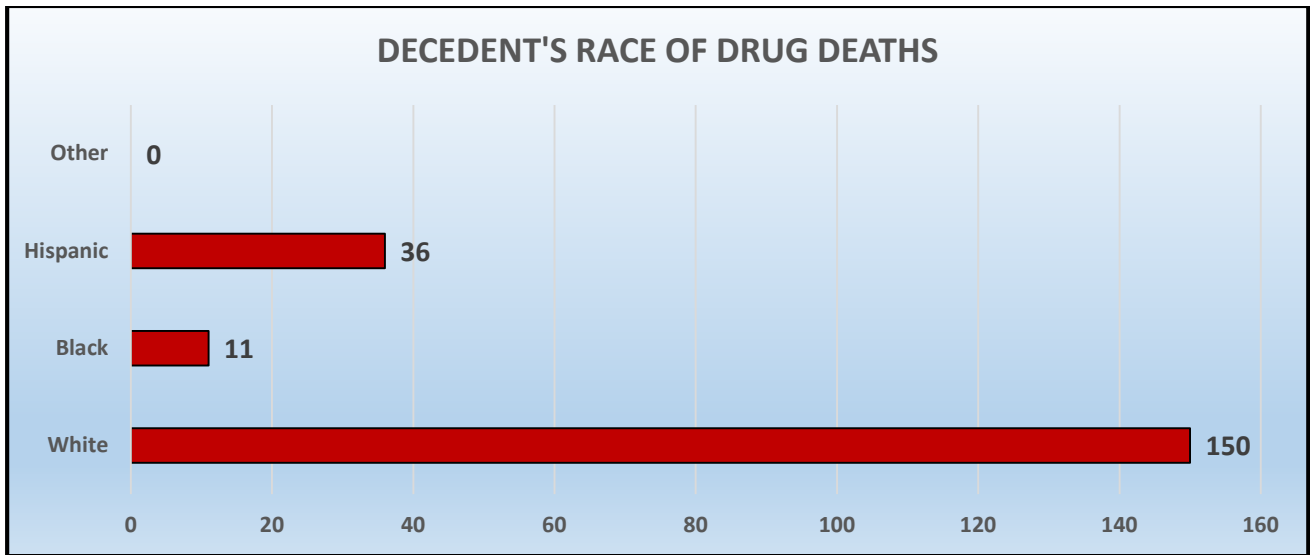


### DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS BY AGE



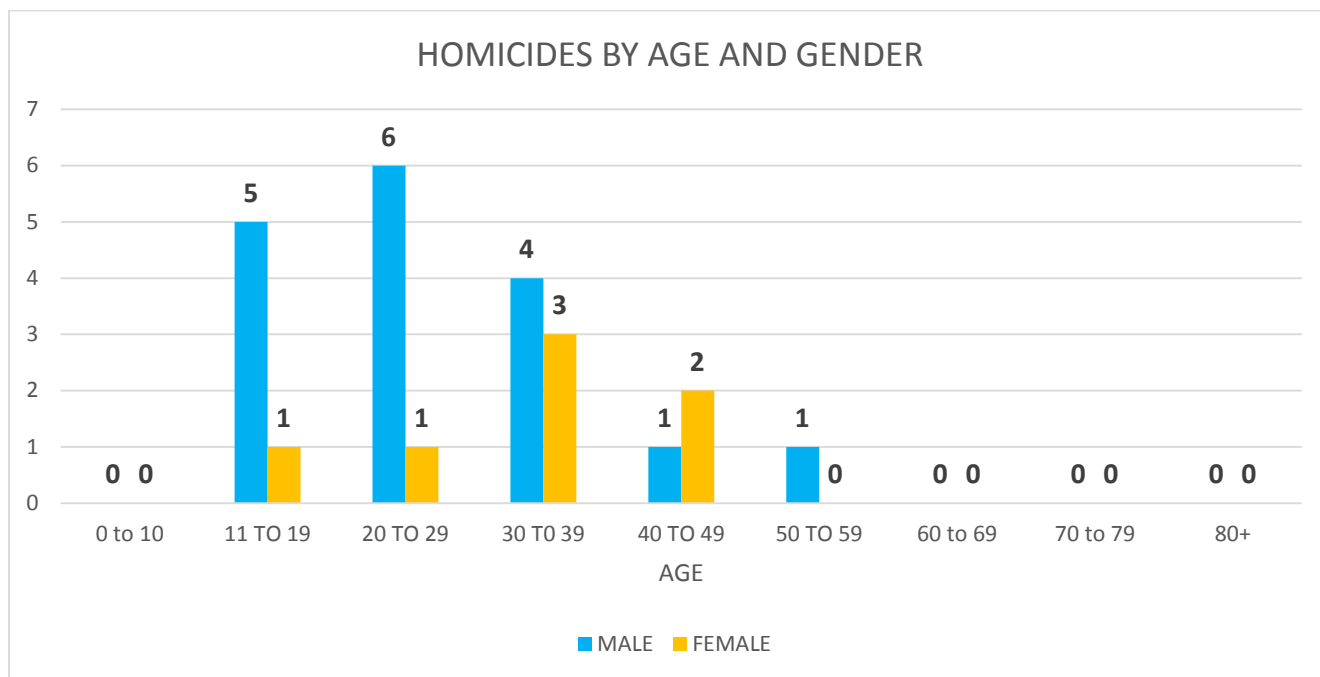
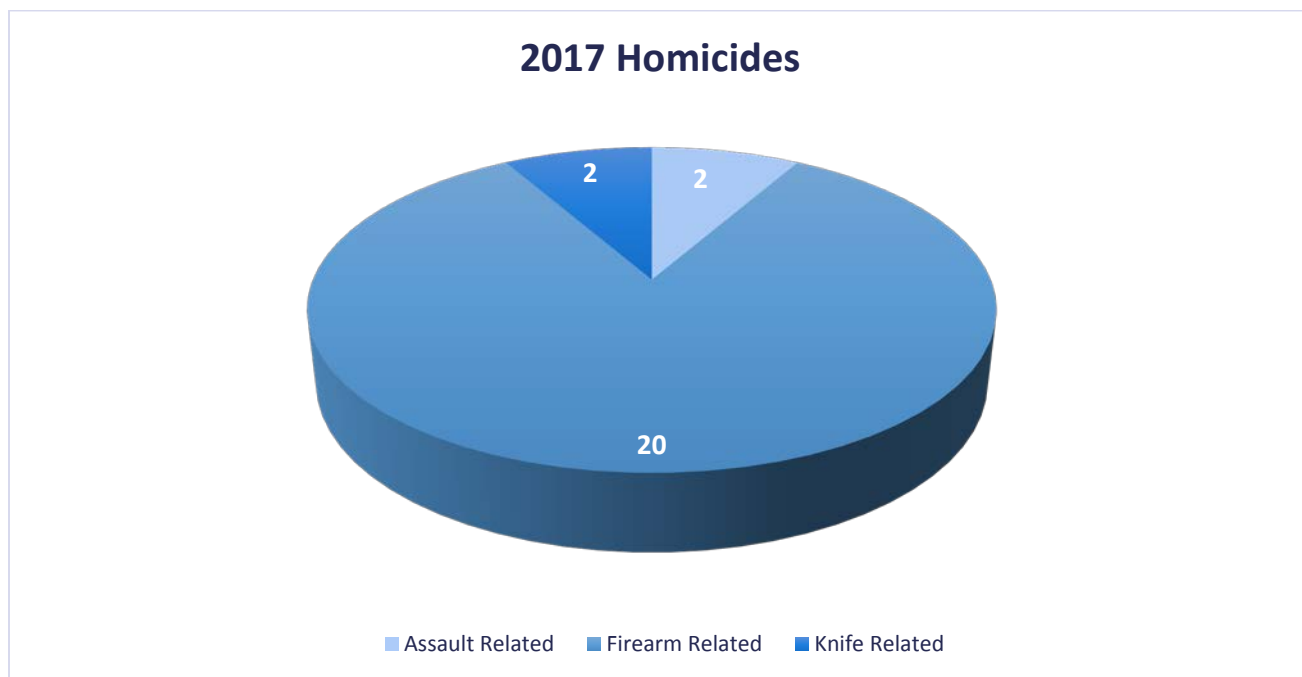
### AGE & GENDER OF DRUG DEATHS



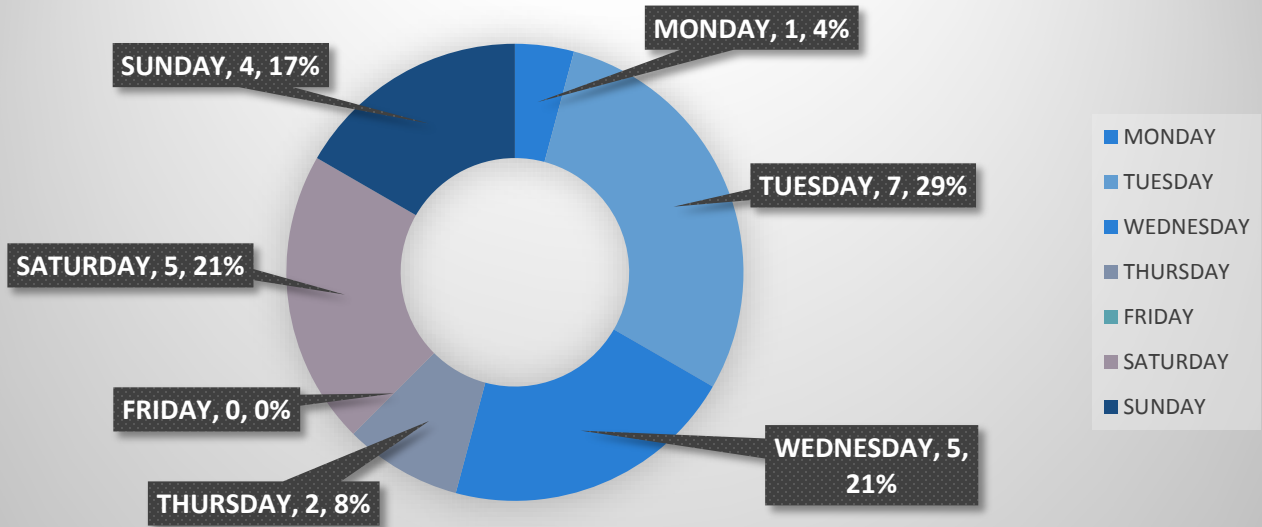


## 2017 HOMICIDE INFORMATION

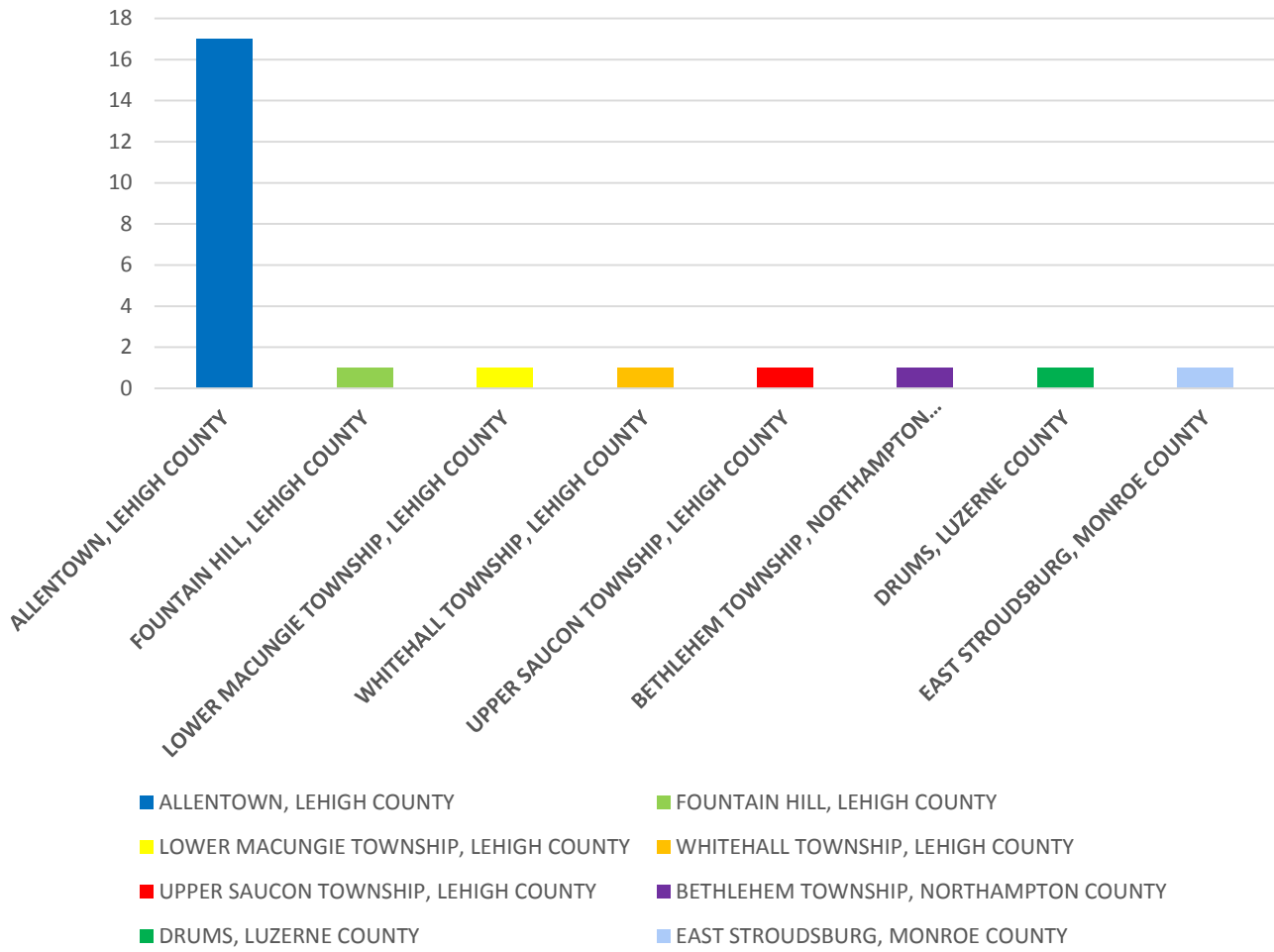
Homicide is death resulting from injuries inflicted by another person. Homicide investigations are quite possibly the most sensationalized investigations for any Coroner or Medical Examiner's Office. These investigations also garner the most media attention. During the 2017 year, there were 24 homicides.

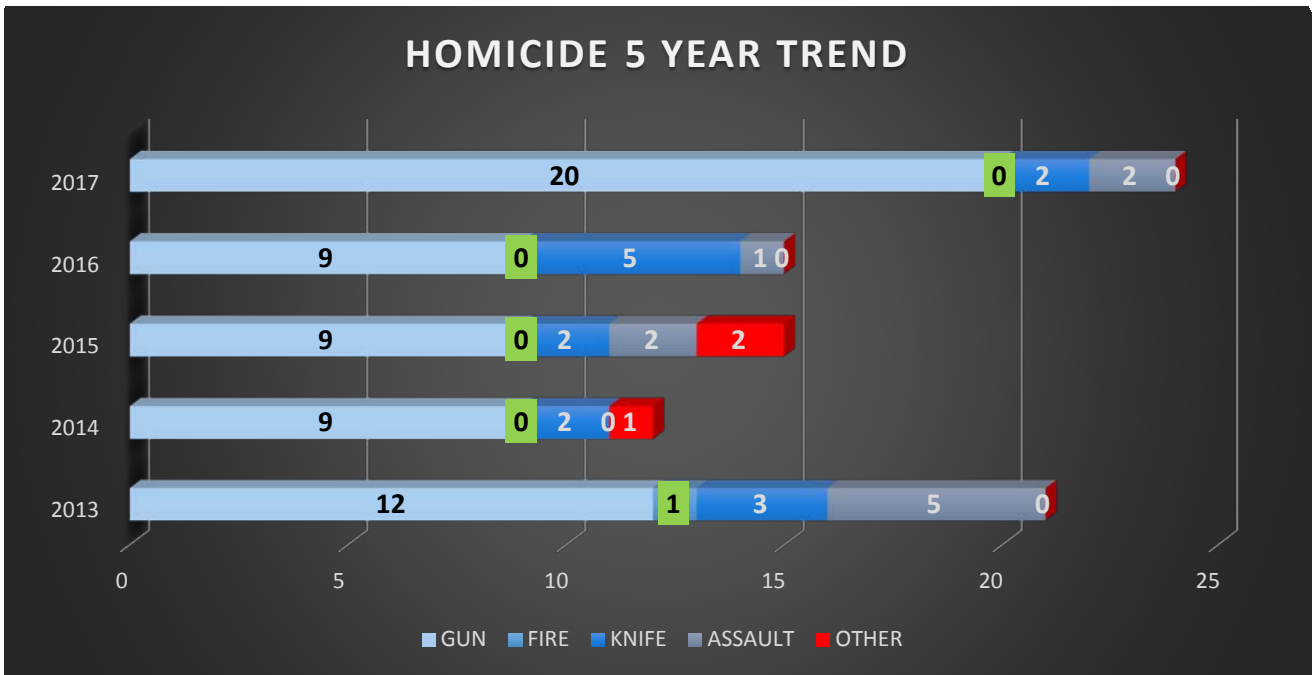


## HOMICIDES BY DAY OF THE WEEK



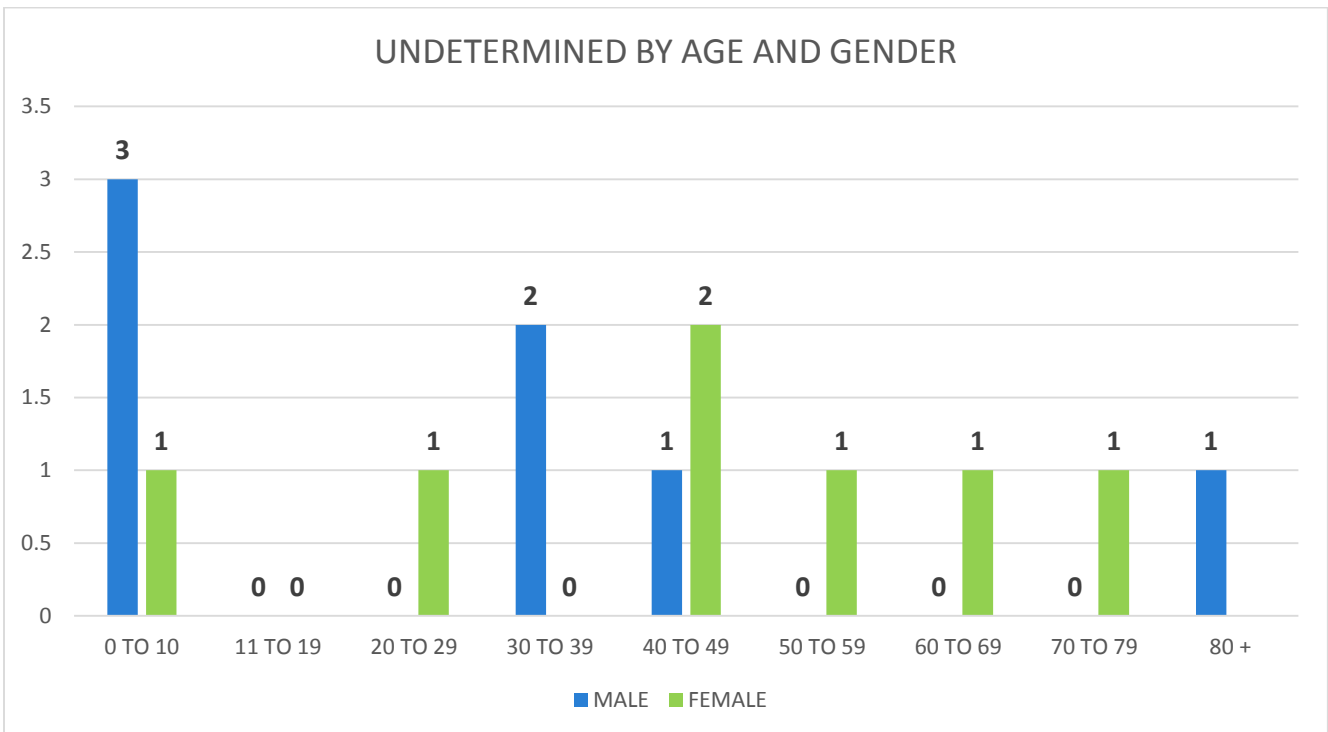
## HOMICIDES BY INCIDENT JURISDICTION





**2017 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.



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# Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center

## 2017 Annual Report

### IN THIS SECTION:

- 2017 INVESTIGATIONS
- JURISDICTIONAL DEMOGRAPHICAL DATA
- EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS
- TRANSPORTS OF DECEDENTS

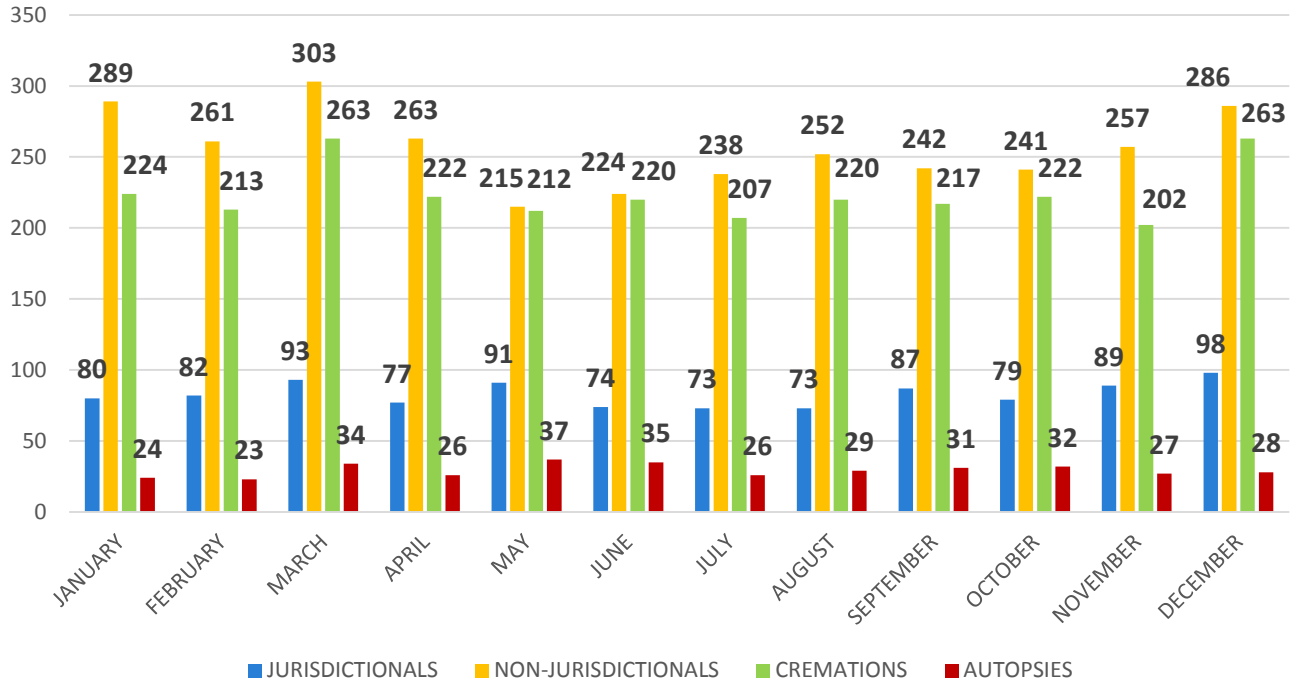
Tab 3



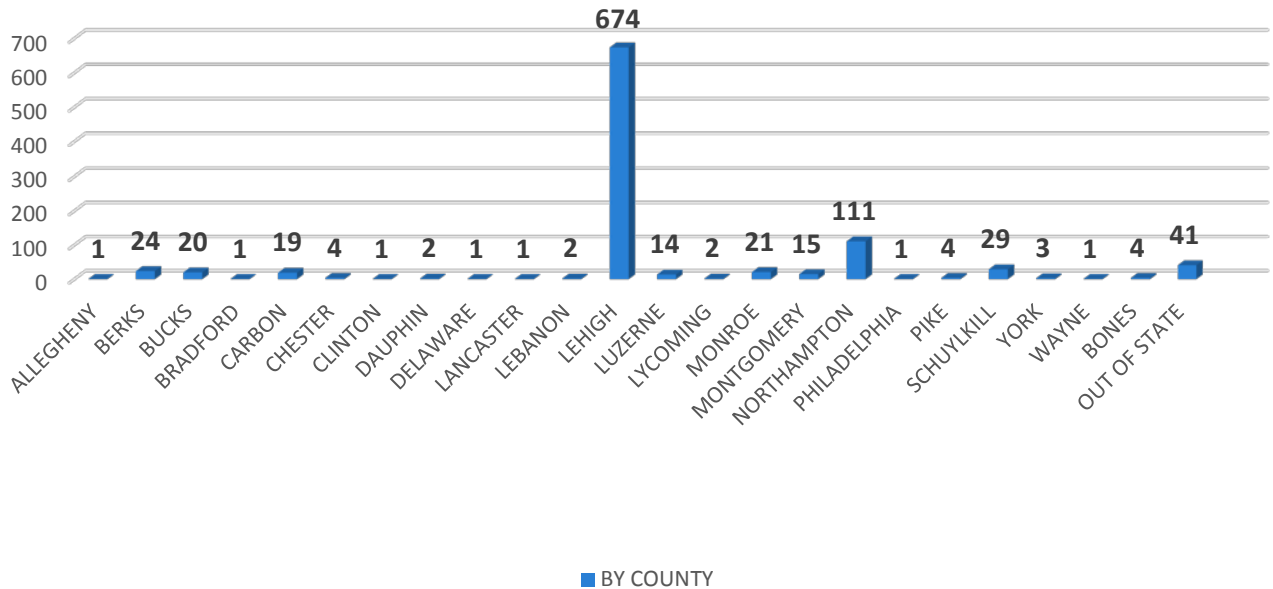
*Accredited by the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners*



### INVESTIGATIONS BY MONTH

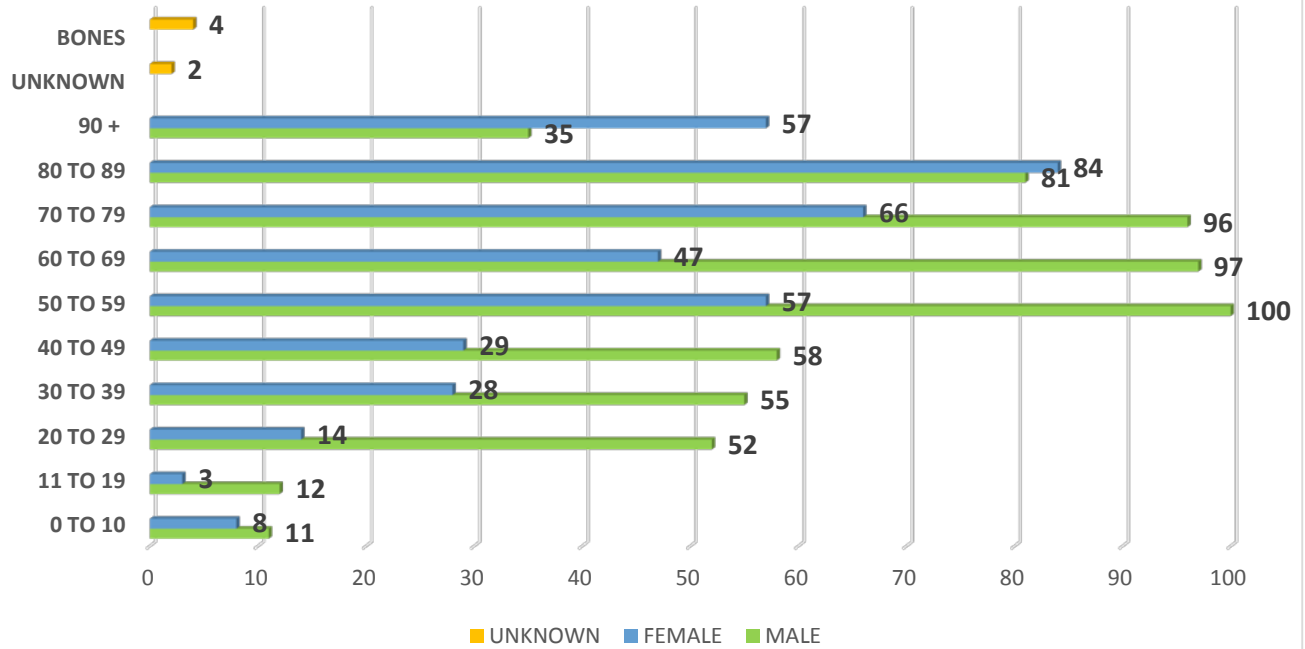


### RESIDENCY OF DECEDENTS IN JURISDICTIONAL INVESTIGATIONS

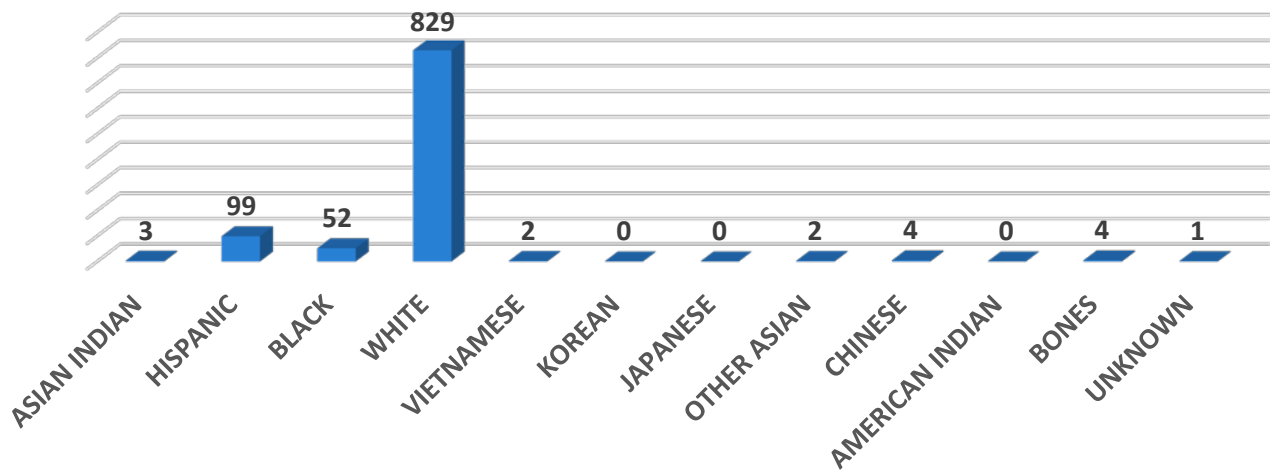




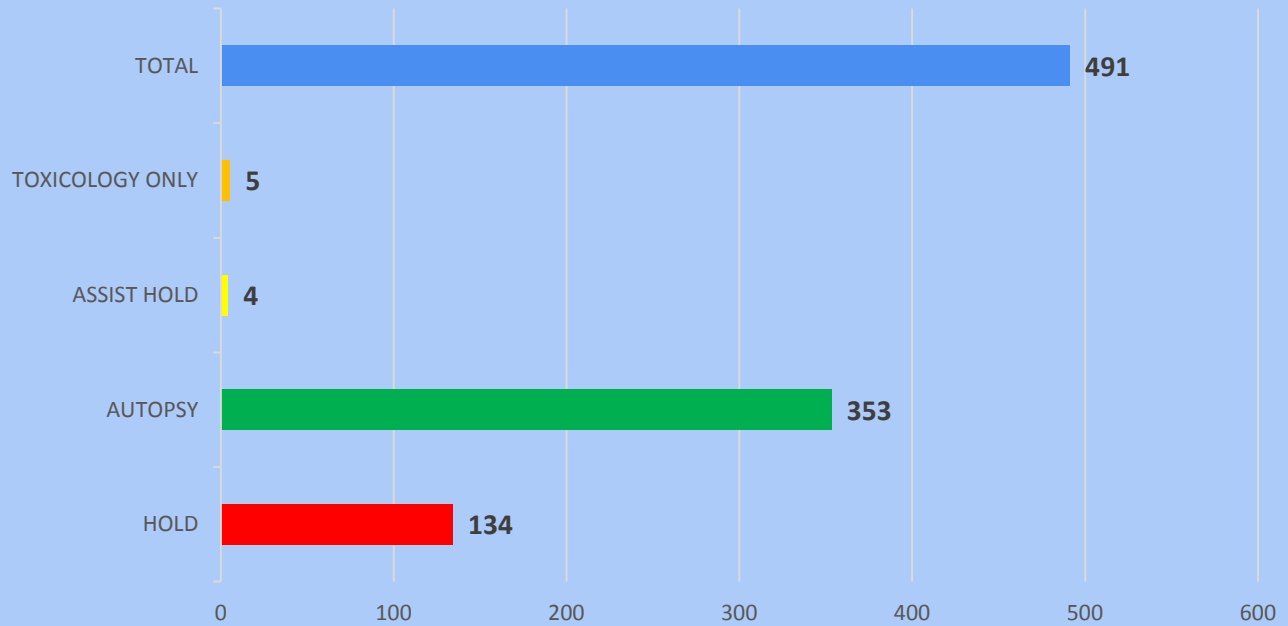
### AGE AND GENDER OF DECEDENTS OF JURISDICTIONAL INVESTIGATIONS



### RACE OF DECEDENTS IN JURISDICTIONAL INVESTIGATIONS



## TRANSPORTATION OF CADAVERS TO THE FORENSICS CENTER





# Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center

## 2017 Annual Report

### IN THIS SECTION:

- FORENSIC AUTOPSY
- COUNTY DISPOSITIONS
- ORGAN PROCUREMENT
- INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Tab 4

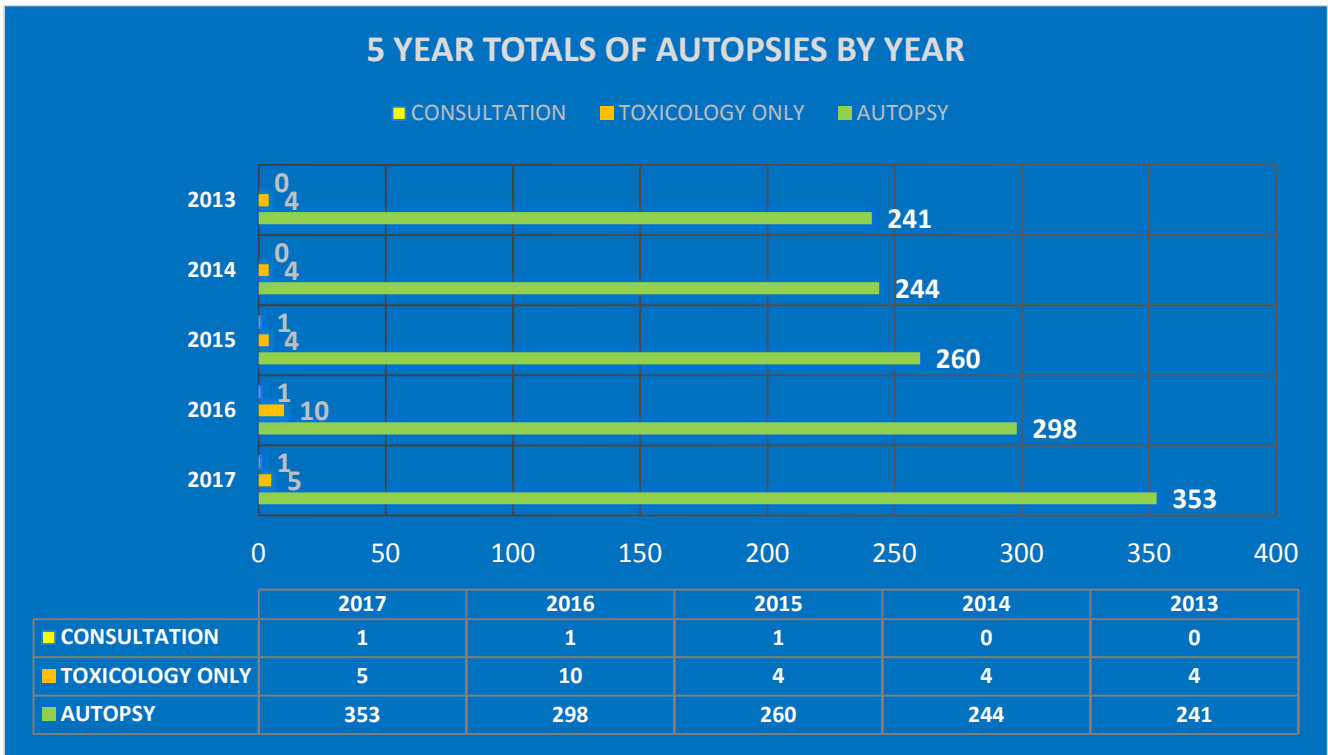
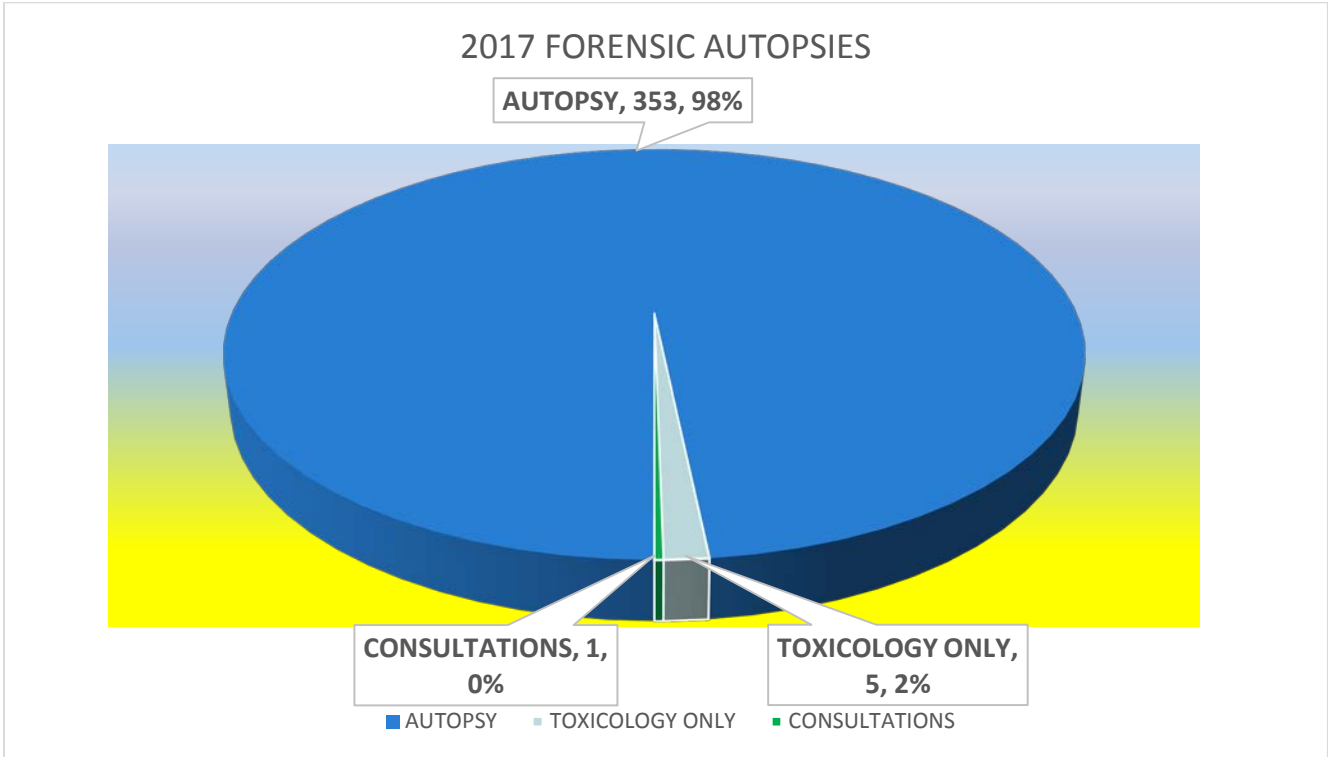


*Accredited by the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners*

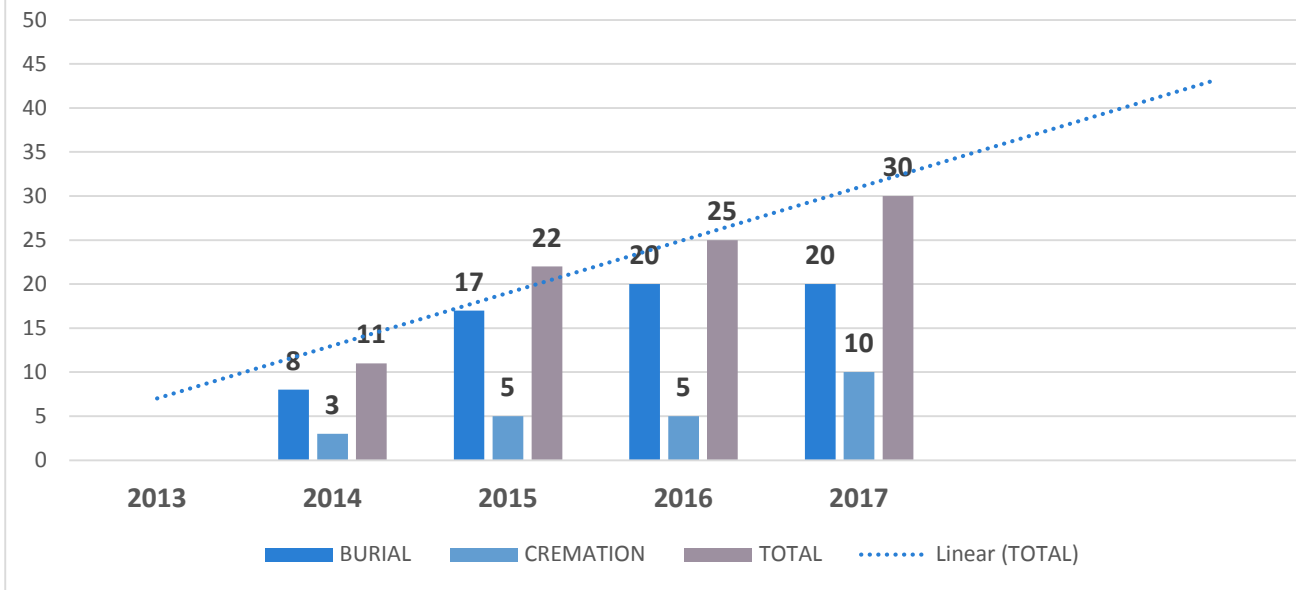


## FORENSIC AUTOPSY

There were 353 autopsies in the 2017 year, which toxicological studies are a standard. Only in 5 investigations, a toxicological only test was performed. 1 investigation consisted of a medical record consultation only. For 2017, all decedents had been identified. We have seen the number of Forensic Autopsies increase from 2016 by 18.46%.



## COUNTY DISPOSITIONS OF CADAVERS

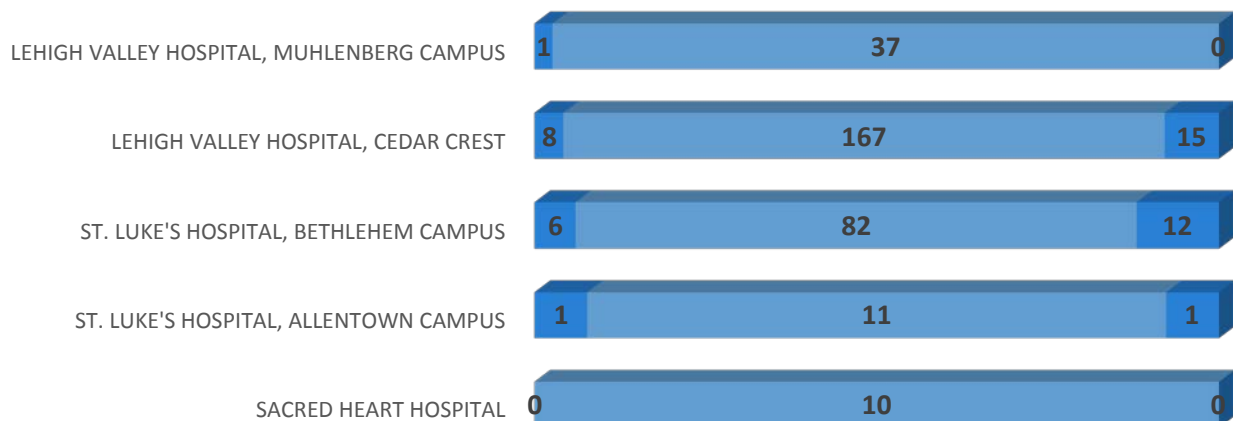


### ORGAN PROCUREMENT

The Lehigh County Coroner’s Office & Forensics Center fully supports Organ Donation and works with the regional Organ Procurement Organizations to fulfill the wishes of the recently deceased and their families. During 2017, of the investigations conducted by the Lehigh County Coroner’s Office & Forensics Center there were 124 known organ procurements.

### 2017 ORGAN PROCUREMENT

■ ORGAN ONLY   ■ TISSUE ONLY   ■ SHARED ORGAN & TISSUE



## Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center Internship Program

### **GOALS OF INTERNSHIP:**

The internship was 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. The interns get the unique opportunity to get firsthand experience in many of the aspects the Coroner's Office has the responsibility to perform. The Coroner's Office does 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 Coroner's Office 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.





# Lehigh County Coroner's Office & Forensics Center

## 2017 Annual Report

### IN THIS SECTION:

- BEING PROACTIVE
- IN CLOSING
- 2017 YEAR-TO-DATE MONTHLY STATISTICS

Tab 5



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## BEING PROACTIVE

We believe in being “Proactive rather than Reactive”. In 2016, we received our third Re-Accreditation from the “IAC&ME” International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners. This Accreditation we have held since 2006 and we were the First County in Pennsylvania and 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



#### **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/nfs/pages/attachments/2015/01/21/mdiaccrreditationfinal.pdf>



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**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. We were proud to have successfully hosted the 2017 Pennsylvania State Coroners Association Conference and be able to showcase this facility.

Thank you for taking time to read our annual report. This Report 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.





***No greater honor or profound duty can ever be imposed on you as the County Coroner than when you are entrusted with the investigation of the death of another human being.***

***Being bestowed with such a moral duty, it is incumbent upon you to follow the course of events and the facts as they develop, regardless of color, creed, without prejudice, to the ultimate conclusion of the investigation.***

***It is a heavy responsibility. Let no power on earth deter you from the truth or your personal conviction to see that justice is done; not only for the deceased, but for the surviving family as well.***



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Lehigh County Coroners Office

2017 Year - to - Date

3/27/2018

Jurisdictional Cases		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	
Total ( Cases Only)		80	82	93	77	91	74	73	73	87	79	89	98	996	
Natural		37	43	38	37	39	21	28	38	37	34	43	40	435	
Accident		37	34	39	33	37	43	35	26	33	35	33	44	429	
Suicide		3	3	10	5	11	7	6	5	11	4	6	7	78	
Homicide		2	0	3	2	2	2	1	3	2	3	3	1	24	
Undetermined		0	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	3	2	3	1	14	
Other		0	1	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	7	
Pending		1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	4	9	
Non-Jurisdictionals		289	261	303	263	215	224	238	252	242	241	257	286	3071	
Cremation		224	213	263	222	212	220	207	220	217	222	202	263	2685	
Autopsy		24	23	34	26	37	35	26	29	31	32	27	29	353	
Tox. Only		1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
Consult Only		0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
D.A. Ordered		2	0	1	1	2	0	1	3	2	3	3	0	18	
Autopsy		0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	
Out of County		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Unidentified Bodies		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Organ Donation		5	11	14	5	9	11	10	6	14	19	10	5	119	
Monthly Totals		593	556	659	562	518	518	518	545	546	542	548	647	6752	
Breakdown other than Natural Deaths		Accident												Undetermined	
		MVA	68	Industrial	1	Gun	36	Burns	1	Fire	Other	8			
		Falls	164	Choking	6	Asphxia	1	Jump	1	Gun	C.O.				
		Fire / Burns	12	Water Related	2	Hanging	17	Knife	1	Knife					
		Exposure	2	Drug	167	C.O.	1	Drug	19	Drug	2				
		Other	7	Carbon Mon.	429	Train	Other	1	Child	4					
		Total	429												14
		Other													Homicide Breakdowns
		Bunial/Crypt	Fetal Death		1	Gun	20	Assault	2	In County	21				
		Bones/Remains	(no Manner)		1	Fire	2	Beating		Out of County	3				
Other			7	Knife	2	Other		In Atown	17						
Total	7											24			

2017 MONTHLY STATISTICS.XLSX

