



**Office of the Medical Examiner
Lenawee County**

**Annual Report
2019**



Compiled by
Lenawee County Medical Examiner's Office

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OFFICE OF THE LENAWEE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER

To: Lenawee County Board of Commissioners and the
Citizens of Lenawee County

The laws of the State of Michigan assign the responsibility for determining the cause and manner of unexpected deaths in each county to the medical examiner. The Lenawee County Medical Examiner upholds these laws and accepts this responsibility with full commitment to a consistent high quality service. Every reported death is investigated thoroughly, frequently with the cooperation of law enforcement agencies and health care personnel in Lenawee County. The results of these death investigations provide valuable information which is used in professional education and by the criminal justice system, public health department, families of the deceased and other concerned persons.

While the Medical Examiner and staff of investigators and support persons are primarily concerned with the circumstances surrounding unexpected deaths, our concern for the living is reflected in our regular reviews of all childhood deaths with concerned and involved state and county agencies, as well as our support for tissue and organ donations through the Gift of Life program to provide lifesaving specimens to those individuals waiting for a chance at normal living.

During 2019, we experienced a continued increase in death investigations, again approximately 3 in every 10 county deaths. 82% of the deaths reported to our office occurred in persons over the age of 50 and 46% in persons over the age of 70. 53% of the 261 reported deaths occurred at home. 41% of those reported were selected for autopsy and further investigation. 48% of these were caused by disease, 52% by injury. 17% of all reported deaths (32% of autopsies) were caused by accident, a sustained rise over the years. This was primarily a result of 19 drug-related deaths (caused exclusively or in part by injected or an ingested substance). Reflecting a national trend in recent years, fentanyl (a synthetic opioid many times more powerful than morphine) was included in a majority of drug-related deaths and was often combined with heroin or other abuse substances. Another significant increase was a 60% rise in the number of suicides, most accomplished by firearm or asphyxia. During the year we wrote 153 death certificates and, in addition, reviewed 499 deaths for which a cremation permit was signed. At present, we are completing our plans for the transition of our morgue and autopsy operation for both Lenawee and Hillsdale Counties to the new facility in Jackson County. The planned transition should be in operation during the summer of 2020.

Death investigations in neighboring Hillsdale County continued the development of a cooperative agreement with Lenawee County which instituted in 2017 a death investigation system in that county by sharing our experience and resources. This relationship is now providing a professional presence in Hillsdale County and is benefiting both counties.

The maintenance of a properly prepared and effective death investigation system necessarily involves periodic investigator recruitment and continuing education in forensic science. These regular efforts, along with the many requirements of our combined investigator activities, are coordinated by the individual investigators and by our dedicated support staff.

I want to thank the Lenawee County Board of Commissioners and the County Administration for their encouragement and support of this program, which enables the medical examiner staff to provide this necessary and valuable service to the citizens of Lenawee County. I submit this annual report to demonstrate the expanding scope and sophistication of this professional and continued cost-effective service. I take pride in the continued development of this office and welcome the opportunity to discuss any aspect of this report with you.

Respectfully Submitted,

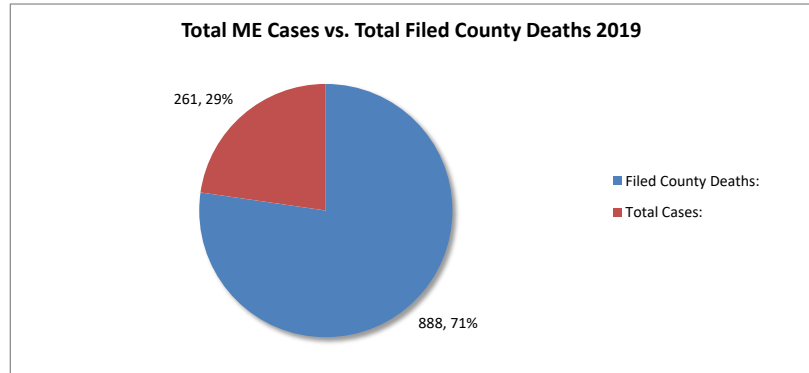
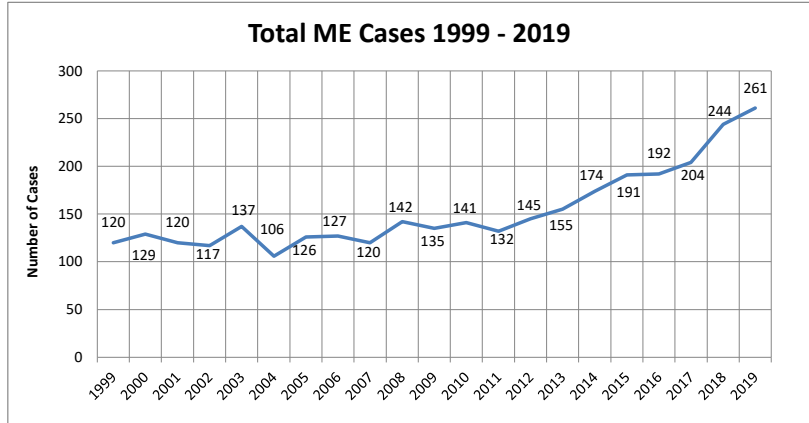
Bader J. Cassin, M.D.

Office of the Medical Examiner

Overview of Medical Examiner Cases 2019

Total Cases: 261 Male: 160 Female: 66

Autopsies: 107 Male: 72 Female: 35
 Toxicology: 107



Total Death Certificates and Cremation Permits signed:

DCs Signed, No Autopsy: 46
 Total DCs Signed: 153
 Cremation Permits Signed: 499

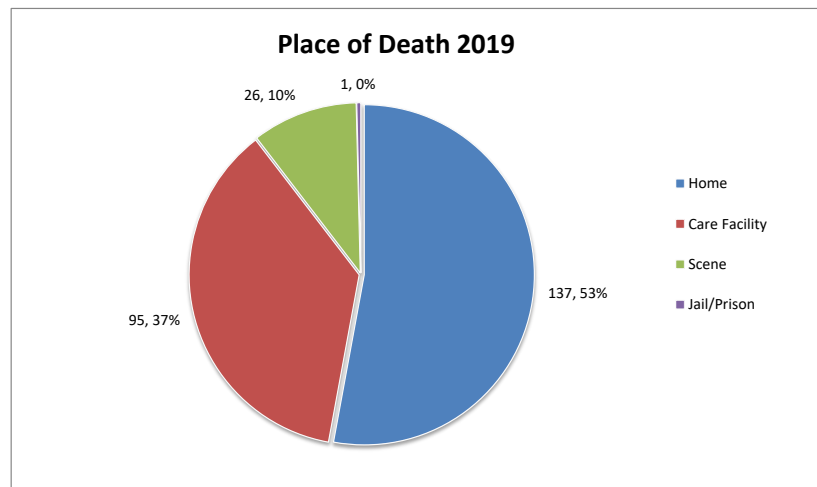
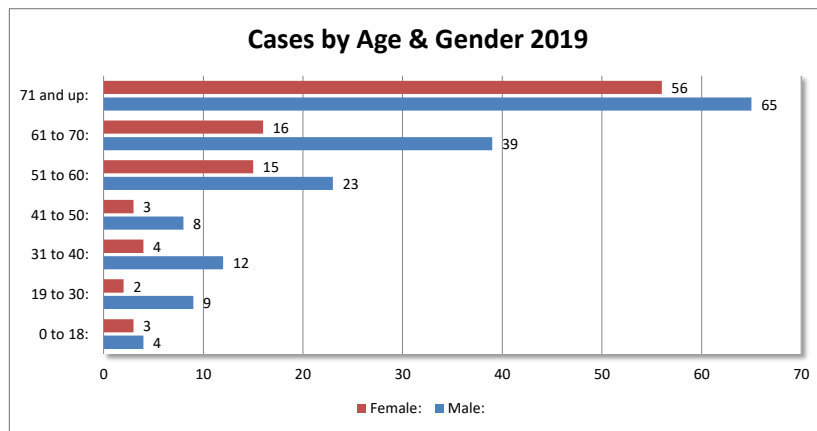
Lenawee County Medical Examiner
 Overview of Cases 2019

Cases by Age:

0 to 18:	7
19 to 30:	11
31 to 40:	16
41 to 50:	11
51 to 60:	38
61 to 70:	55
71 and up:	121
Total:	259

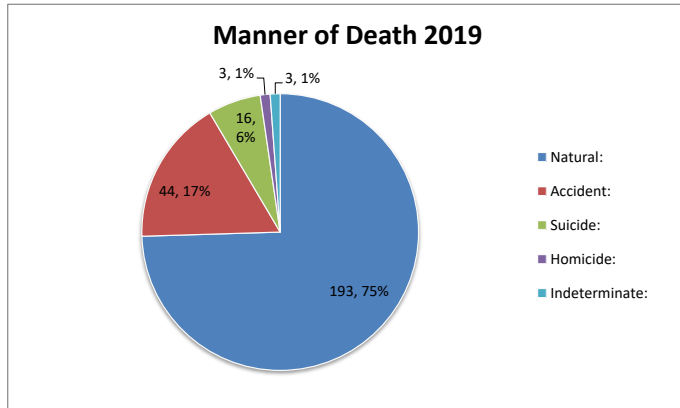
Place of Death:

Total M.E. Deaths at Home:	137
Total M.E. Deaths at Care Facility:	95
Total M.E. Deaths at Scene:	26
Total M.E. Deaths Jail/Prison:	1
Total:	259



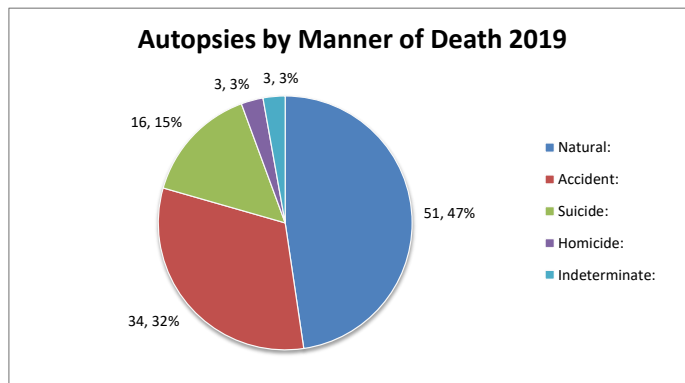
Manners of Death:

Natural:	193
Accident:	44
Suicide:	16
Homicide:	3
Indeterminate:	3
Non-Human:	2
Total:	261



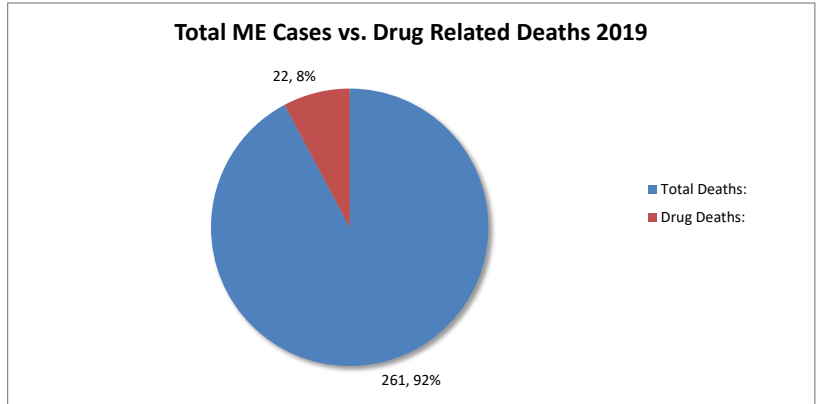
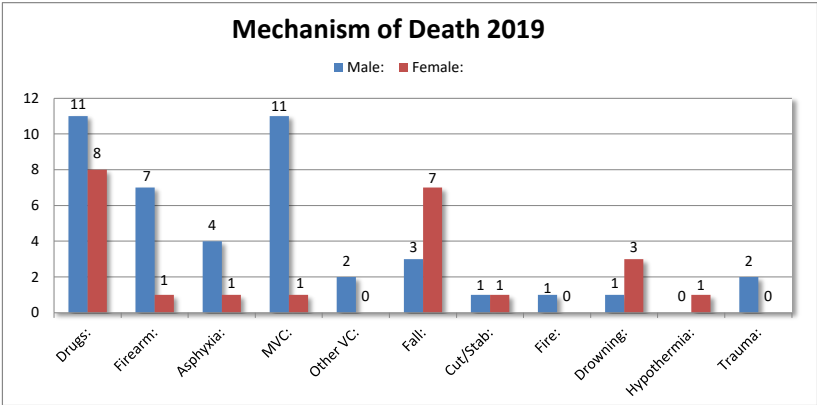
Autopsies by Manners of Death:

Natural:	51
Accident:	34
Suicide:	16
Homicide:	3
Indeterminate:	3
Total:	107



Lenawee County Medical Examiner
 Overview of Cases 2019

Mechanism of Death:	Male:	Female:
Drugs:	19	8
Firearm:	8	7
Asphyxia:	5	4
MVC:	12	11
Other VC:	2	2
Fall:	10	3
Cut/Stab:	2	1
Fire:	1	1
Drowning:	4	1
Hypothermia:	1	0
Other Trauma:	2	2
Total:	66	43



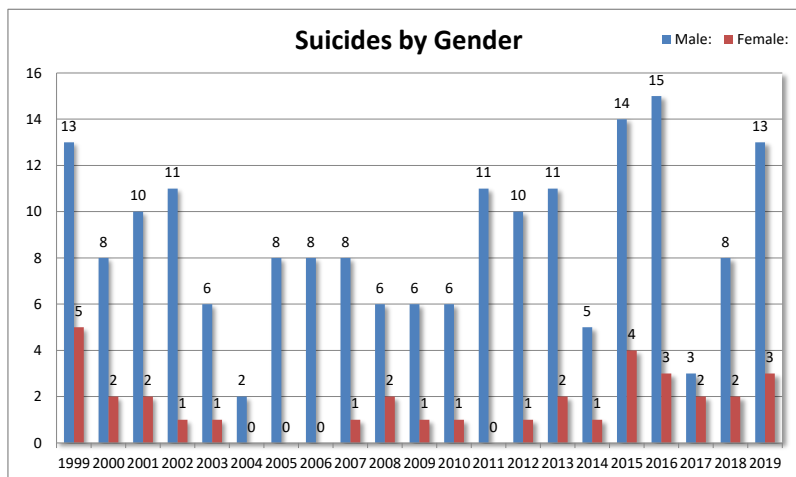
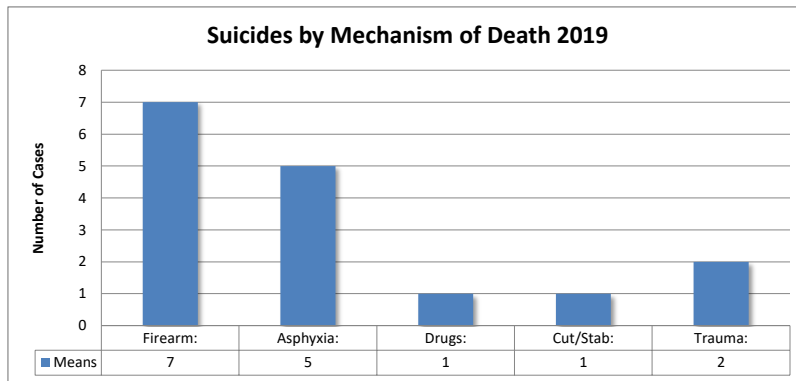
Lenawee County Medical Examiner
 Overview of Cases 2019

Suicides by Age and Gender:

	Male:	Female:
0 - 9:	0	0
10 - 19:	2	1
20 - 29:	3	0
30 - 39:	2	1
40 - 49:	1	1
50 - 59:	4	0
60 - 69:	0	0
70+:	1	0
Total:	13	3

Suicide by Mechanism of Death:

Firearm:	7
Asphyxia:	5
Drugs:	1
Cut/Stab:	1
Trauma:	2
Total:	16



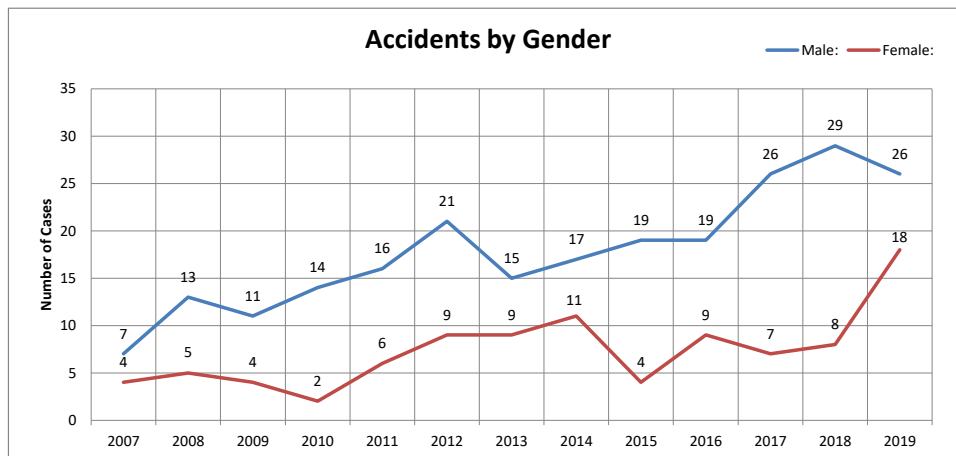
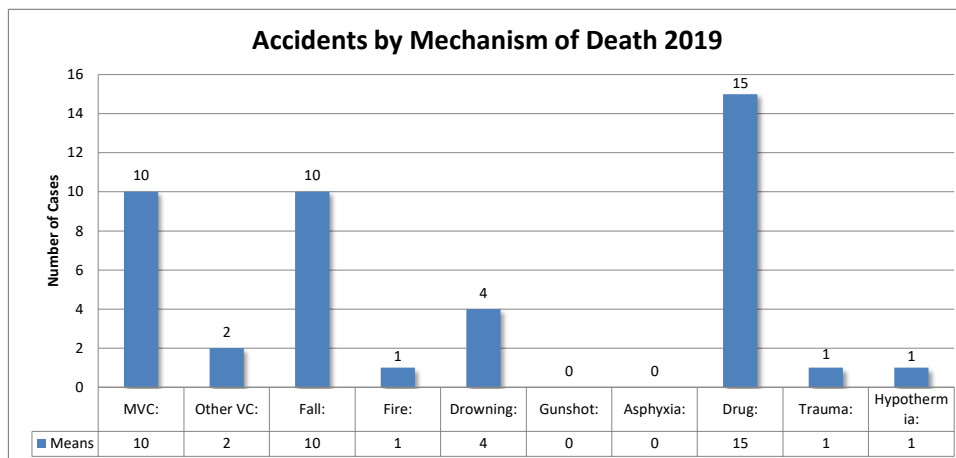
Lenawee County Medical Examiner
 Overview of Cases 2019

Accidents by Age and Gender:

	Male:	Female:
0 - 9:	0	0
10 - 19:	1	0
20 - 29:	3	2
30 - 39:	10	3
40 - 49:	1	2
50 - 59:	4	2
60 - 69:	3	0
70+:	4	9
Total:	26	18

Accident by Mechanism of Death:

MVC:	10
Other Vehicle:	2
Fall:	10
Fire:	1
Drowning:	4
Firearm:	0
Asphyxia:	0
Drug:	15
Blunt Trauma:	1
Hypothermia:	1
Total:	44



Lenawee County Medical Examiner
 Overview of Cases 2019

Indeterminate Deaths:

	Male:	Female:
0 - 19:	0	0
20 - 29:	0	0
30 - 39:	0	0
40 - 49:	0	0
50 - 59:	2	1
60 - 69:	0	0
70+:	0	0
Total:	2	1

Indeterminate by Mechanism of Death:

Drugs:	3
Infant Death:	0
Other:	0
Total:	3

Homicides:

	Male:	Female:
0 - 19:	1	0
20 - 29:	1	0
30 - 39:	0	0
40 - 49:	0	0
50 - 59:	0	0
60 - 69:	0	0
70+:	0	1
Total:	2	1

Homicides by Mechanism of Death:

Firearm:	1
Cut/Stab:	1
Other:	1
Total:	3

