

Jefferson Parish



2018 Annual Report

Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office
2018 8th Street
Harvey, 70058



Accredited by the
National Association
of
Medical Examiners

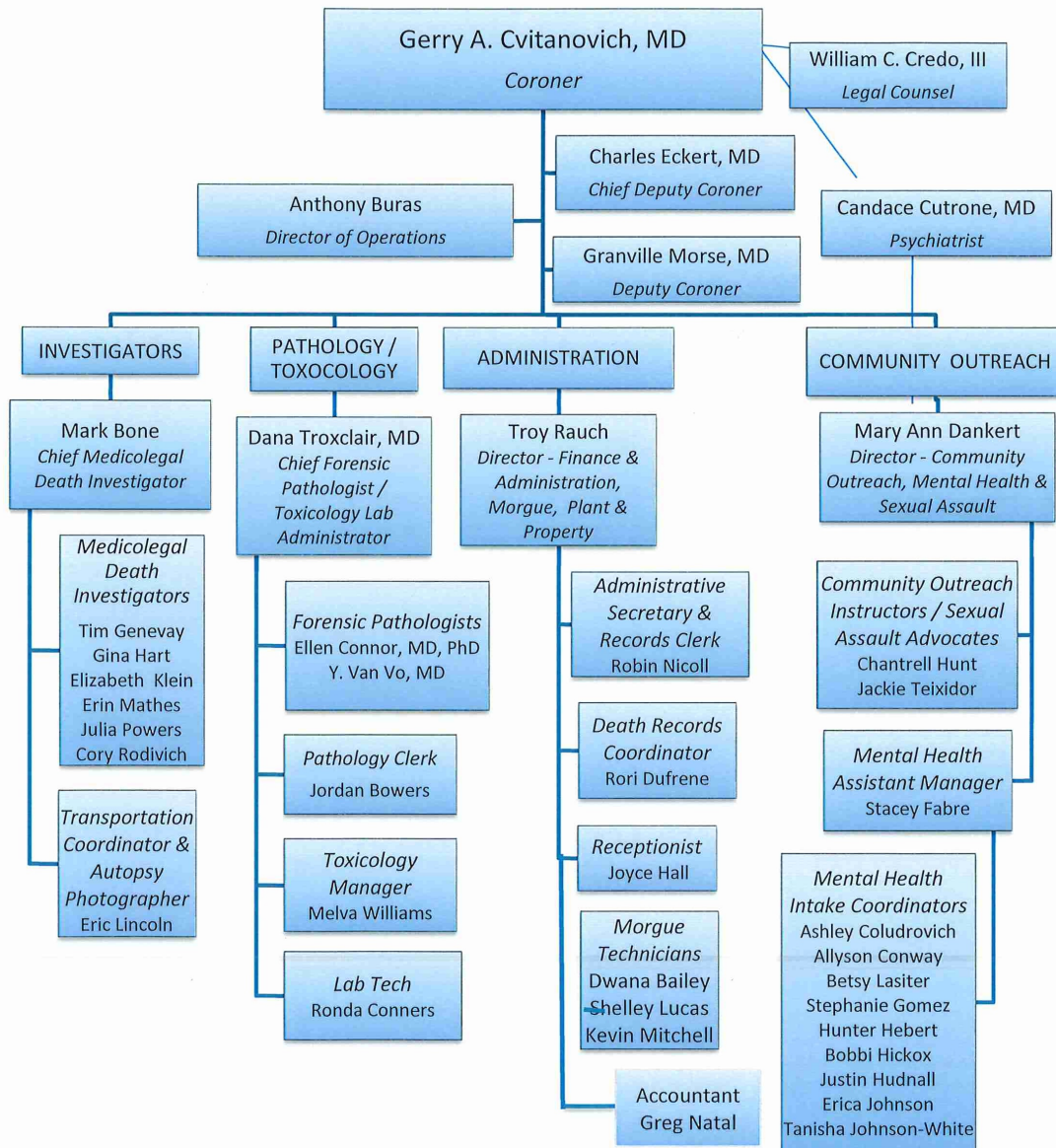
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Organizational Chart

JEFFERSON PARISH CORONER'S OFFICE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2018



Brief Summary

Population (est. 2018)	434,051
Cases Reported to Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office	3475
A. Number of deaths certified after postmortem examination	489
1. Number of Coroner Cases with Complete Autopsy and Toxicological Analysis	481
2. Number of Coroner Cases with External Examination and Toxicological Analysis	8
3. Number Hospital autopsies retained under Coroner's Office jurisdiction	1
B. Number of deaths certified without postmortem examination	361
C. Number of death scene investigations	475
D. Number of unidentified bodies	0
E. Number of exhumations performed	0
F. Number of bodies transported to the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office	797

The Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office (JPCO) is the only Coroner's Office in the State of Louisiana Accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners and is under the direction of Dr. Gerry Cvitanovich who was elected Coroner in 2011. The office is staffed by board certified forensic pathologists and death investigators, toxicology lab technologists, morgue technicians and trained administrative staff. State statute mandates that JPCO provide death investigations, mental health evaluations and the examination of victims of sexually-oriented criminal offenses. As a result, Coroner's Office staff members are available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. The JPCO provides timely investigations in all cases, prompt transportation services and the completion case reports and death certificates to be used by families and the legal system.

The Coroner may order an autopsy as he deems necessary to help certify the death. Information collected during the investigation helps clarify the circumstances such as the sequence of events prior to death. Evidence collected during an investigation and/or postmortem examination may help lead to the arrest and successful conviction of a suspect in a homicide case. Our investigation may also exonerate an innocent person. We are an independent and autonomous office who works for neither the prosecution nor the defense. Complete findings of the death investigation are distributed to families and law enforcement agencies when appropriate.

Our team of professionals are also available to answer questions and address concerns regarding deaths within the parish. Death investigators frequently make personal contact with family members and assist them by providing appropriate answers regarding the circumstances of the death. They also give answers to common questions and facts about autopsies and may distribute resource information pertaining to grief counseling.

In 2012, Dr. Cvitanovich began a program of community outreach in the schools and community at large. The purpose of this program is to educate our children regarding the dangers of drugs and the consequences as it relates to teens, sex and the law. The program has been received well by educators, students and their parents.

The Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office will continue to serve the community with professionalism and integrity throughout the death investigation process as well as providing guidance and compassion for those suffering from mental illness and victims of sexual oriented criminal offenses.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Jefferson Parish Council for their support of the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office and the services we provide to the citizens of the Jefferson Parish.

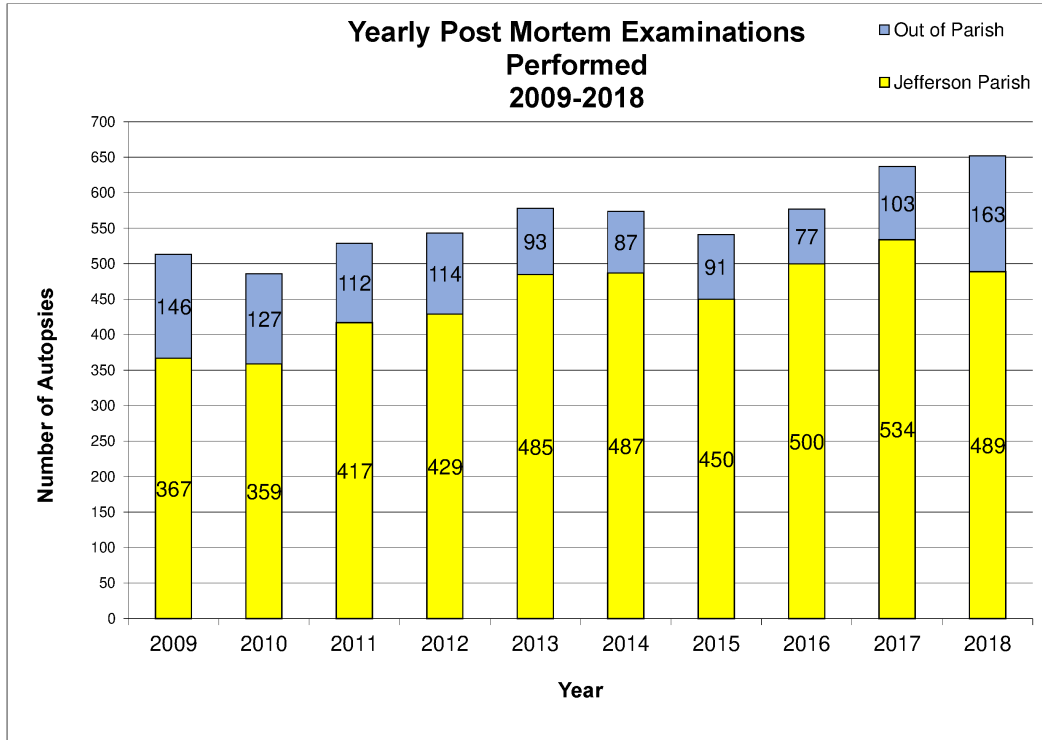
Types of Deaths Reportable to the Coroner's Office

As per Louisiana R.S. 13:5713 (A), the Coroner shall either view the body or make an investigation into the cause and manner of death in all cases involving the following:

- (1) Suspicious, unexpected, or unusual deaths.
- (2) Sudden or violent deaths.
- (3) Deaths due to unknown or obscure causes or in any unusual manner.
- (4) Bodies found dead.
- (5) Deaths due to suspected suicide or homicide.
- (6) Deaths in which poison is suspected.
- (7) Any death from natural causes occurring in a hospital under twenty-four hours of admission.
- (8) Deaths following an injury or accident either old or recent.
- (9) Deaths due to drowning, hanging, burns, electrocution, gunshot wounds, stabs or cutting, lightning, starvation, radiation, exposure, alcoholism, addiction, tetanus, strangulation, suffocation, or smothering.
- (10) Deaths due to trauma from whatever cause.
- (11) Deaths due to criminal means or by casualty.
- (12) Deaths in prison or while serving a sentence.
- (13) Deaths due to virulent contagious disease that might be caused by or cause a public hazard, including acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

As per Louisiana R.S. 13:5713 (B,C), there are two circumstances in Louisiana when an autopsy must be performed: 1) In the case of any death where there is a reasonable probability that the violation of a criminal statute has contributed to the death, 2) Any infant under the age of one year dies unexpectedly, without explanation, with no underlying disease process.

Post Mortem Exams Performed from 2009-2018

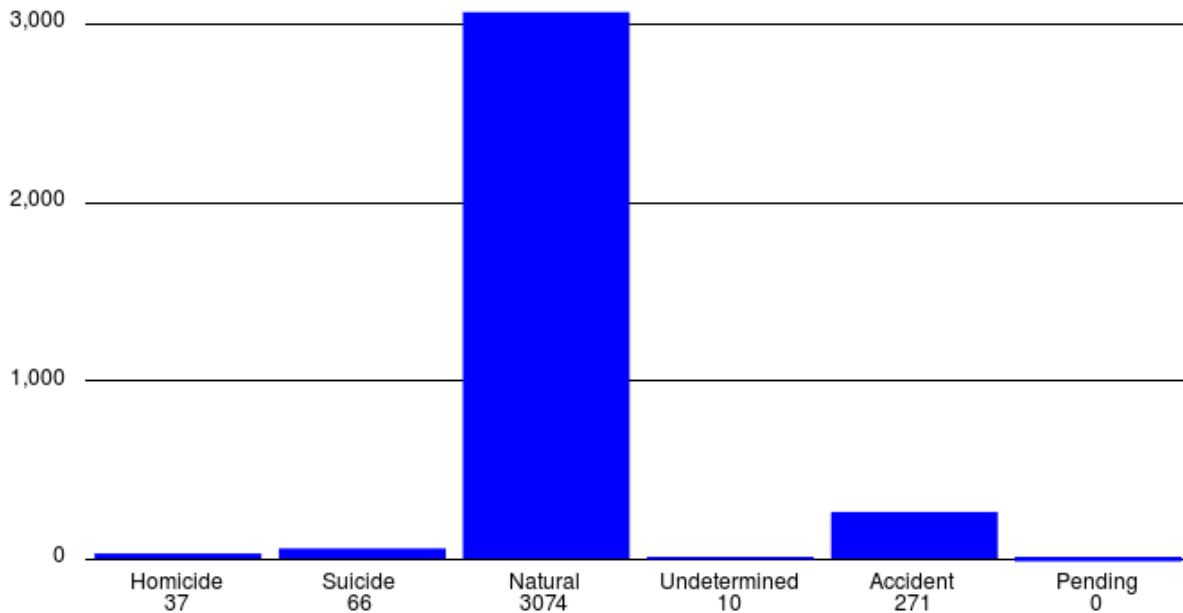


In 2018, the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office accepted jurisdiction in 3475 cases, of those, 489 were autopsied. This graph depicts the number of post mortem exams performed over the past 11 years. The office also performed 163 autopsies for 10 other Coroner agencies in the state.

Full Autopsy: A complete external and internal examination of a decedent with toxicological analysis.

External Examination: An examination of the exterior of a decedent with toxicological analysis.

Manner of Death following an Autopsy and/or Death Investigation



The **Manner of Death** is a classification of the way in which the cause of death came about, whether by force of natural events, accidental means, self-inflicted wounds, or other external forces. Manner of Death is determined largely by means of the investigation. There are only five (5) manners of death, listed below. The Coroner is the only one authorized to utilize all five manners of death on the death certificate.

Natural: Death caused solely by disease. If a natural death is hastened by injury or any other non-natural event (e.g. fall,), the manner of death will not be considered natural. If the terminal process is caused by a non-natural event (e.g. pneumonia due to long-term bed confinement as a result of a motor vehicle crash), the manner of death will not be considered natural.

Suicide: Death due to injury that occurred with the intent to cause one's own death.

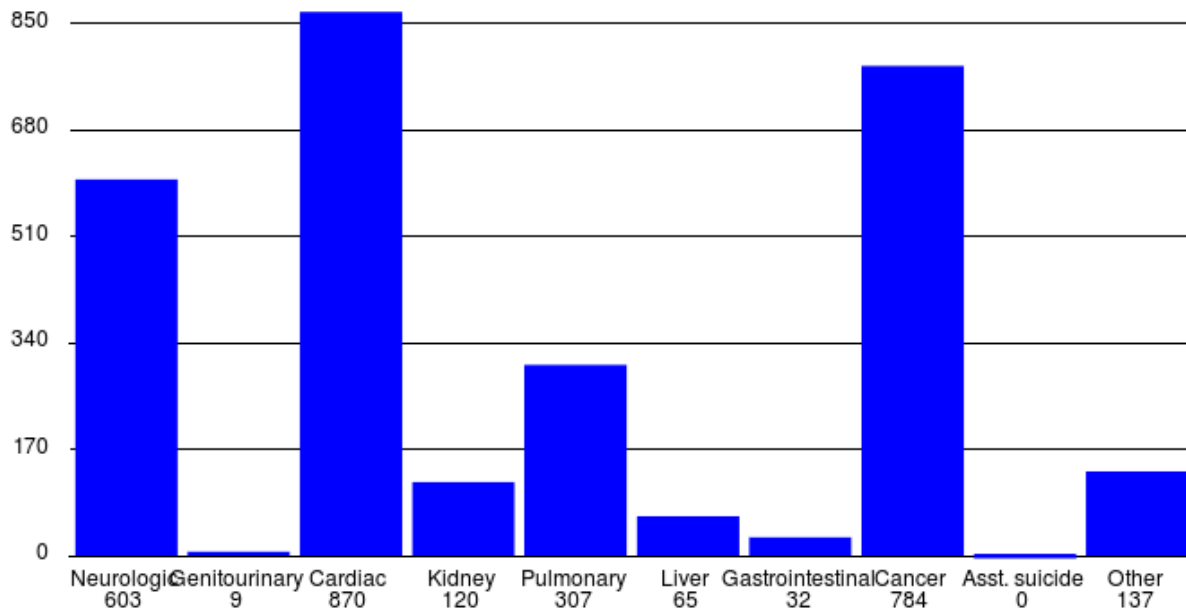
Accident: Death other than natural where there is no evidence of intent: i.e. an unintentional event of chain of events. This category includes motor vehicle crashes, falls, drowning, accidental drug overdoses, etc.

Homicide: Death resulting from injuries caused by the actions of another person.

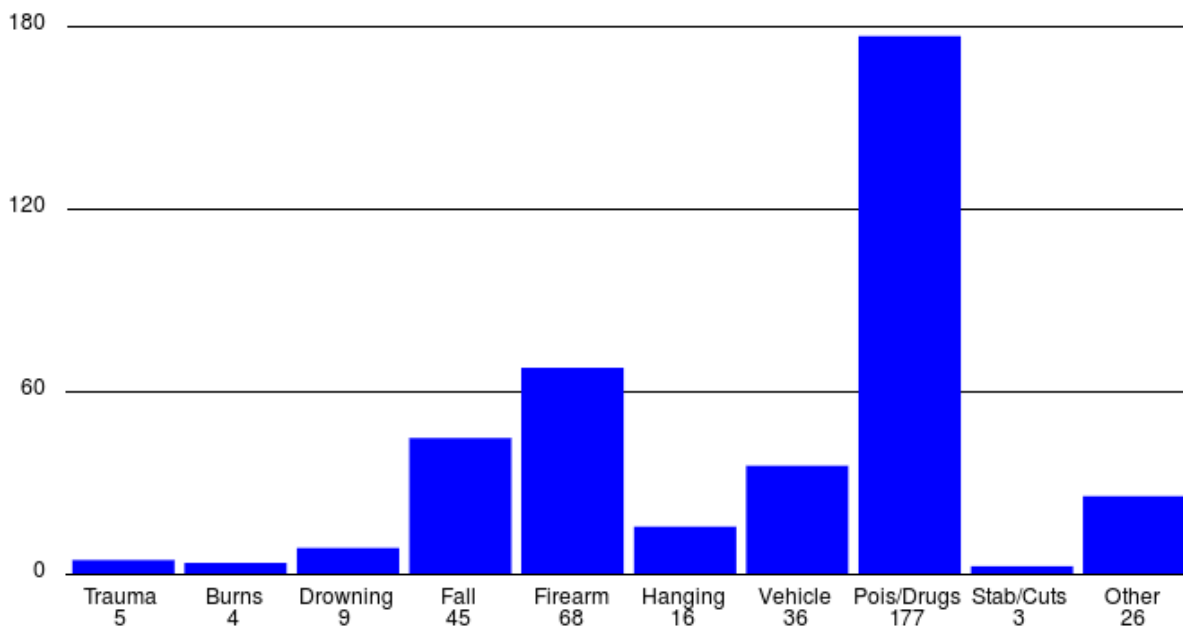
- Homicidal manner does not indicate a *criminal* homicide, which is determined by the legal process and not the certifier of the death.

Undetermined: Manner assigned when there is insufficient evidence, or conflicting information (especially about intent), to assign a specific manner.

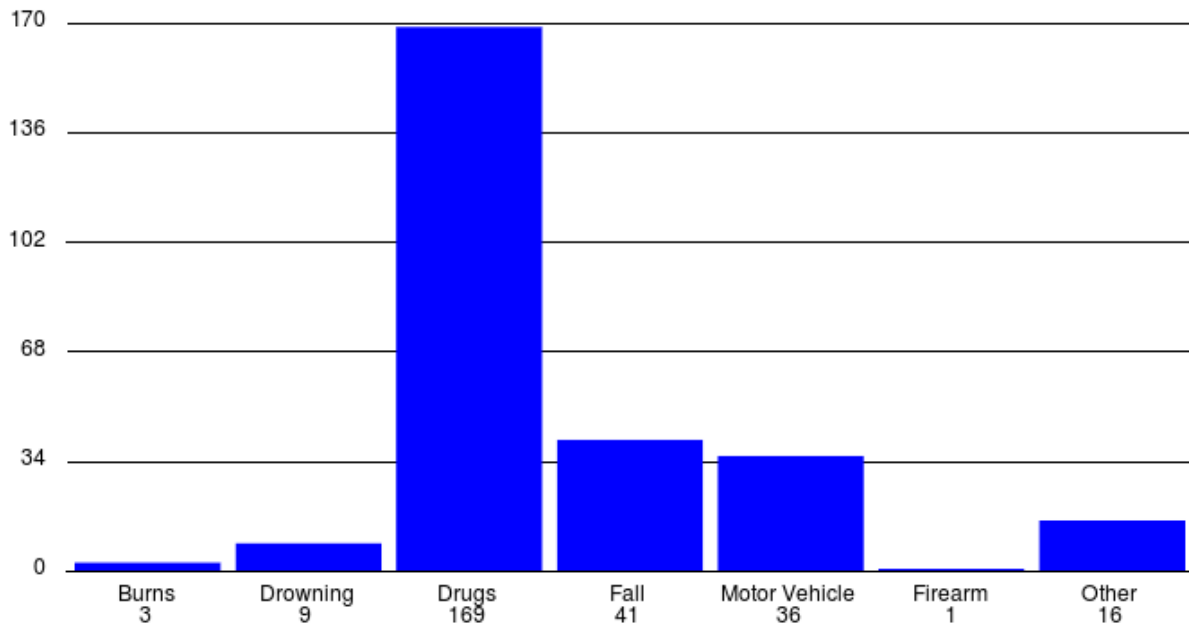
Deaths by Natural Causes



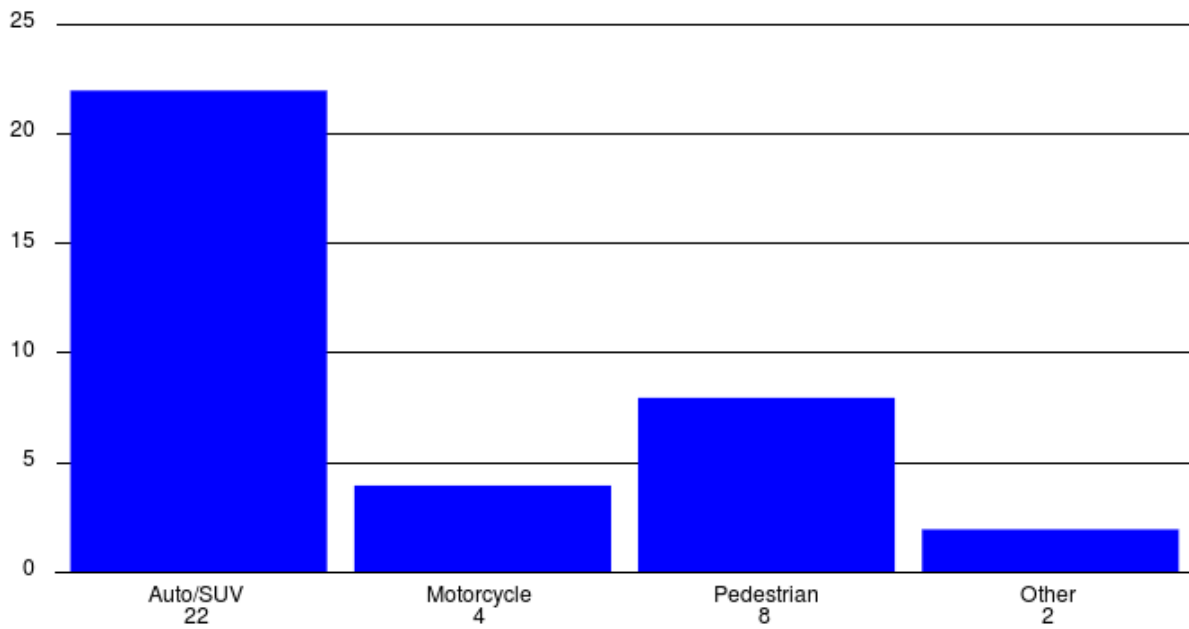
Deaths by Unnatural Causes



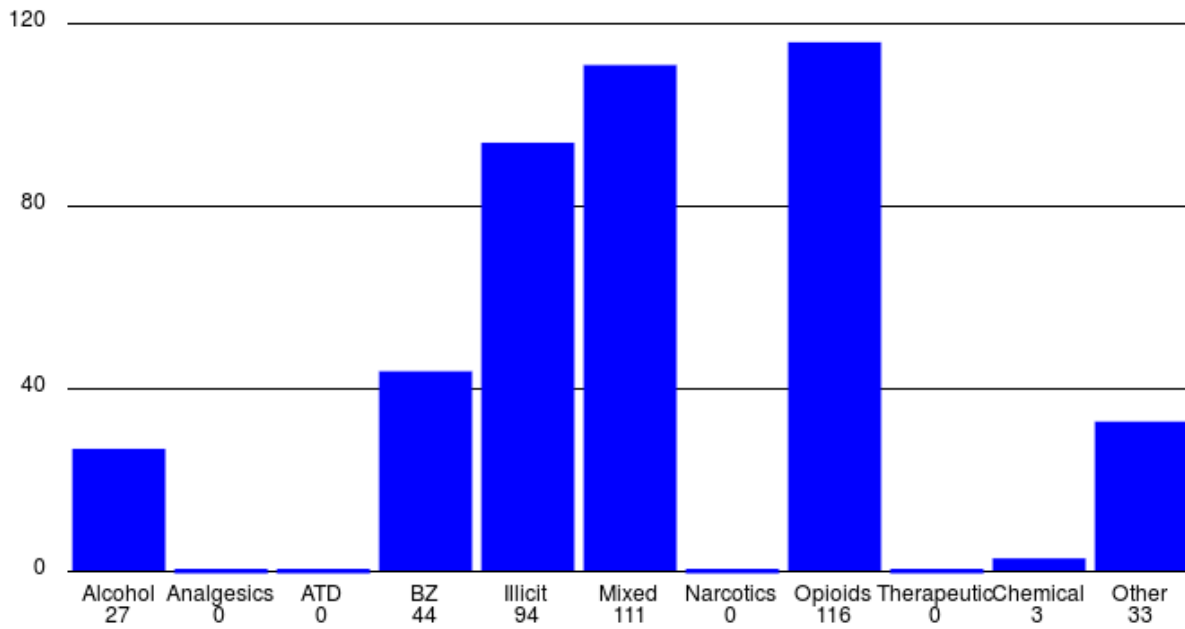
Accidental Deaths by Type



Accidental Deaths - Motor Vehicle Crashes

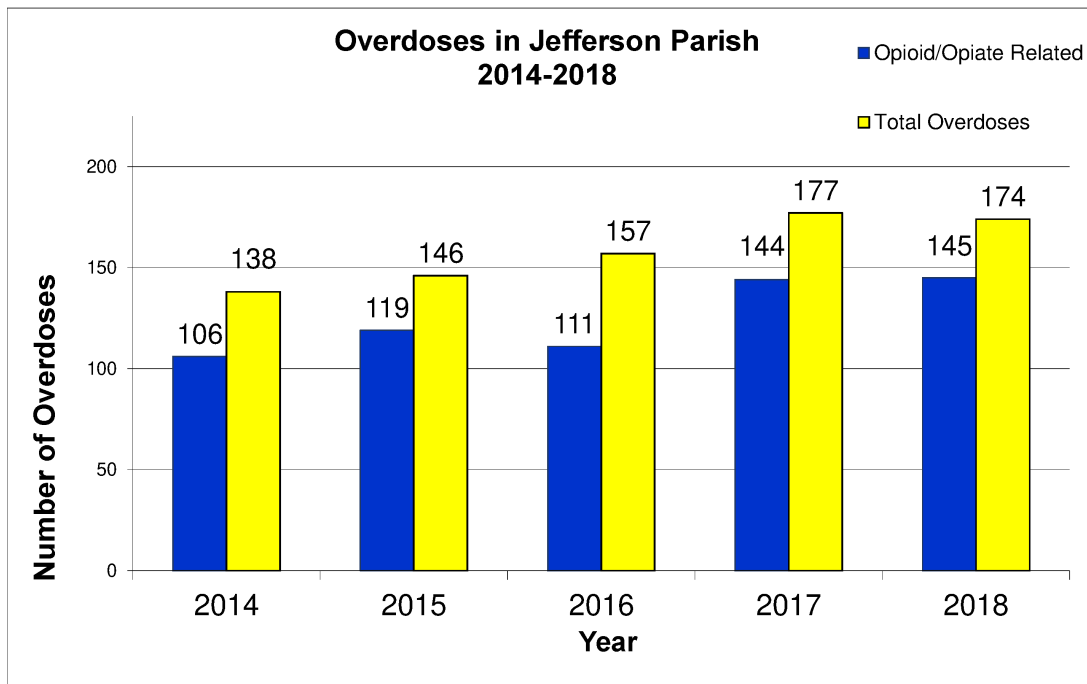


Drugs Contributing to Cause of Death



Analgesics, Antidepressants (ATD) Narcotics, Therapeutics: These drug categories were not used to classify any drug deaths in Jefferson Parish

Drug Overdoses in Jefferson Parish 2014-2018



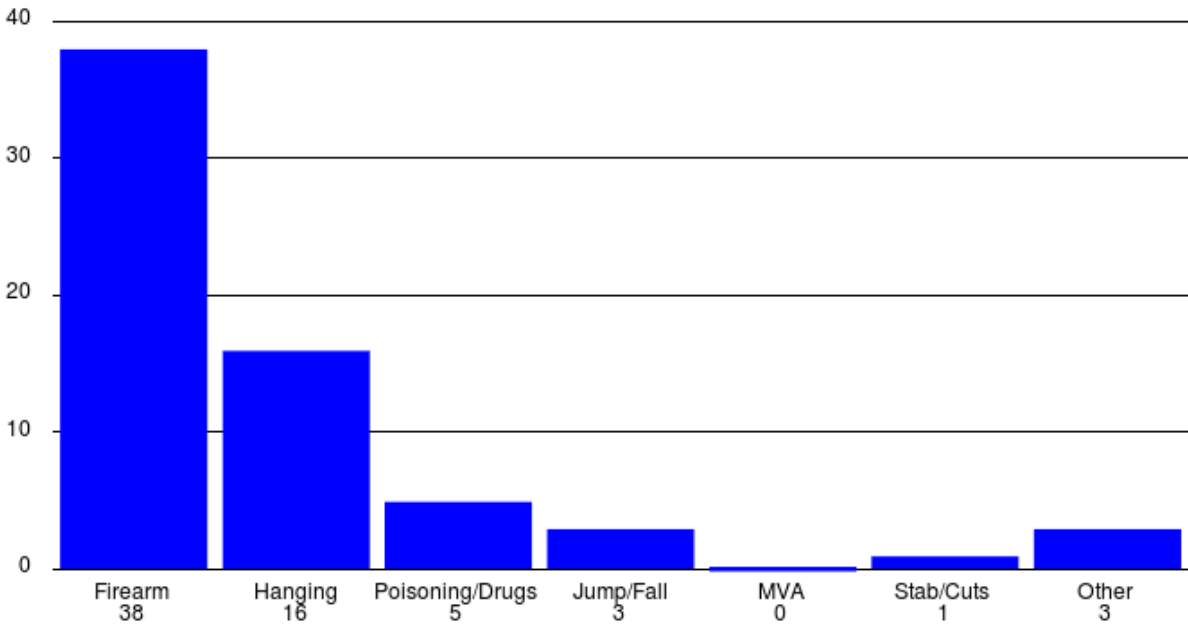
Fentanyl Related Deaths

2014: 8
2015: 15
2016: 25
2017: 66
2018: 78

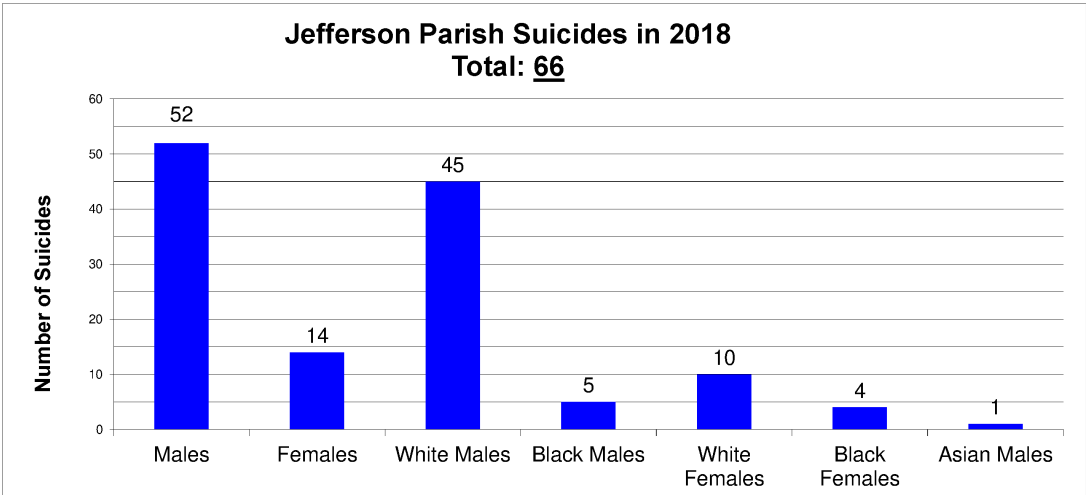
Heroin Related Deaths

2014: 66
2015: 65
2016: 64
2017: 63
2018: 54

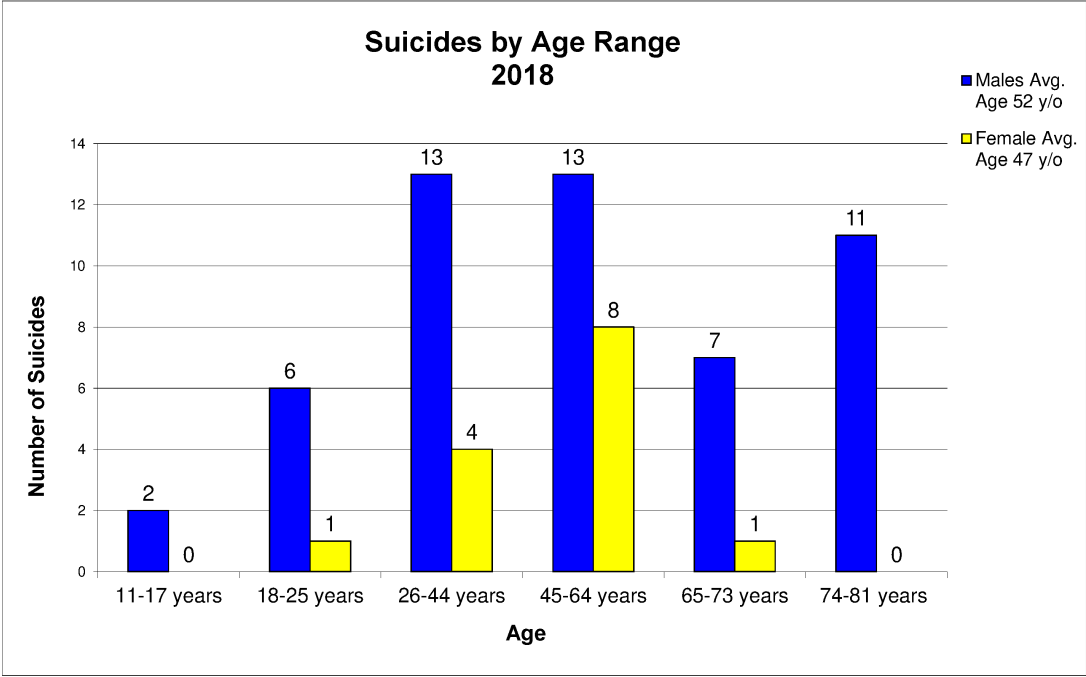
Suicide by Means



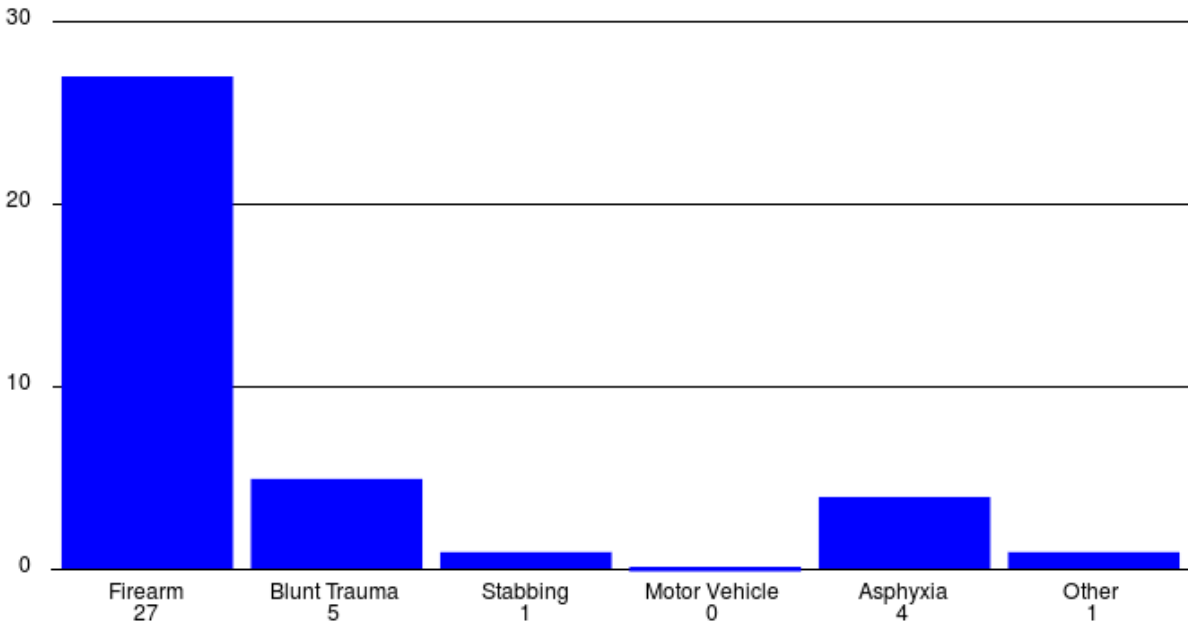
Suicide By Race and Gender



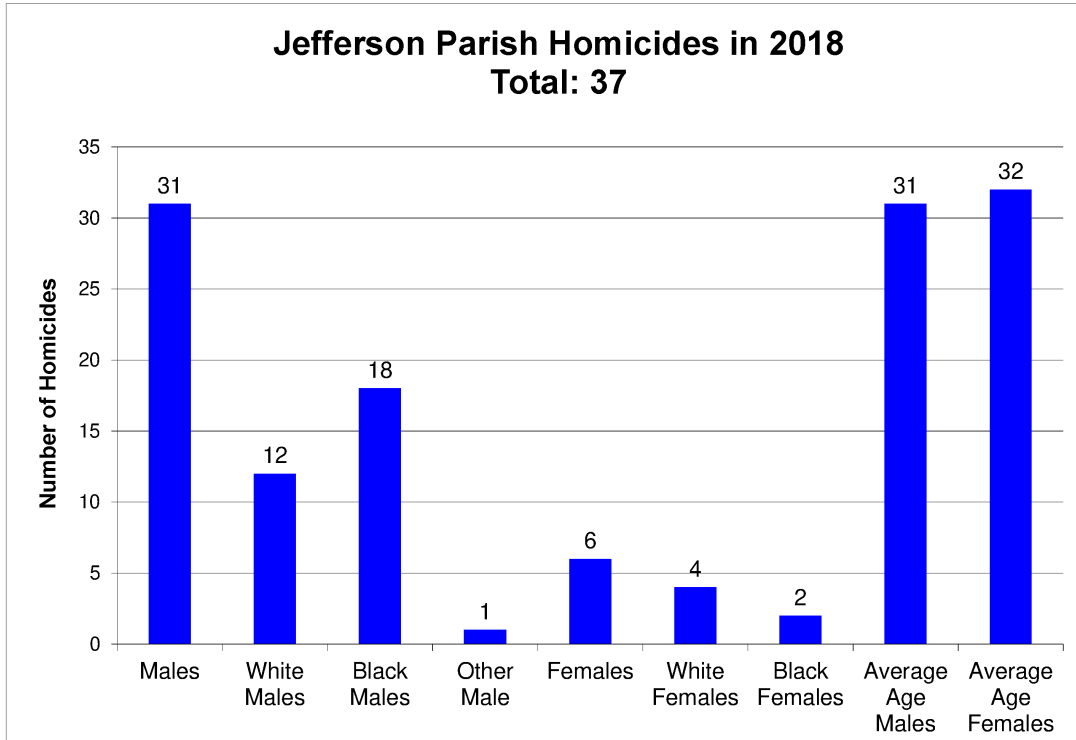
Number of Suicides By Age Range



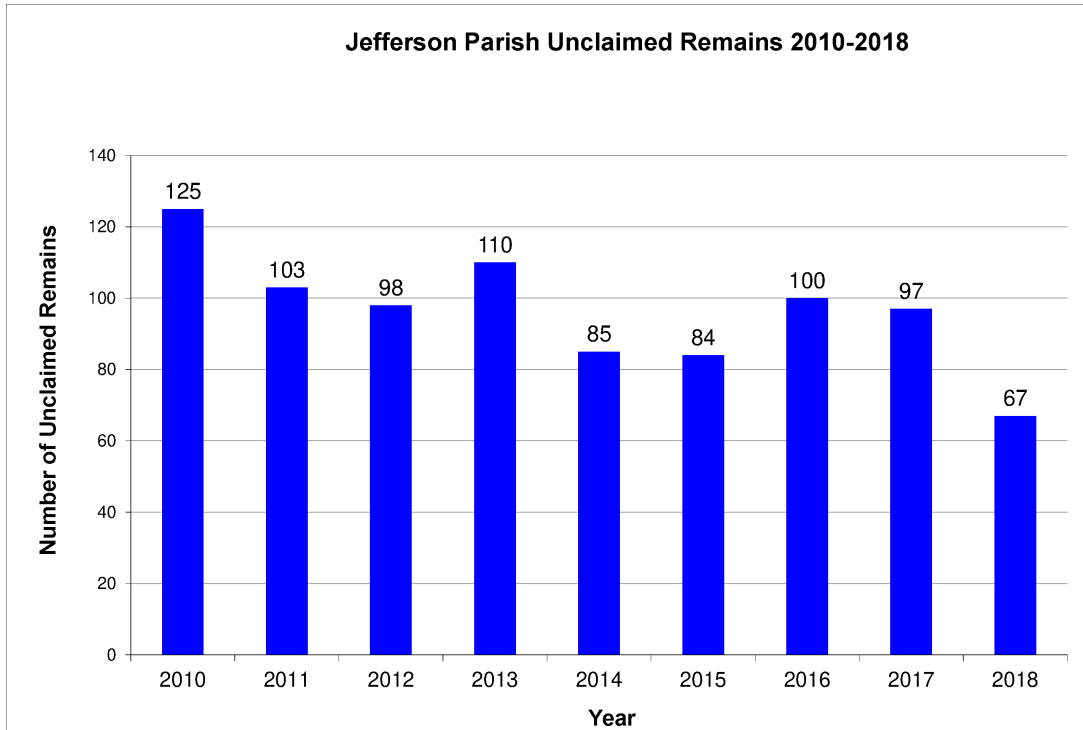
Homicide Deaths



Homicide By Gender, Race and Average Age

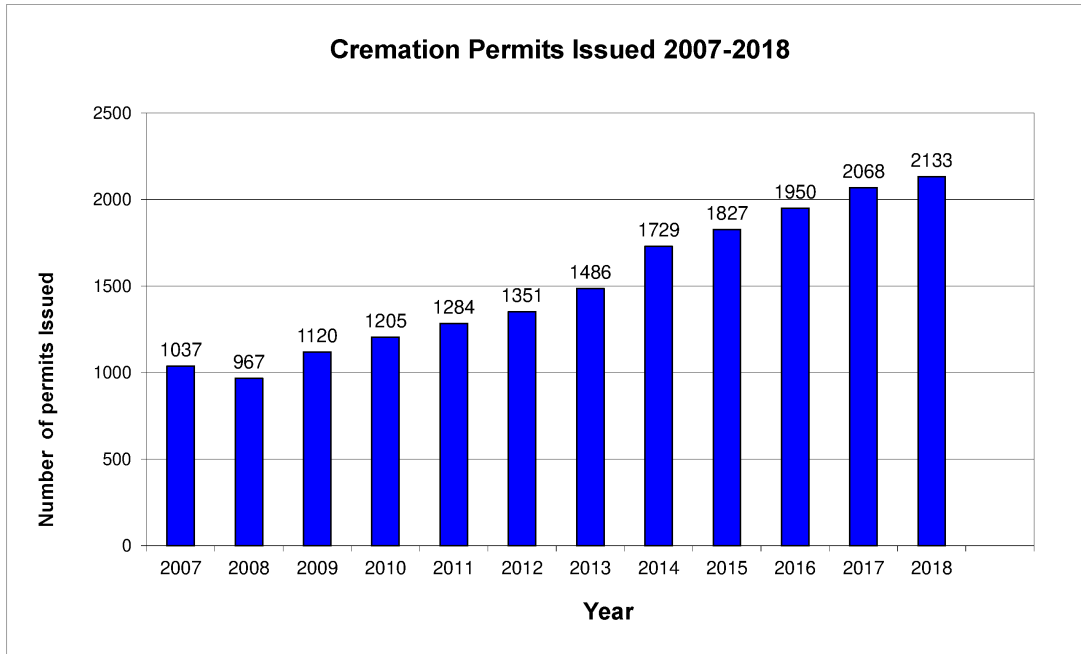


Pauper/Unclaimed Remains 2010-2018



The Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office (JPCO) is required by law to provide final disposition of all unclaimed dead bodies in Jefferson Parish. In accordance with the law, a procedure has been established by the JPCO to facilitate the necessary arrangements of the remains. When a body is unclaimed or abandoned in Jefferson Parish, it becomes the responsibility of the JPCO to initiate a diligent search for a family member or concerned party willing to claim the body for final disposition. If after 30 days of death and the body is still unclaimed, the JPCO may dispose of the body in accordance with the law. In 2018, 56 bodies were cremated as unclaimed/abandoned costing \$25,485. The Compassionate Burials For Indigent Babies Organization provided final disposition for 11 Jefferson Parish infants. The graph above depicts the unclaimed bodies cremated from 2010-2018.

Cremation Permits Issued 2007-2018



In the State of Louisiana, as per LA R.S. 13:5716, the Coroner is charged with the investigation in all deaths if the body is to be cremated. If, after the necessary investigation, the Coroner is satisfied that there are no suspicious circumstances surrounding the death, he shall issue a permit for cremation. The investigation involves the confirmation that the death certificate is appropriately executed and no further circumstances exist which may have contributed to the death. If the investigation reveals suspicious circumstances or the reasonable probability of the commission of a crime, the Coroner shall deny the permit. If the cause of death is unclear or falls under the jurisdiction of the Coroner, a postmortem exam and issuance of a revised death certificate may be required.

Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency/Southern Eye Bank Statistics For Coroner Cases

Since not all deaths fall under the Coroner's Office jurisdiction, our office is not involved with all donation requests. Although the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office does not approach families for donation of organs and tissue from decedents, we recognize the tremendous need for this life-saving activity and cooperate fully with organ and tissue procurement agencies. It is the philosophy of the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office that all requests for organ and/or tissue donation be given high priority for approval. In practice, the procurement agency contacts the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office with information regarding a potential donor and the specific organs or tissue requested. The Coroner and his pathologist's evaluates the request to determine if the donation would significantly affect the postmortem examination. In the great majority of cases, examinations can be conducted so that donations do not interfere with certification of death or collection of evidence. In this way, the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office works to maximize the donation of organs and tissue that go directly to save lives. In 2018 , the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office gave release on 53 deaths that came under the office's jurisdiction. Altogether, there were 14 organ donors for transplant from the 67 cases referred to the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office saving 55 lives. There were 39 tissue donors approved for skin, bone, cartilage, heart valves and other tissues through the tissue procurement agency enhancing 2730 lives. Southern Eye Bank received 91 eye donors released by the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office in 2018. One donor can provide the gift of sight to two people and enhance vision for an additional four people.

Other Coroner Responsibilities

Louisiana Coroners are also mandated by Louisiana law to perform the following duties:

1) MENTAL HEALTH/INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS

THE OPC/PEC/ CEC PROCESS

Any Parish Coroner or judge of a court of competent jurisdiction may order a person to be taken into protective custody and transported to a treatment facility or the office of the Coroner for immediate examination when a peace officer or other credible person executes a statement under private signature specifying that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, the person has a mental illness or is suffering from a substance-related or addictive disorder and is in need of immediate treatment to protect the person or others from physical harm. The mental status examination following any transport under an Order for Protective Custody (OPC) is called a Physician's Emergency Certificate (PEC). If a patient is found to meet the criteria of being a danger to self or others or gravely disabled, a second mental status exam must be performed by the Coroner within 72 hours of the first exam. That exam is called a Coroner's Emergency Certificate (CEC).

2) PETITION FOR CONTINUING OR PERMANENT TUTORSHIP

When a person above the age of fifteen possesses less than two-thirds of the intellectual functioning of a person of the same age with average intellectual functioning, evidenced by standard testing procedures administered by competent persons or other relevant evidence acceptable to the court, the parents of such person, or the person entitled to custody or tutorship if one or both parents are dead, incapacitated, or an absent person, or if the parents are judicially separated or divorced, may, with the concurrence of the Coroner of the Parish of the intellectually disabled person's domicile, petition the court of that district to place such person under a continuing tutorship which shall not automatically end at any age but shall continue until revoked by the court of domicile. The petitioner shall not bear the Coroner's costs or fees associated with securing the Coroner's concurrence.

3) SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES

The Coroner or his designee shall examine all alleged victims of a sexually-oriented criminal offense. The Coroner may select the hospital or healthcare provider named as the lead entity for sexual assault examinations in the regional plan required by R.S. 40:1216.1 as his designee to perform the forensic medical examination.

Sexual Assault Statistics

Sexual Assault Department 2018

JUVENILES (17 years & younger)	Sexual Assaults Exams
Female	209
Male	69
TOTAL	278

JUVENILES (17 years & younger)	Medical Advocacy
Female	48
Male	16
TOTAL	64

ADULTS (18 years & older)	Sexual Assaults Exams & Medical Advocacy In Jefferson Parish		
	Reported to Law Enforcement	Un-Reported to Law Enforcement	Total
Female	45	13	58
Male	0	0	0
TOTAL	45	13	58

Community Outreach Statistics

Community Outreach Department 2018

Programs are taught in Jefferson Parish Public & Private Schools

kNO!w More Louisiana - Suicide Prevention Program

<i>Suicide Prevention</i>	Students	Classes	Referrals
High School TOTAL	1,479	30	35
Middle School TOTAL	4,193	59	143

kNO!w More Louisiana - Bullying Prevention Program

<i>Bullying Prevention</i>	Students	Classes	Referrals
Middle School TOTAL	3,448	42	0

Teens, Sex, and the Law

<i>Teen, Sex and the Law</i>	Students	Classes
High School TOTAL	1,411	49
Middle School TOTAL	2,612	49

Jefferson Parish Programs	Students	Classes	Referrals
<i>Suicide Prevention</i>	5,672	89	178
<i>Bullying Prevention</i>	3,448	42	0
<i>Teen, Sex, & the Law</i>	4,023	94	0
2018 GRAND TOTAL	13,143	225	178

Out of Parish Programs	Students	Classes	Referrals
<i>Suicide Prevention</i>	149	5	0
<i>Teen, Sex, & the Law</i>	105	2	0
2018 GRAND TOTAL	254	7	0

Mental Health Statistics

Mental Health Department 2018

	Jefferson Parish	Out of Parish	Total All Parishes
OPC - Order for Protective Custody	412	4	416
PEC - Request for Coroner's Examination	4,661	4,045	8,706
CEC - Coroner's Emergency Certificate	2,149	1,999	4,148

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