



OAKLAND COUNTY COURTHOUSE • PONTIAC, MICHIGAN

**Oakland County
Medical Examiner's Office
Annual Report 2021**



All ways, MOVING FORWARD

To the Oakland County Board of Commissioners and
to the citizens of Oakland County:

In accordance with Public Act 181 of 1953, commonly referred to as the Medical Examiners Act, the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office is charged with determining the cause and manner of death in any violent, sudden, unexpected, suspicious, or otherwise unexplained death, including all jail deaths and deaths in police custody in Oakland County.

The Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office is fully accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners. The accreditation signifies that the office is performing at a high level and provides reasonable assurances that the office well serves its jurisdiction.

I hope you find this report informative. It is my pleasure to present to you the 2021 Annual Report for the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office.

Respectfully submitted,



Ljubisa J. Dragovic, M.D., FCAP, FAAFS, FNAME
Chief Forensic Pathologist/Medical Examiner

“Show me the manner in which a nation or a community cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land and their loyalty to high ideals”

Gladstone

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Oakland County Staff	5
General Statistics	6
Five Year Trend	7
Manner of Death 2021.	8
Manner of Death Autopsy Status	8
Manner of Death Age & Gender	8
Natural	9
Accidents	10
Motor Vehicle	11
Suicides	12
Homicides	14
Undeterminable	16
Drug Related	18
Other Information	20
Death Scenes Investigated	20
Personnel	21
Budget.	21
Cremations	22
Unclaimed Decedents.	23

INTRODUCTION

This report includes statistical data from the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office (OCMEO) for the years 2017 to 2021. The total number of cases reported in 2021 (8,768) decreased 4% while the number of autopsies and inspections (1,028) increased 3% compared to 2020. The Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office experienced a 61.53% increase in the number of homicides reported in 2020, this trend continued in 2021 with a 17% increase in reported homicides. The number of drug abuse cases increased 2.54%, while the number of suicide cases decreased 3.33%. The number of unclaimed decedents increased 8.8% in 2021.

Every reported case requires preliminary screening by OCMEO investigators to determine if the case falls under OCMEO jurisdiction. Cases that are released occur when the circumstances of the death are known, there is well documented medical history, and the primary care physician is willing and able to sign the death certificate. In 2021, this represented 6,639 cases. Cases that are accepted use one of two approaches to complete the death certificate. The first approach is a medical examiner certification case. The decedent is not transported to the OCMEO and the medical examiner reviews medical records and other pertinent reports to complete the death certificate. In 2021 there were 1,101 medical examiner certifications. The second approach is when the medical examiner orders the decedent into the OCMEO for a physical examination. The physical examination can include a full autopsy, a partial autopsy (cranial only), or an inspection (external examination only). In 2021, this represented 1,002 cases. In addition to the 1,002 medical examiner cases, the OCMEO completed 26 private autopsies.

All cremations that occurred in Oakland County require the approval of the OCMEO. The number of requests for cremation permits continues to rise with a 3.5% increase in 2021.

The Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office hosts several multi-jurisdictional meetings to discuss specific types of cases where deaths may have been preventable. A prime example is the child death review meeting held monthly. Any death involving a child under the age of 18 is reviewed by the forensic pathologists, prosecutor's office, law enforcement, protective services, forensic psychiatrists, area pediatricians, State Department of Public Health, a Consumer Product Safety Commission representative, and any other appropriate specialty depending on the circumstances of the case. The Child Death Review Team reviewed 37 cases in 2021. Similar teams review deaths resulting from domestic violence.

The Medical Examiner's Office continues to partner with educational as well as government organizations for instruction and training. Presentations on cause and manner of death and tours are conducted for: basic police academies, advanced police crime scene training, detective schools, auxiliary and reserve police academies, and more. Along with hosting several medical students in 2021, the Medical Examiner's Office continued the partnership with Wayne State University and the Detroit Medical Center. Each year several pathology residents will spend about a month here during the final stages of their training before becoming board-certified pathologists.



OAKLAND COUNTY STAFF

Chief Medical Examiner
Deputy Chief Medical Examiner

Deputy Forensic Pathologists

Administrator

Chief Medical Examiner Investigator
Medical Examiner Investigators

Autopsy Attendant Supervisor
Autopsy Attendants

Forensic Toxicologist

Histologist

Lead Medical Examiner Office Assistant
Medical Examiner Assistants

Ljubisa Dragovic, M.D.
Kanubhai Virani, M.D.

Bernardino Pacris, M.D.
Shauna Bryan, M.D.
Patrick Cho, M.D.

Casimir Miarka

Mark Giroux
Mariline Rodgers
Raymond Jankowski
Keith Batchelor
Mitch Brown
Jeffery Collins
David St. Germaine
Timothy Wood
Arthur McNamara*

Christina Grammatico
Daniel Jamieson
April Leder
Melissa Ohlrich
Jennifer Dolce

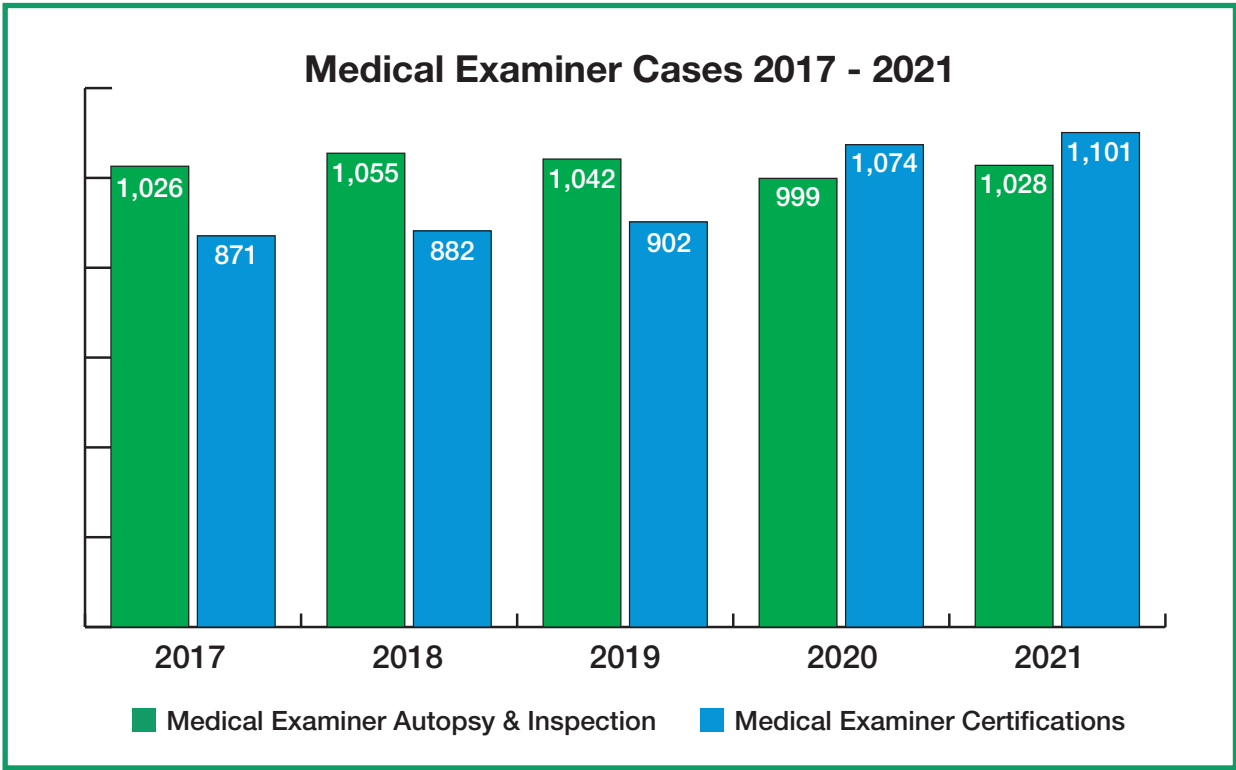
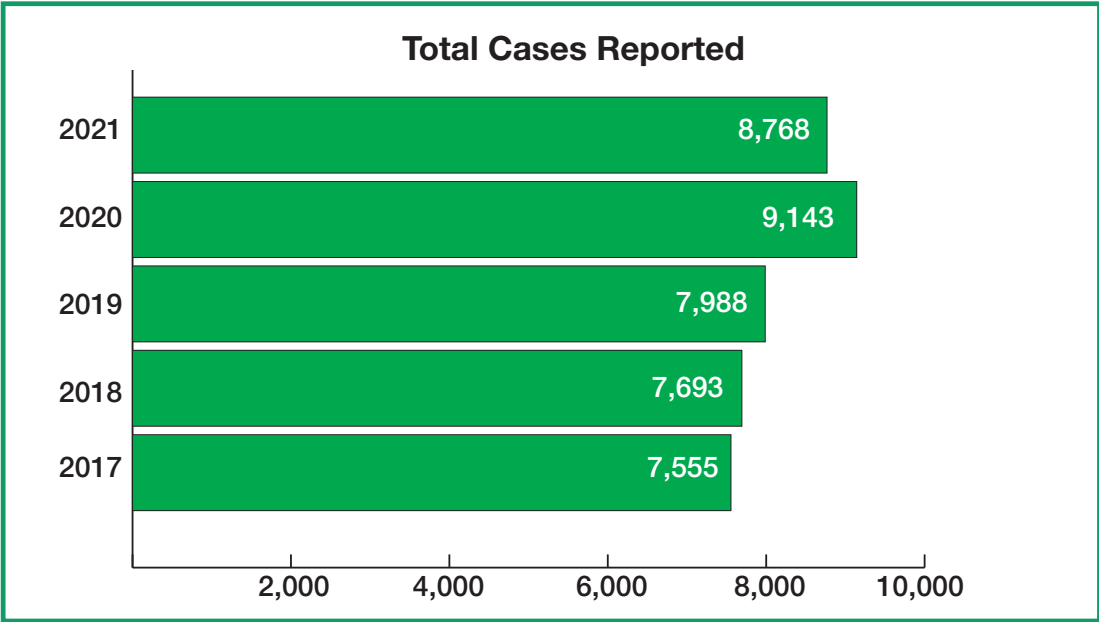
Li Wang, PhD

Karen Darnell-Goldsworthy

Dana Kneip
D'Arcy McAvoy
Chauna Mullins
Amber Lofton

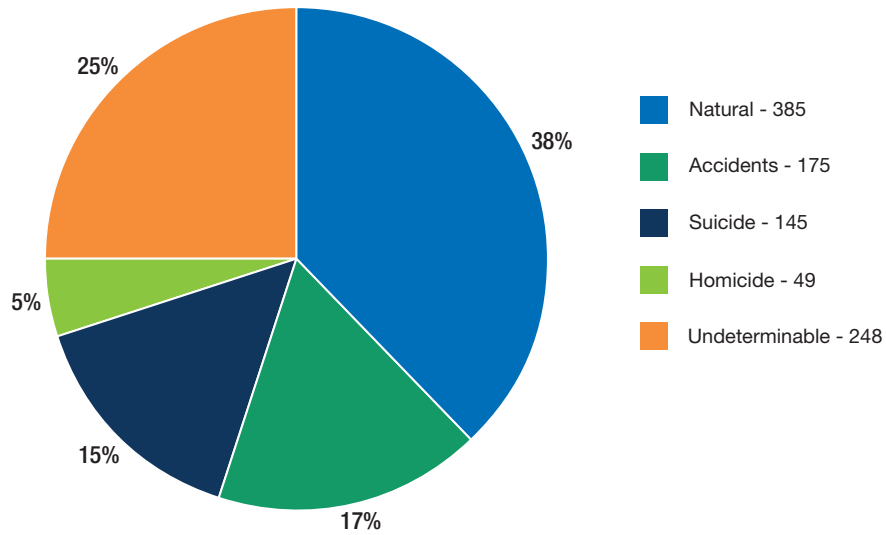
GENERAL STATISTICS 2021

Total number of cases reported	8,768
Cases Accepted	2,129
Scenes Investigated	679
OAKLAND COUNTY CASES	2,103
ME Certifications (Death Certificate Only)	1,101
Examinations	
Full Autopsy	794
Partial Autopsy	5
External Only	203
NON-COUNTY CASES	26
Examinations	
Full Autopsy	22
Partial Autopsy	2
External Only	2
TOTAL CASES	2,129
Medical Examiner Certification (Death Certificate Only)	1,101
Examinations	
Full Autopsy	816
Partial Autopsy	7
External Only	205
MISC INFORMATION	
Unidentified Bodies (after case completion)	0
Exhumations	0
Bodies Transported to Morgue	1,051
Toxicology Cases	703
Cremation Permits Approved	8,486
Microscopic Slides Created	3,040



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Private Autopsy	21	19	32	30	22
Other County	2	82	59	4	4

Medical Examiner Cases by Manner

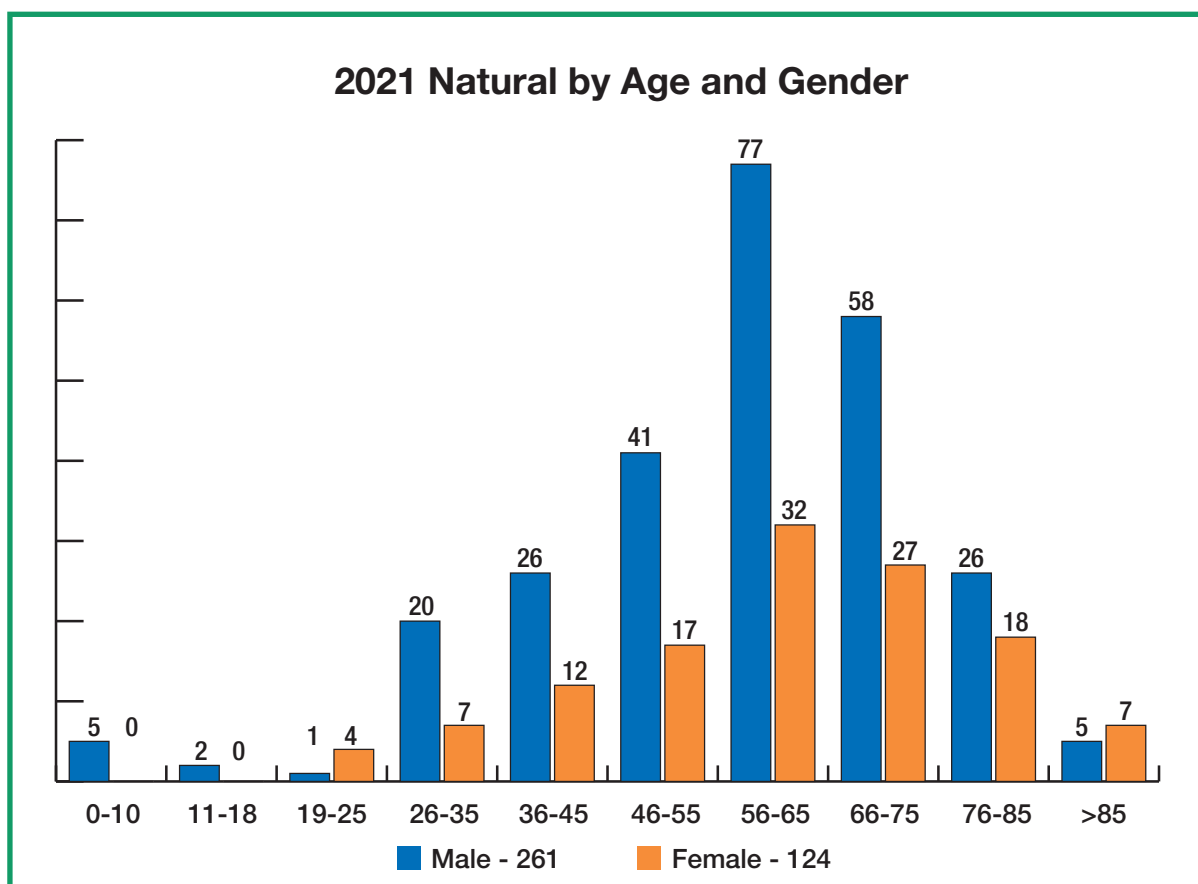
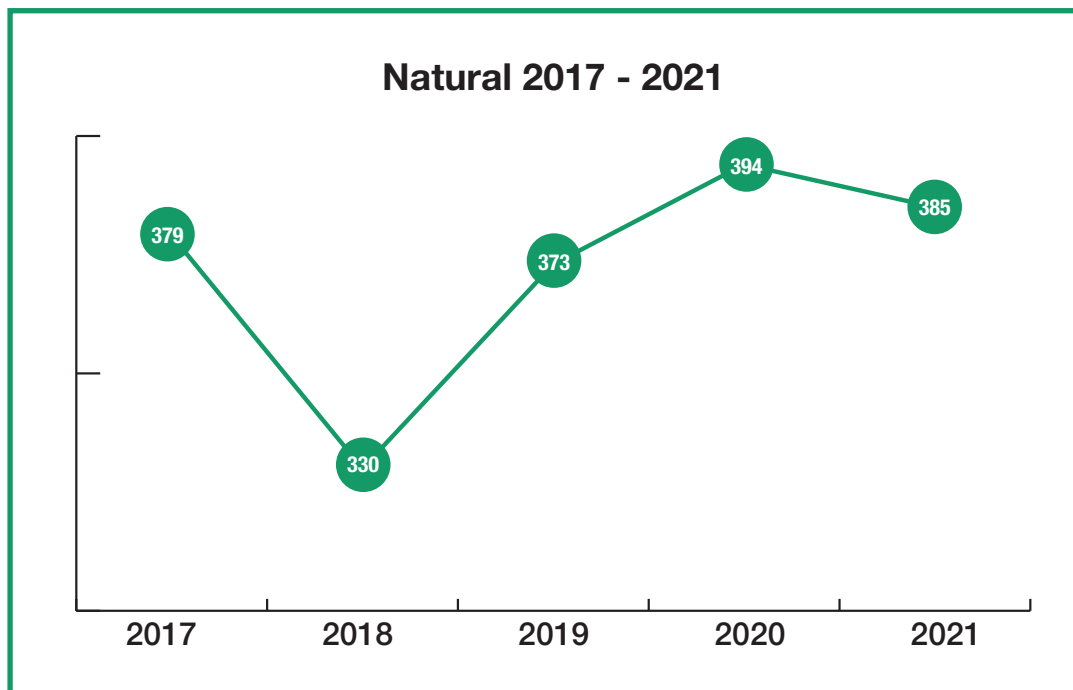


2021 Medical Examiner Cases

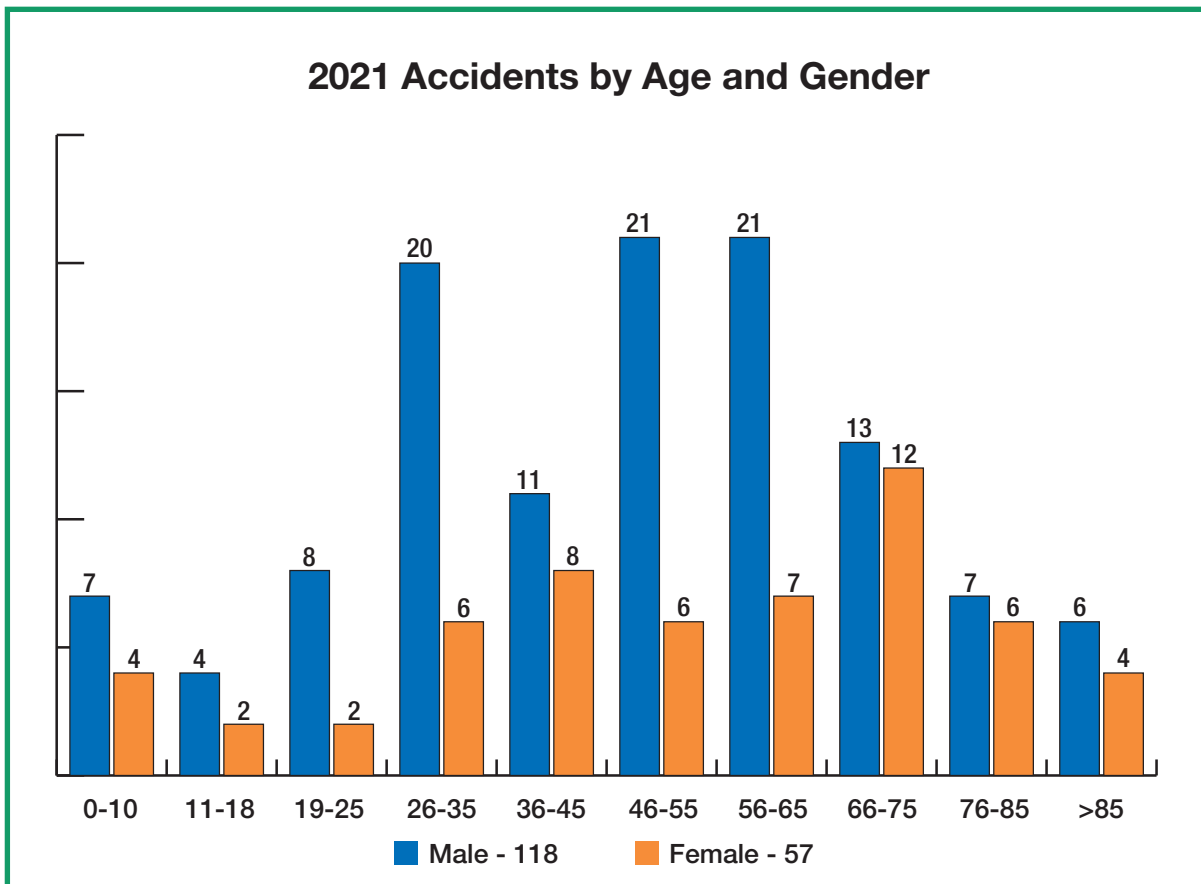
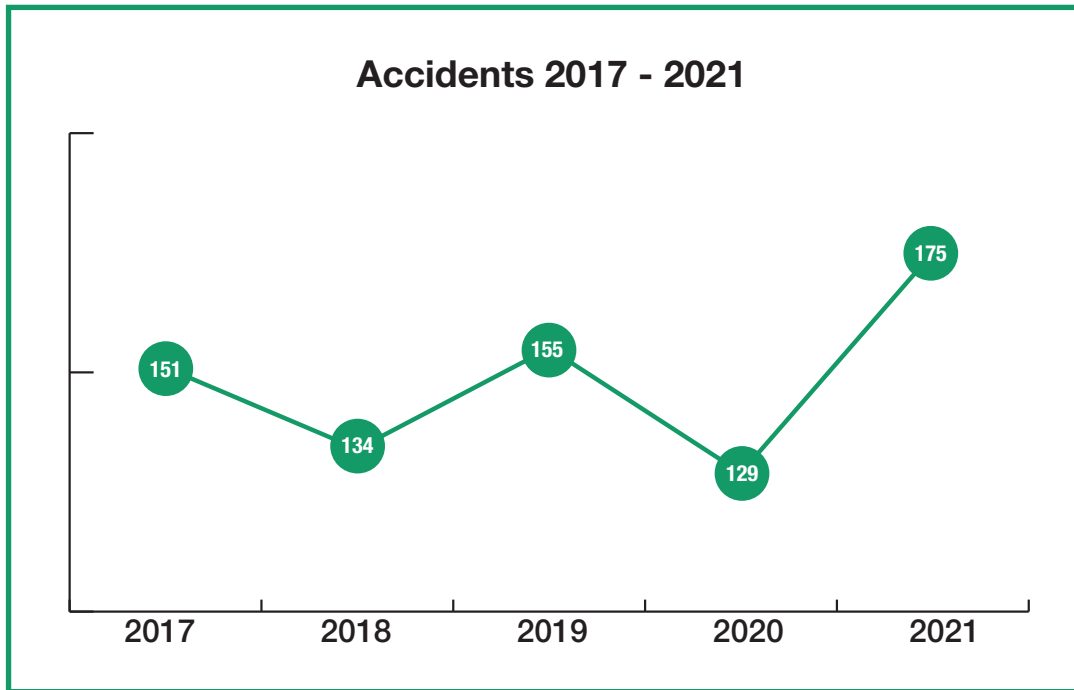
Manner	Full Autopsy	Partial Autopsy	Inspection
Natural	230	0	155
Accident	165	0	10
Suicide	124	3	18
Homicide	49	0	0
Undeterminable	226	2	2
Private	20	2	0
Other County	2	0	2

2021 Exam Cases - Age and Gender

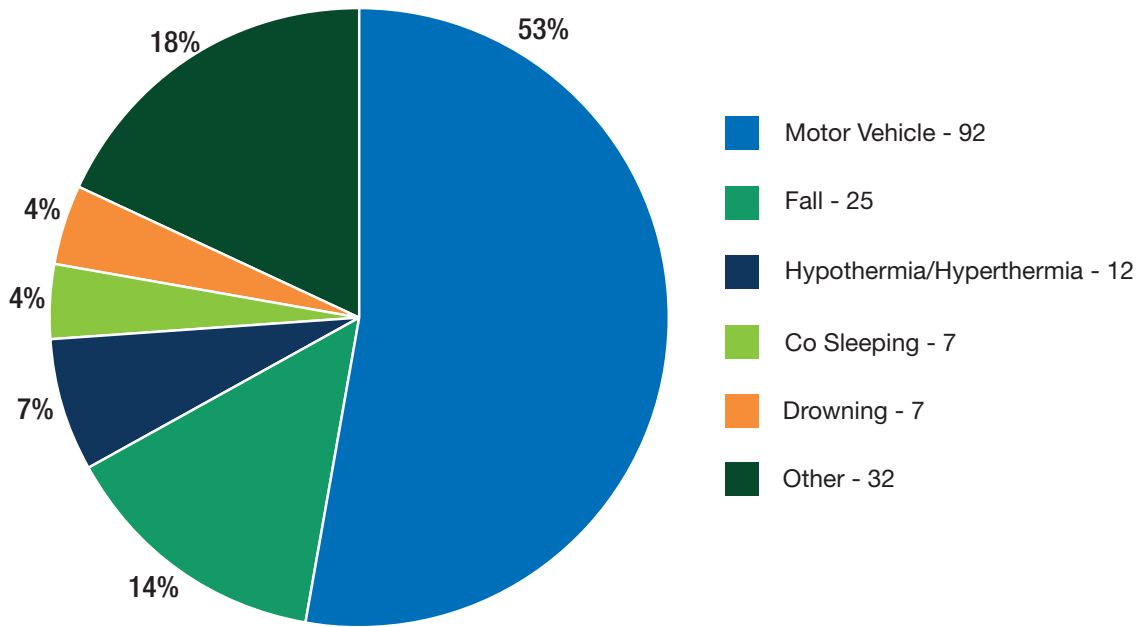
	Natural		Accident		Suicide		Homicide		Undeterminable		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
<1	2	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	13
1-5	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
6-10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
11-18	2	0	4	2	5	5	2	4	0	0	24
19-25	1	4	8	2	15	4	9	0	14	8	65
26-35	20	7	20	6	15	4	12	2	43	13	142
36-45	26	12	11	8	18	10	6	2	46	22	161
46-55	41	17	21	6	16	10	3	1	42	14	171
56-65	77	32	21	7	17	5	3	2	22	13	199
66-75	58	27	13	12	9	2	1	0	6	1	129
76-85	26	18	7	6	8	1	0	0	0	1	69
>85	5	7	6	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	23
Total	261	124	118	57	104	41	37	12	176	72	1002



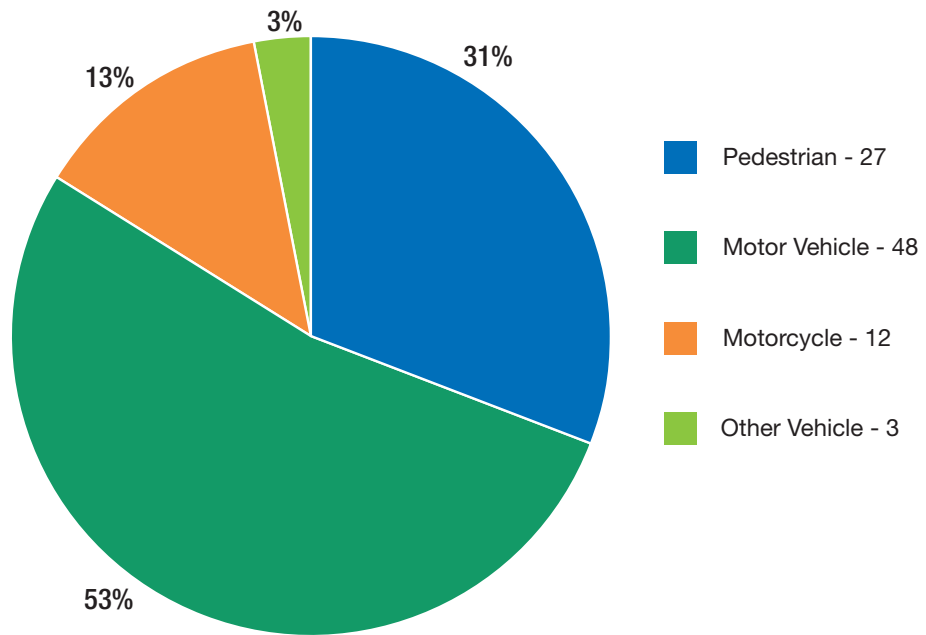
ACCIDENTS



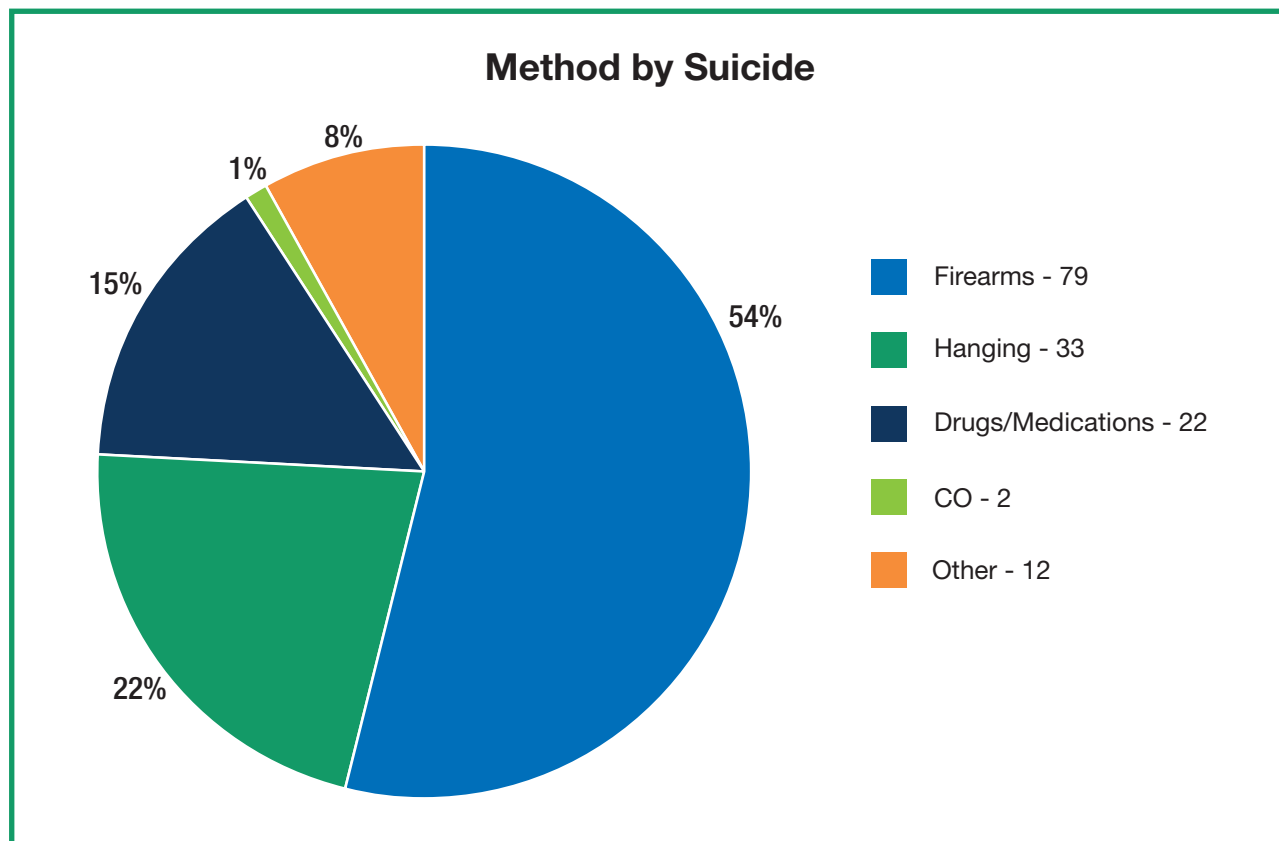
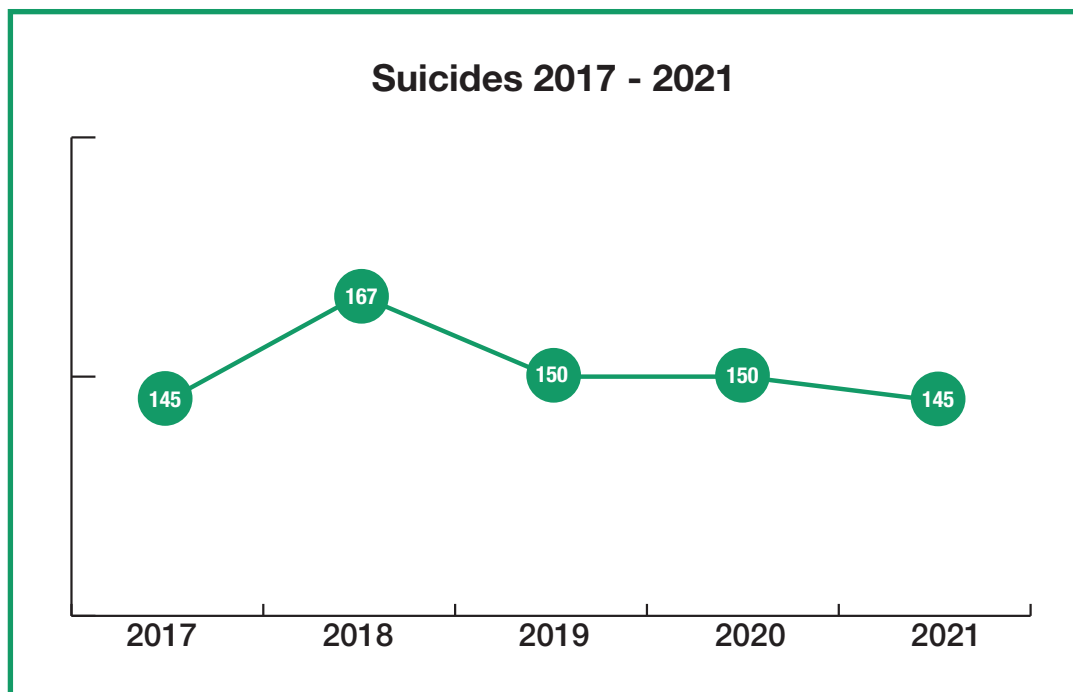
Method by Accident



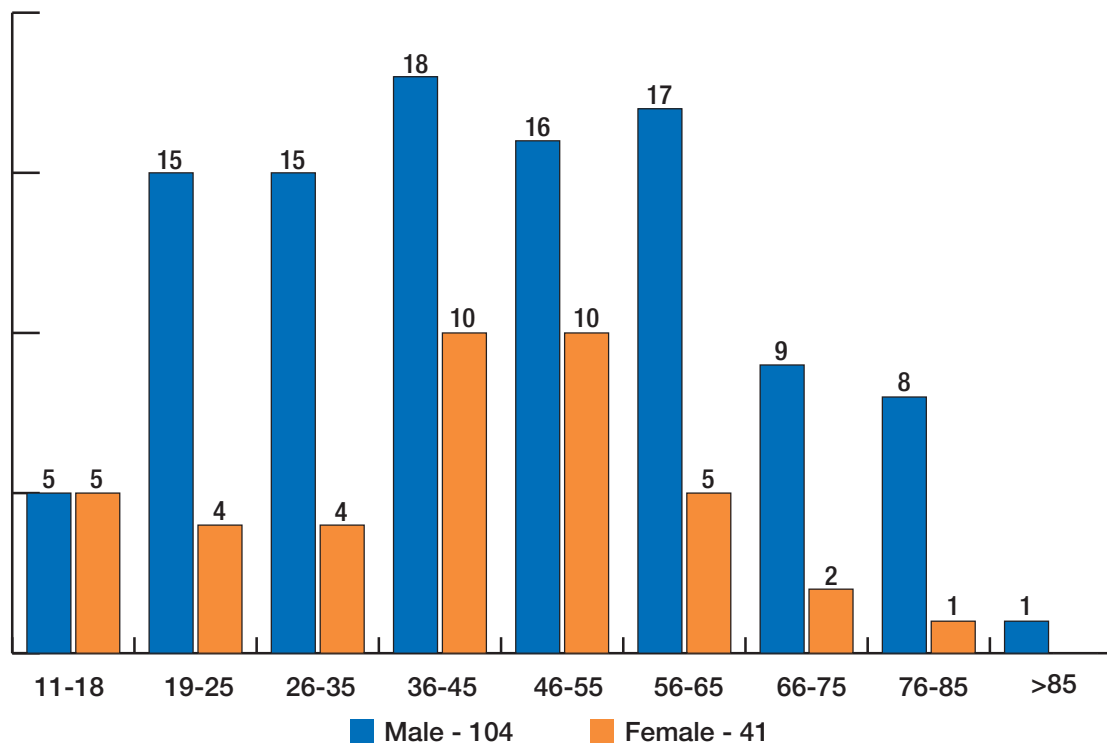
Motor Vehicle Accidents by Type



SUICIDES

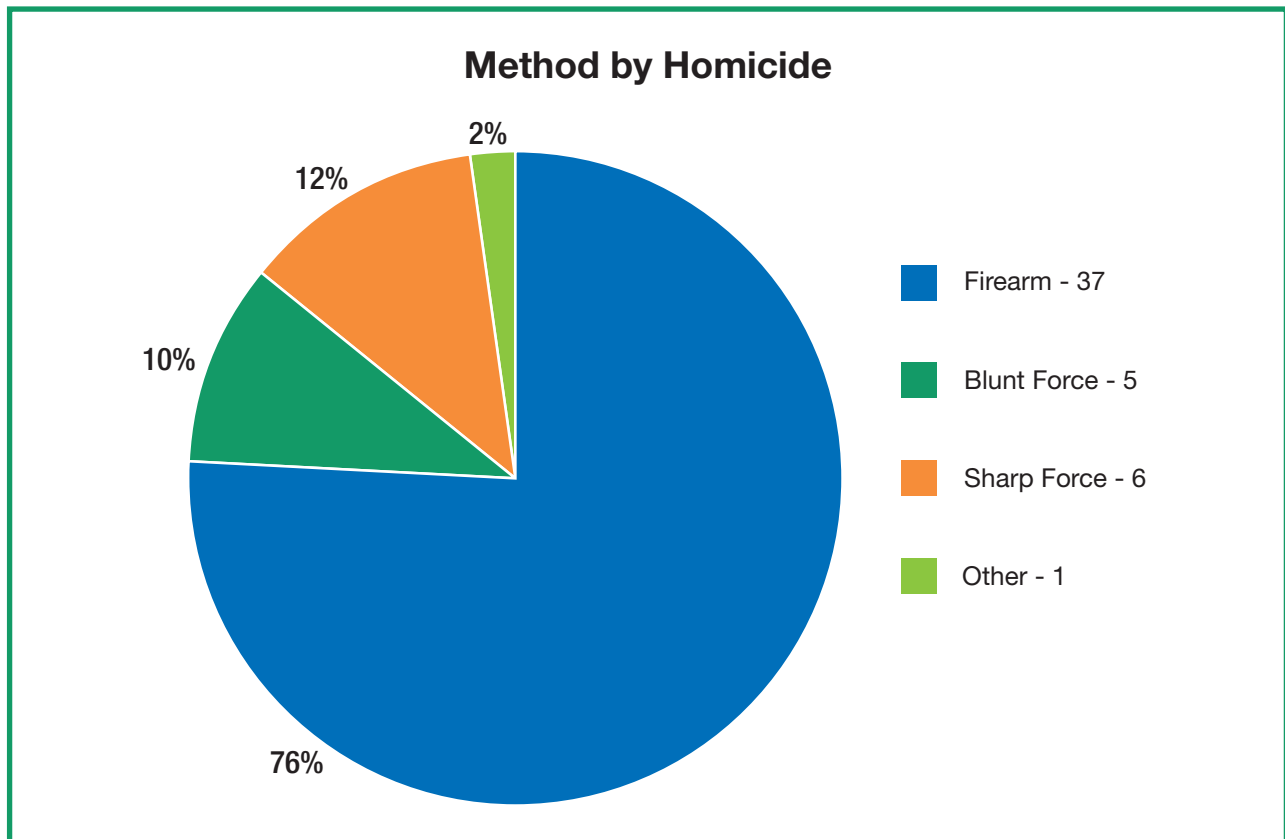
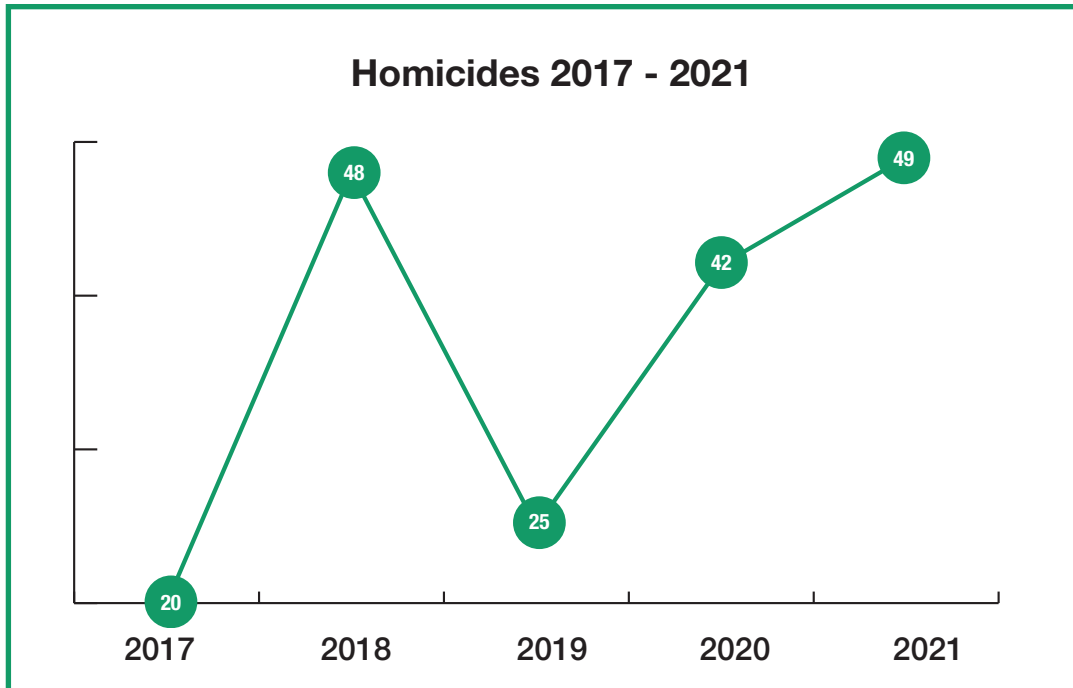


2021 Suicides by Age and Gender

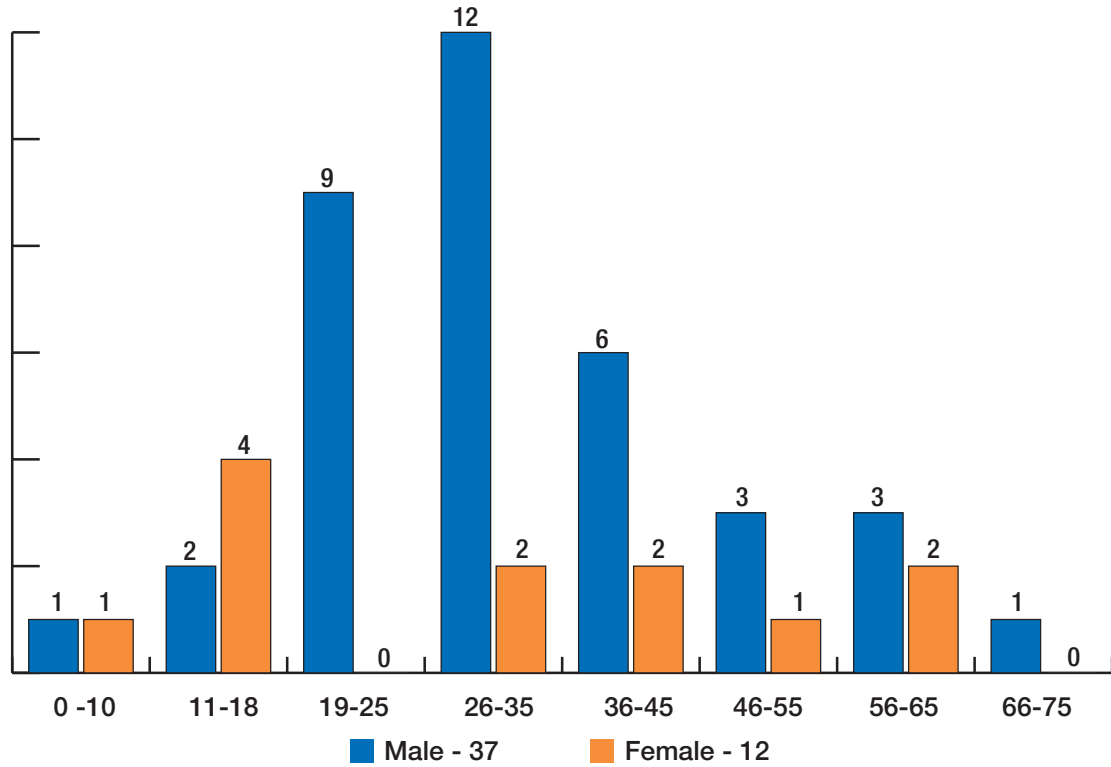


HOMICIDE

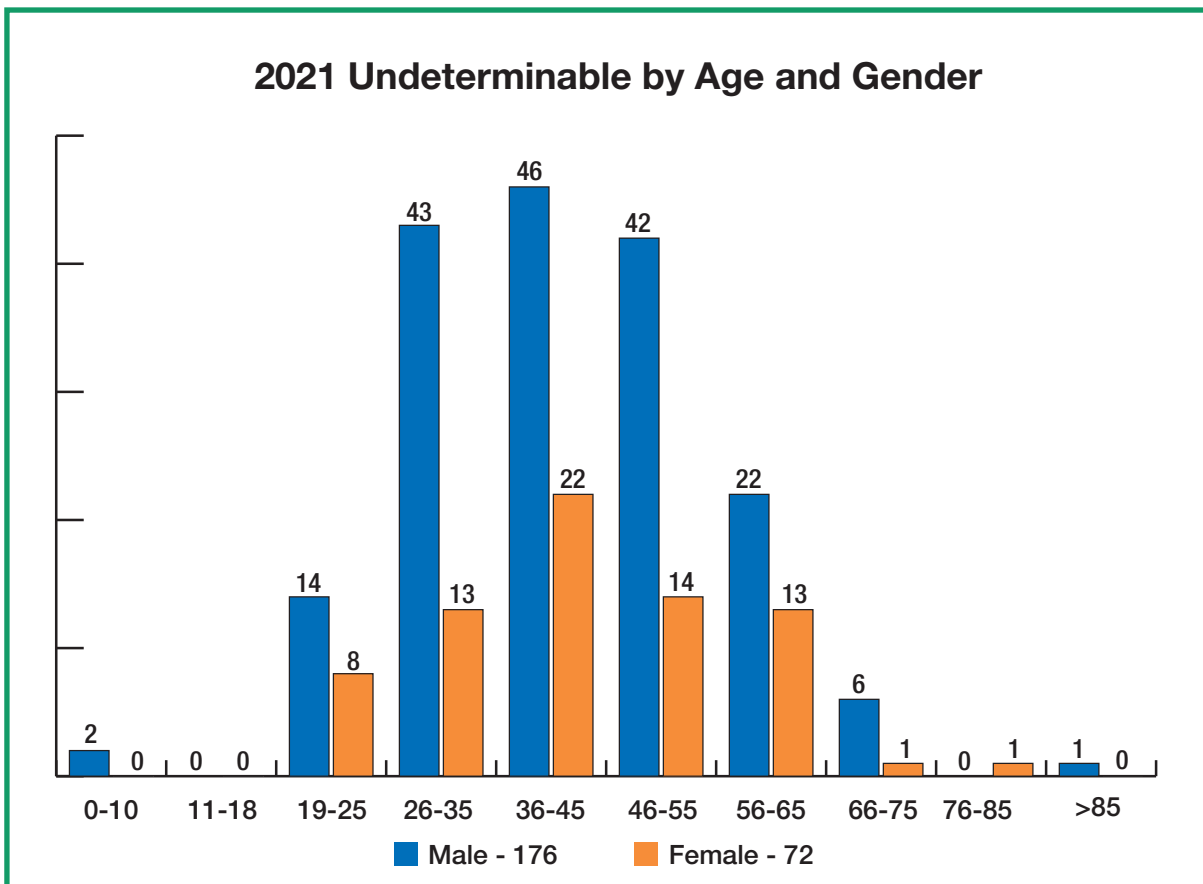
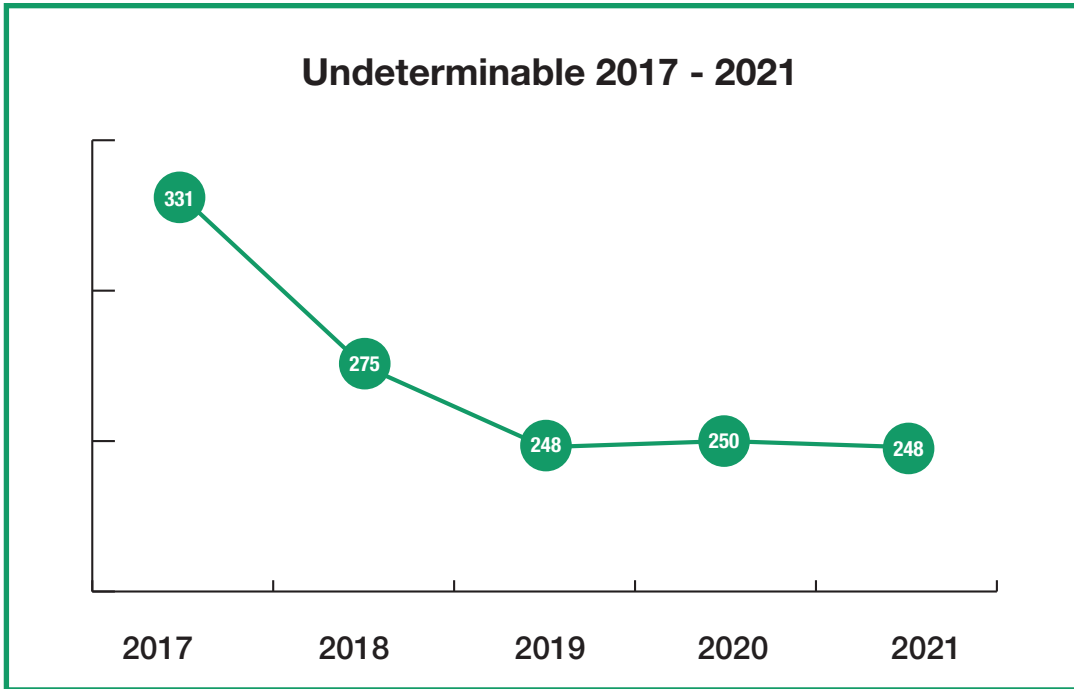
There was a 17% increase in homicides from 2020 to 2021. 75% of the homicide victims are male. In 76% of the homicides, the method used was firearm.



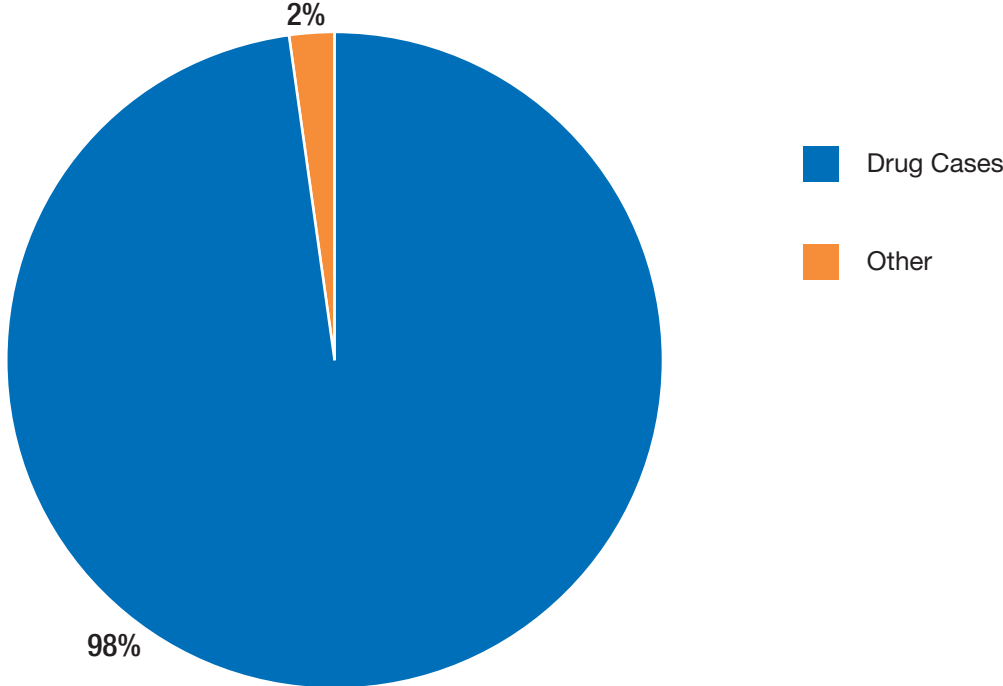
2021 Homicide by Age and Gender



UNDETERMINABLE

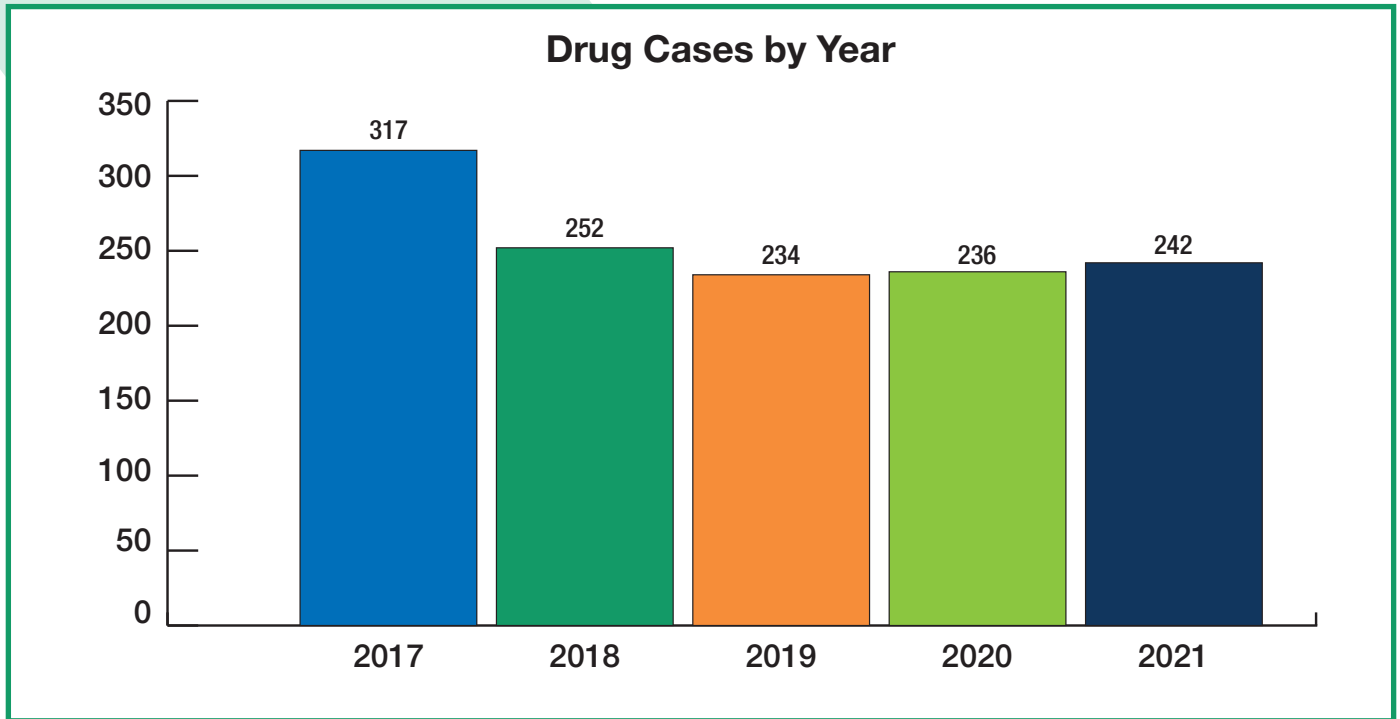


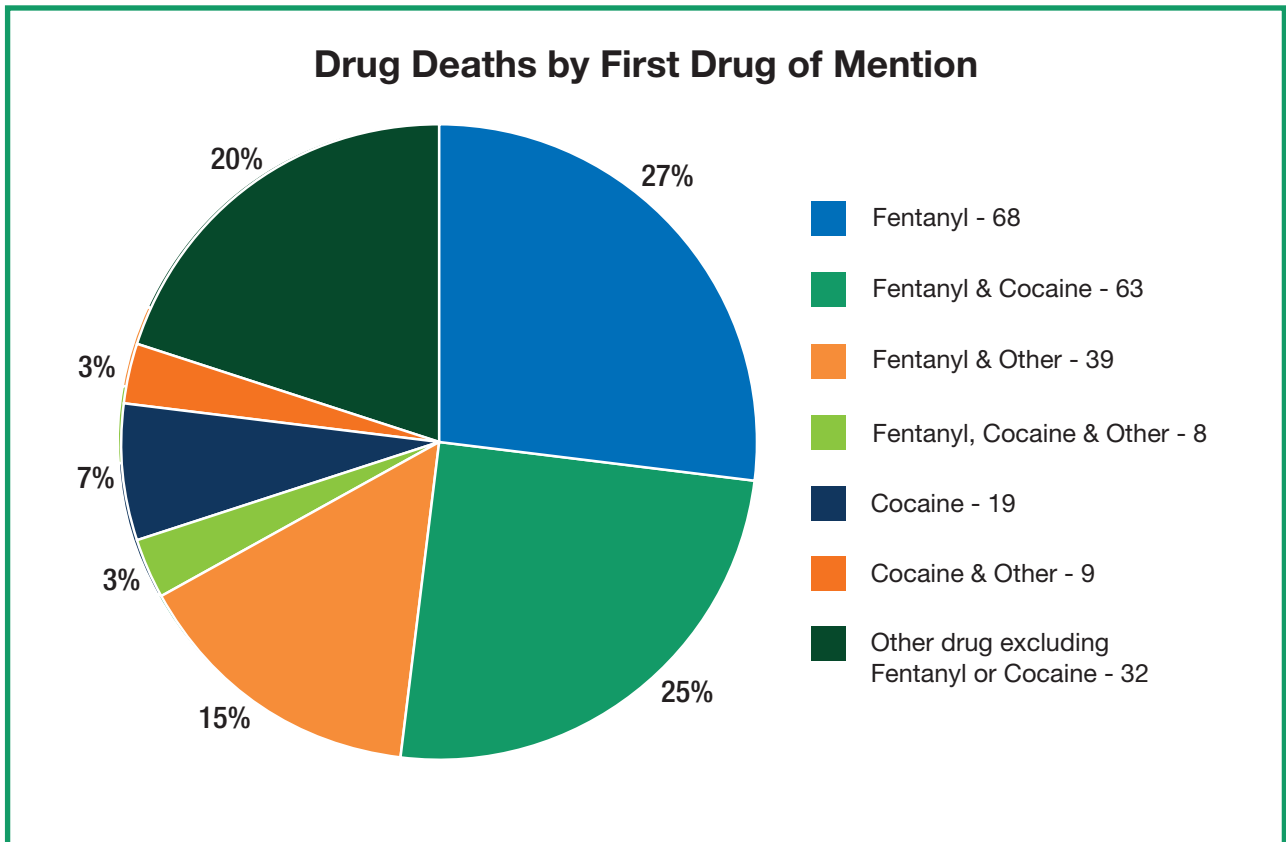
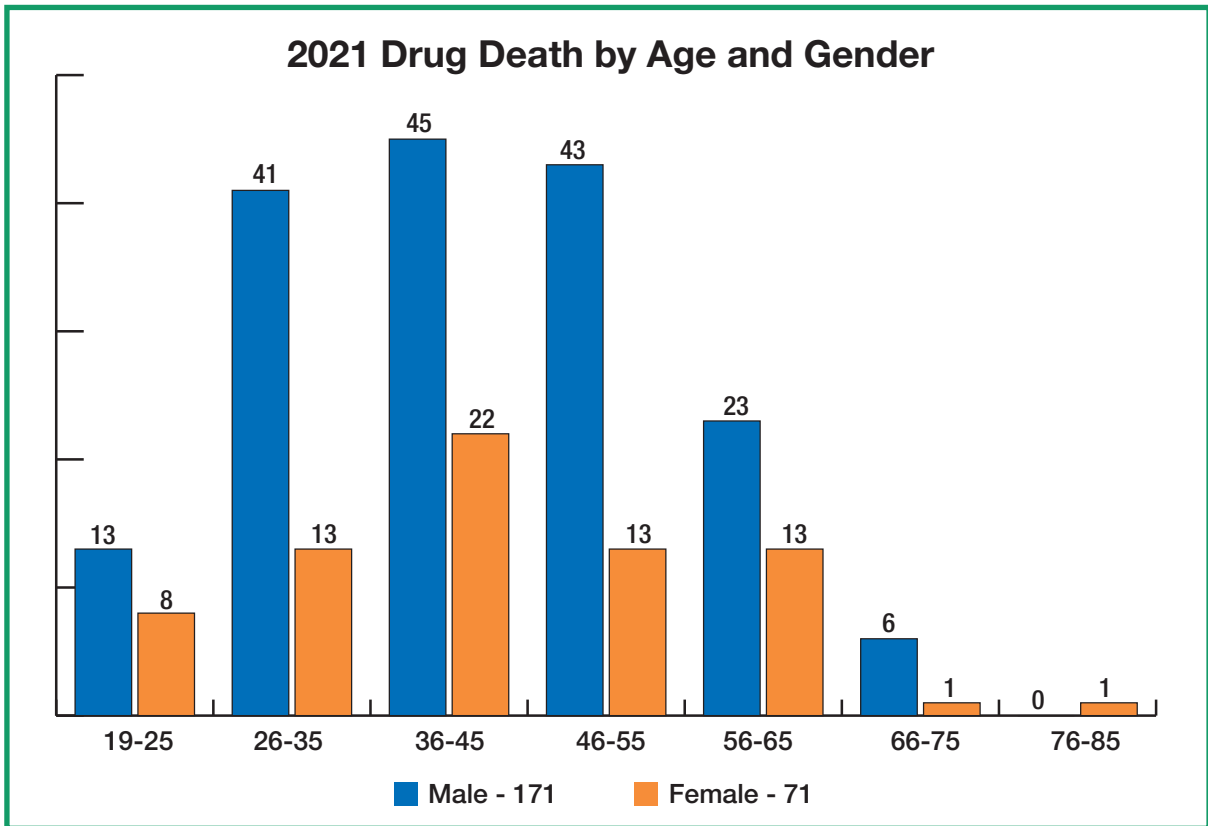
Undeterminable by Type



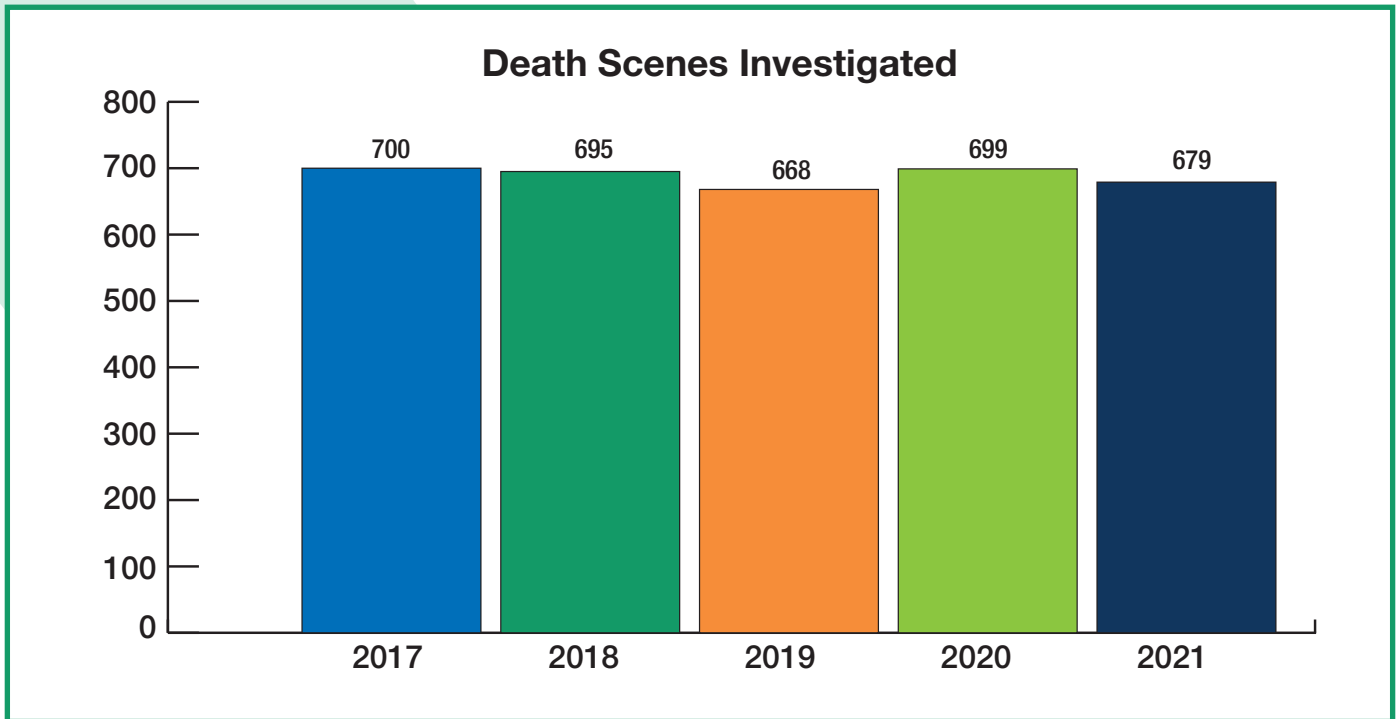
DRUG CASES (EXAM CASES ONLY)

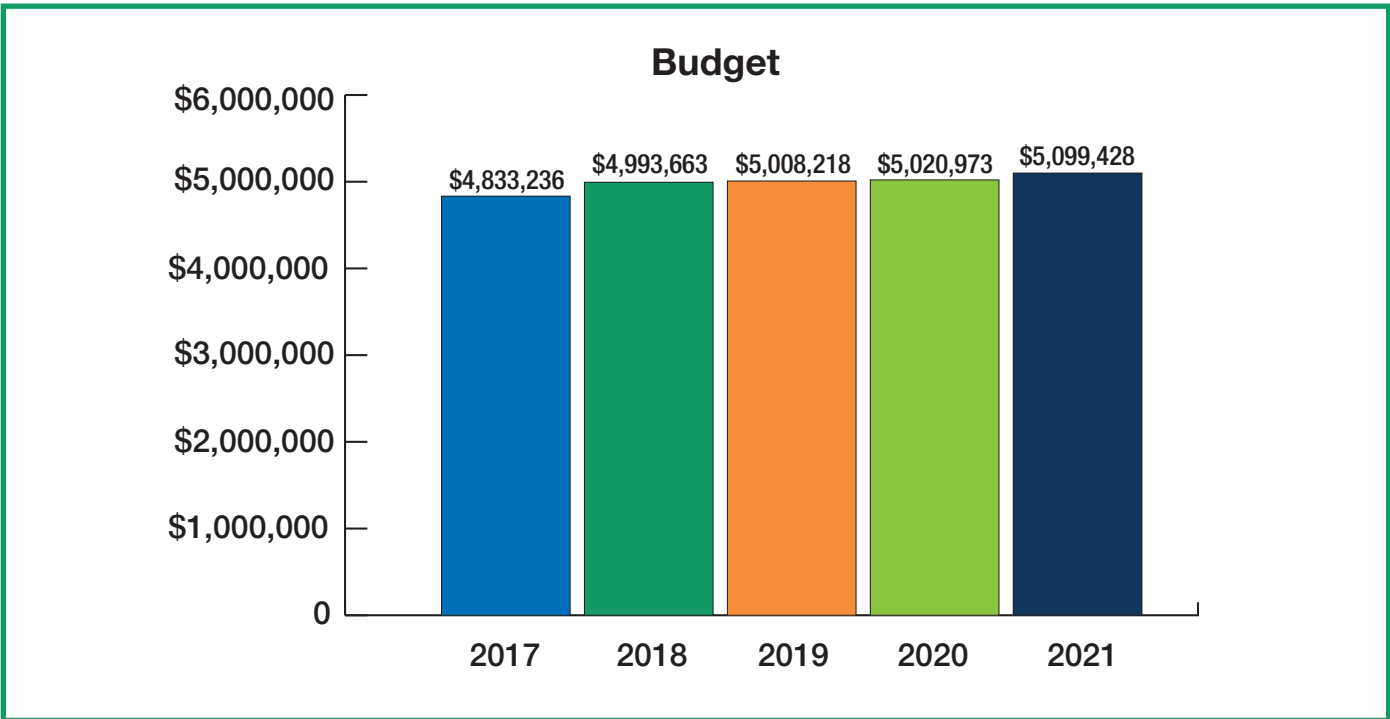
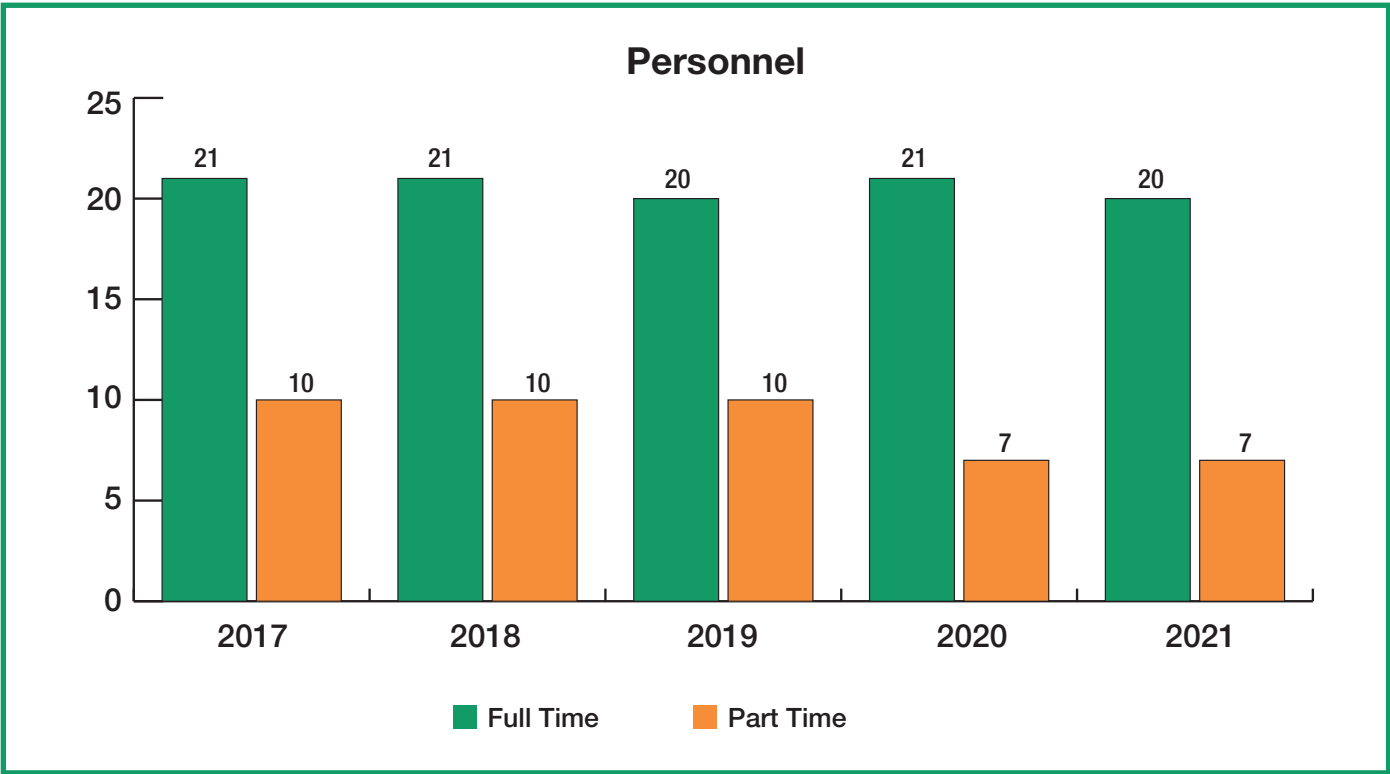
The following charts represent the number of cases when the manner of death was classified as Undeterminable and Drug Abuse, Drug Intoxication, or Medication Intoxication was listed as a primary cause of death. There was an increase of 2.54% from 2020 to 2021. In 73.6% of the drug related cases, fentanyl intoxication was listed in the primary cause of death.





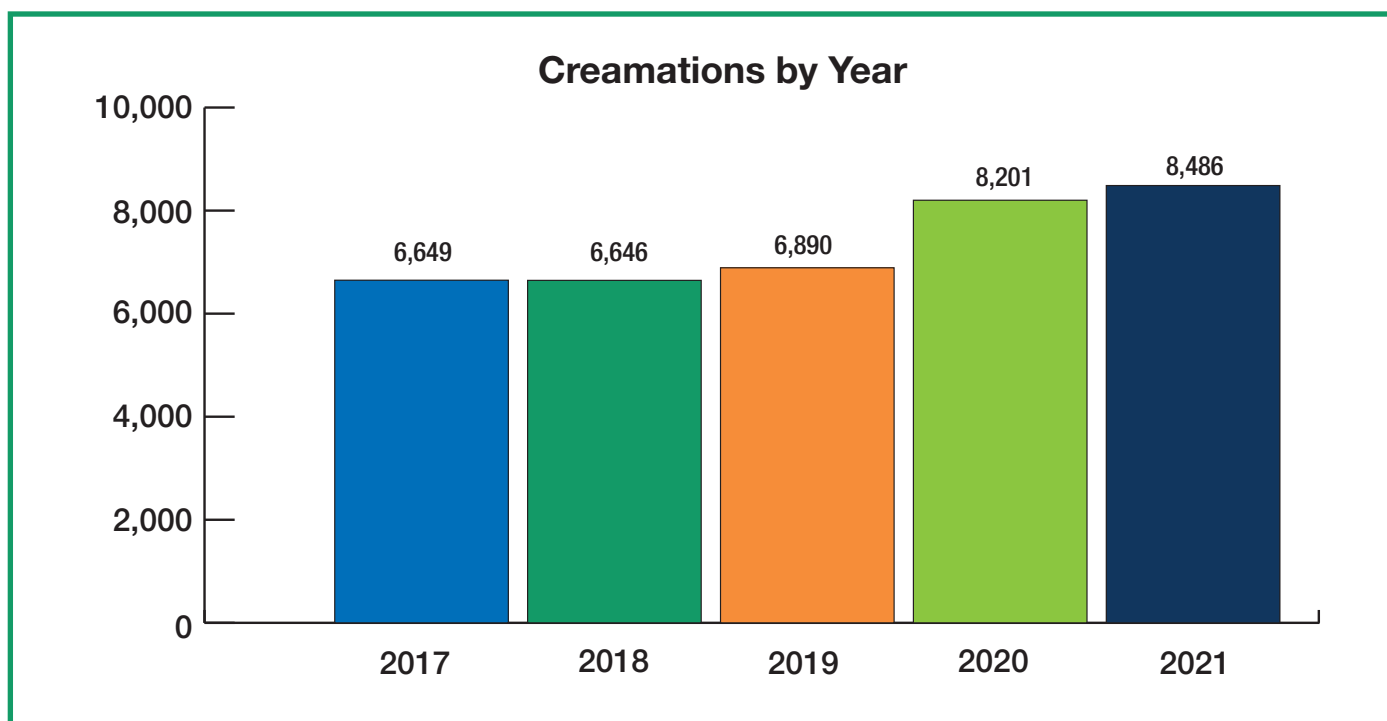
OTHER INFORMATION





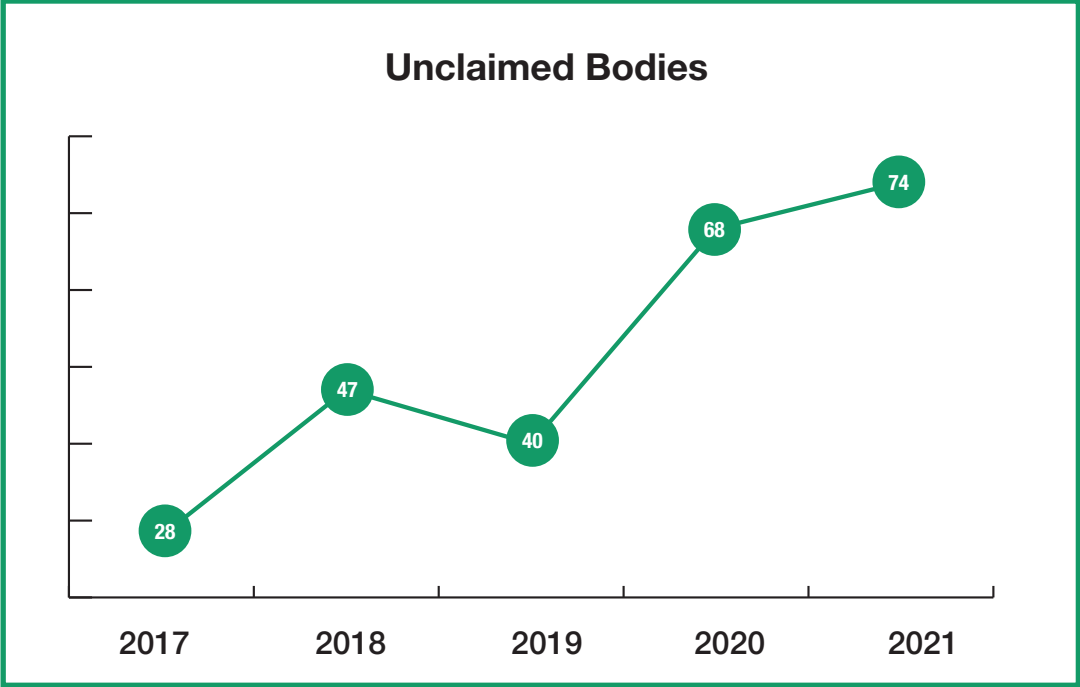
CREMATION AUTHORIZATION

Pursuant to Michigan Compiled Laws § 333.2848(3), if final disposition is by cremation, the medical examiner of the county in which death occurred shall sign the authorization for final disposition. The Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office reviews each cremation permit and respective death certificate before authorizing cremation. Cremation permit requests remained steady for 2017-2019. There was a 19% increase from 2019 to 2020 and 3.4% increase from 2020 to 2021.



UNCLAIMED BODIES

The Estates and Protected Individuals Code, Public Act 386 of 1998, MCL 700.3206 establishes the rights and powers to make decisions about funeral arrangements and handling, disposition, or disinterment of a decedent's body. When there is no next of kin or the next of kin refuses to handle the arrangements, the Medical Examiner's Office applies for state assistance through the Department of Health and Human Services to fund the cremation of the decedent. Since 2019, there has been a significant increase in the number of cases handled by the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office.





OakGov.com