



The Franklin County Forensic Science Center  
Office of the Coroner

ANNUAL  
REPORT

2020-2021





## FRANKLIN COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE

The Franklin County Coroner's Office serves a community of nearly 1.3 million people, including the city of Columbus. There are approximately 10,000 deaths per year. The Coroner's Office investigates all deaths by violence, criminal means, suicide, infant deaths, and prisoner deaths or any unattended death whatever the cause. The Coroner's Office provides identification, performs autopsies or medical examinations, and carries out any other requirements in regard to deaths which fall in the categories mentioned above.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Franklin County Coroner's Office is to serve and protect the interest of the community by maintaining the highest standard of professionalism and integrity in determining the cause and manner of death.

We are a dedicated team that is committed to providing excellence, compassion and respect to every family and community member.

## DEDICATION

We recognize that each case within this report represents the death of a person whose absence is grieved by beloved family, friends, and our community. To those individuals, their loved ones, and to all the citizens of Franklin County who share in the loss, this report is dedicated.



## WELCOME TO THE 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FRANKLIN COUNTY CORONERS OFFICE

Our goal for this report is to provide our partners and the residents of Franklin County with up-to-date information on the services we provided to the county in 2020. I dedicate this report to those families and friends who have suffered a loss and had their loved ones come to our office. This report, although full of statistics and numbers, signifies the countless times when many of our residents have suffered through the worst and last day of their lives. We are here to not only investigate their deaths but to provide some semblance of closure and peace to their loved ones. Below are some highlights of the report that represent key areas for 2020.

2020 presented several challenges for us. In May of 2020 our agency physically moved to a beautiful, new and larger facility. The move took place over four weeks with no hiccups! For that I have to thank our Facilities Director, Kara Cruikshank who coordinated the process from start to finish. However, our county, state and nation were affected by COVID 19 by March of 2020. Needless to say, our agency was also seriously affected and had to make changes to keep our staff and partners safe. You can read more about this throughout the report. Lastly we experienced a huge increase in violent deaths during 2020. Since we were in a larger facility with improved capabilities physically we were able to accommodate the increased number of decedents. However, this did stretch our staffing capabilities and has translated to longer waits for coroner reports.

In general, the mortality count for our county increased 18% from 2019 to 2020: 10,000 to 11,800. Our office, however, accepted jurisdiction on approximately 23% more cases in 2020 than in 2019. This increase translated to 64% more homicides, and 28.8% more accidental deaths in 2020. We did see a 9.5% decrease in suicides.

Through this report you will get a sense of how our office functions. What I hope you will also discern is the amount of data our office collects and its importance to the county, the state, and the nation. Our data is used to evaluate child and infant deaths, suicides, motor vehicle accidents, occupational accidents, and overdose deaths. We partner with various agencies to work on preventive measures against addiction, violence, and mental health issues.

An effort many in our county are unaware of is mass fatality planning. If we had a situation like the Las Vegas mass shooting or the Parkland school shooting, how would our county respond? The Franklin



County Emergency Management Agency would be in charge of coordinating a mass critical event and our agency would be the lead on a mass fatality response along with situational related partners.

I am proud to assure the residents of Franklin County that we have a comprehensive plan in place and have had frequent staff trainings and exercises to review the plan.

In 2019 we applied for and were granted a subgrant from Franklin County Public Health and CDC to bring onboard an epidemiologist. The epidemiologist came on board in 2020 and has worked on outreach events and fatality reviews.

Our continued work with Lifeline of Ohio and the Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank on organ and tissue recovery has helped to save many lives in our community as well as nationally.

In 2019 we began revising the strategic plan for the agency. Our new strategic plan can be viewed in this report.

My charge as Coroner of Franklin County is to continue to provide the residents of our county excellence in service through integrity, transparency, accountability and communication. We are here to not only care for those who have died, but to also save lives.

Again, please welcome to the 2020 Annual Report for the Franklin County Coroner's Office.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Anahi Ortiz M.D.".

**Anahi Ortiz M.D.**  
Franklin County Coroner

## ROLE OF THE CORONER'S OFFICE

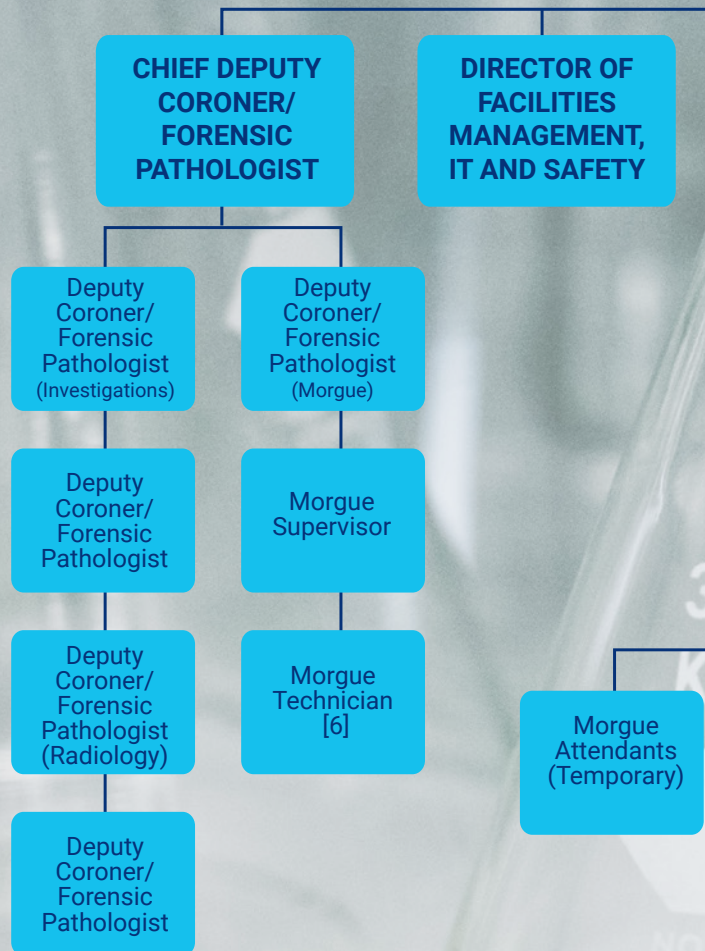
- Generates the unbiased, independent, and formal report and verdict on all deaths that fall under the coroner's jurisdiction
- Obtains information surrounding the death and determines if it falls under the jurisdiction of the Coroner
- Investigates only deaths defined in the "Coroner's Statute", Ohio Revised Code 313.12 that are mandated to be investigated by the Coroner

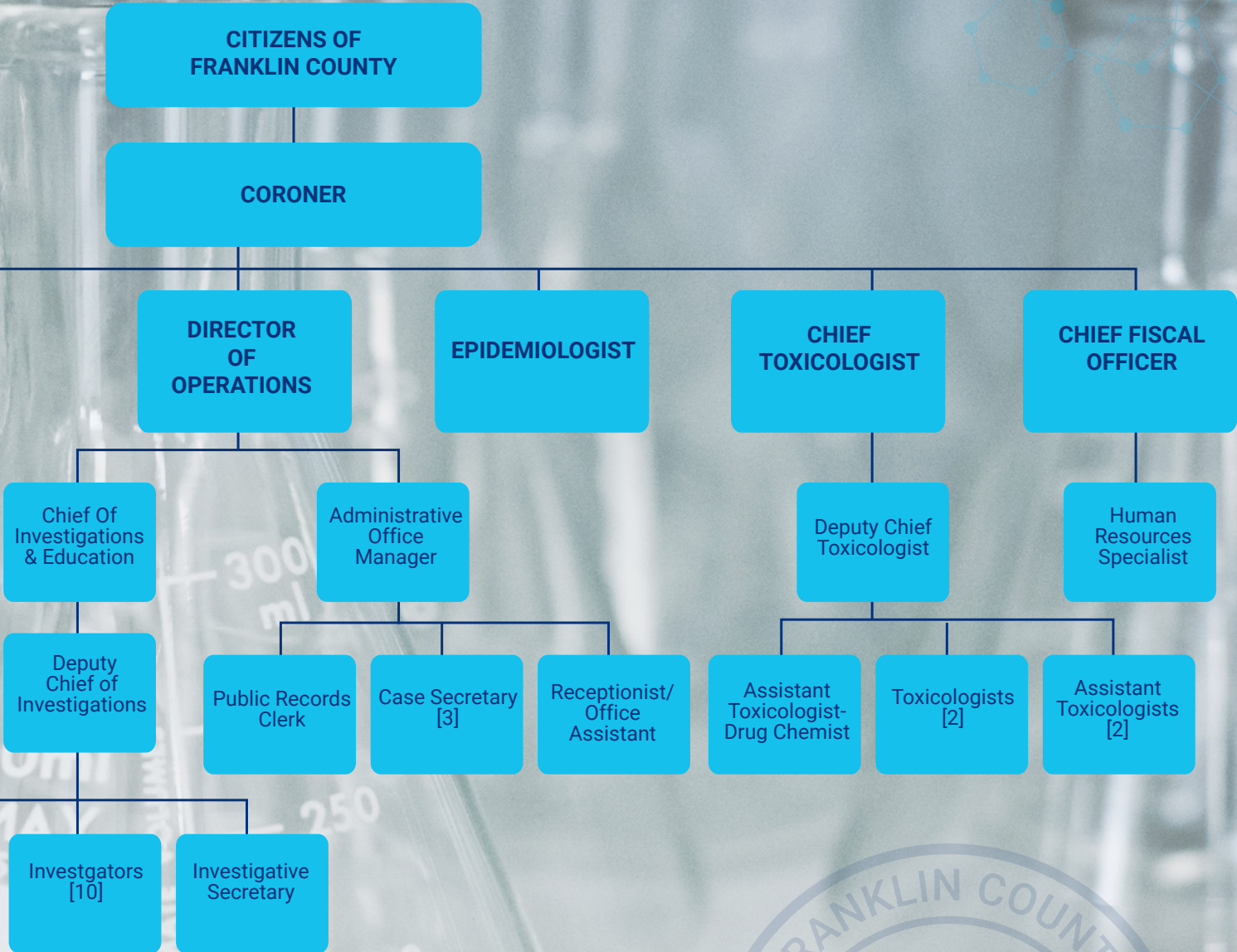
In Ohio, the Coroner is the only physician who may certify deaths that are not due to natural cause(s).

## DEPARTMENTS OF THE FRANKLIN COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE

- Administration
- Case Management
- Toxicology
- Pathology
- Investigations
- Morgue/Histology

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





# FRANKLIN COUNTY FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER



## ABOUT DR. ANAHI ORTIZ

Dr. Anahi Ortiz was born in New York, New York. She graduated from the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education, a six-year BS/MD program, at City College of New York. She then received her medical degree from Downstate Medical College in Brooklyn. Dr. Ortiz decided on pediatrics as her focus and did her residency at St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital in Manhattan.

After residency, her career has focused on providing care to the underserved communities of New York City and eventually those in Columbus, Ohio. Dr. Ortiz moved to the central Ohio area in 1996 where she has worked as a pediatrician at Nationwide Children's Hospital, Westside Community Health Center, and North Community Counseling. She has always been a proponent of volunteering in the community. She currently volunteers for several local non-profits.

She was appointed to the Office of Franklin County Coroner in November of 2014. Since then she has worked towards streamlining the process for more timely production of death certificates, professionally interpreting several forms for families of decedents whose primary language is not English, and educating the medical community on completing death certificates. She has highlighted cultural sensitivity as a priority of the Coroner's Office and brought in several educational sessions on cultural sensitivity for the staff. As of April of 2018, she has added a paid FMLA program for employees. Since 2014, Dr. Ortiz has strived to improve staffing levels and the professional quality of her employees in order to give our residents more timely coroner reports. Trauma informed care is important

to any organization that works with trauma including coroner/medical examiner offices. This has also been a focus of Dr. Ortiz for her employees. Currently we work with EAP to bring services to the office on a regular basis and offer training in mental health first aid.

In March of 2015, Dr. Ortiz convened the Franklin County Drug Overdose Death Initiative (DODI). This group currently meets regularly to look at the rising rate of drug use and deaths in our county and how we can intervene. Since then she has hosted the Franklin County Opiate Crisis Summit in March of 2016 and again in 2017. She has also worked on a Community Action Plan towards the opiate crisis and launched the Franklin County Opiate Crisis Task Force in August of 2016.

Dr. Ortiz is on the Board of Netcare, Proyecto Mariposa, Ohio Federation for Health Equity and Social Justice and the Board of the National Violent Death Reporting System. She is a member of the Franklin County Suicide Prevention Coalition and the Medical Advisory Board of YMCA Head Start. She has also spoken to numerous community groups, as well as professional organizations on suicide, infant mortality, cultural sensitivity and the addiction/opiate crisis.

Dr. Anahi Ortiz has almost 30 years of experience in working with high risk communities in the medical field. She has brought this experience and knowledge to the Office of Coroner where she has been a voice for those who die of violent means and has helped to improve the lives of our community.

## EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION



**Amanda Alvarez,**  
B.S. /B.A., D-ABMDI  
*Director of Operations*



**Kara Cruikshank, B.S.**  
*Director of Facilities  
Management and IT*



**Beverly Harper, B.S.**  
*Chief Fiscal Officer*



**David Moffett**  
*Front Office  
Supervisor*



**Charlie Vallance**  
*Human Resource  
Specialist*

## PATHOLOGY



**Kevin Jenkins, M.D.,  
MBA, MHSA**  
*Chief Deputy Coroner/  
Forensic Pathologist*



**Maneesha Pandey, M.D.**  
*Deputy Chief Coroner/  
Forensic Pathologist*



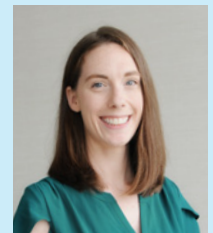
**John Daniels, M.D.**  
*Deputy Coroner/  
Forensic Pathologist  
(retired August 2021)*



**Andrew Sexton, D.O.**  
*Deputy Coroner/  
Forensic Pathologist  
(retired May 2021)*



**Anne Shepler, M.D.**  
*Deputy Coroner/  
Forensic Pathologist*



**Elaine Amoresano, M.D.**  
*Deputy Coroner/  
Forensic Pathologist*

## TOXICOLOGY



**Daniel Baker, M.S.,  
F-ABFT**  
*Chief Toxicologist*



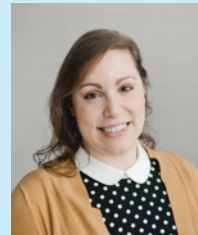
**Rebecca DeRienz,  
M.S., D-ABFT-FT**  
*Deputy Chief  
Toxicologist*



**Erika Wrigley, B.S.**  
*Morgue Supervisor*



**Charity Detty, M.S.,  
D-ABMDI**  
*Chief of Investigations  
Administration*



**Katelyn Yoder, MA,  
F-ABMDI**  
*Chief of Investigations  
Operations*

## MORGUE

## INVESTIGATIONS

In 2020, a team was put together to create a strategic business plan for the FCFSC. The goal of this was to better understand “who we are” and “what is our purpose”. The Forensic Science Center brought to light a lot of dreams and visions that were not able to be thought of at the old facility. With new resources and space, the staff knew that there was great potential to provide better resources to the community. With that, the team started a new and refreshed strategic business plan. Creating new values, a mission statement and reinforcing the foundation of this agency provided staff some light during some of the hardest times in the agency history due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Below you will find information on what the team has created and what is used today in the Forensic Science Center.

During this process, internal and external stakeholders were identified and interviewed to provide information on where the office had strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. By identifying these four areas the team was able to set a strategy on where to focus the work of the FCFSC to better support the community. From this, four key focus areas were identified which include leadership and staff development, communications, education, and excellence. With this, goals and objectives were created to maintain accountability for all staff so that resources could continue to be provided to the community.

## VALUES

**Service** – We are passionate about serving families and community members who may be at their most vulnerable.

**Integrity** – All our work is done with integrity and transparency.

**Excellence** – We are committed to constant improvement to achieve excellence.

**Respectful** – We treat everyone with respect. We provide dignity for the decedents; we are compassionate and respectful to the families and community members we serve; we respect our community partners, and we respect one another.

**Collaboration** – We value the contribution of our community partners and each other and know that collaboration is essential to obtaining outcomes.

## VISION

Our vision is to be a national leader in forensic science and investigation as we seek the truth on behalf of the families and community members we serve. We are committed to collaboration, excellence and compassion.



## COVID-19

The beginning of January of 2020, the world started watching things unfold with the beginning phases of COVID-19. The World Health Organization (WHO) had announced that there was a potential new virus that had originated in Wuhan, China and was highly contagious. By January 21, 2020 the United States saw the first case and by the end of the year the United States had over 20 million cases and more than 346,000 people had died due to the virus.

In Franklin County as of July 2021, there have been reported 36,561 cases with a total of 634 deaths. Dr. Ortiz put into place many restrictions starting in March and April of 2020 on properly social distancing. Some of the restrictions included no in-person meetings, visitors, shadowings, tours, and educational opportunities had to be placed on hold to ensure the safety of all coroner staff. As of July 2021 the FSC is still under restrictions with limiting outside visitors to come into the facility.

The already over-extended staff worked diligently to ensure the community was receiving the highest standard of professionalism and integrity in determining the cause and manner of death during the pandemic. The rise of overall coroner casework and the limitations that COVID-19 brought stretched the staff in many ways.

A problem that the FCFSC saw was a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) available. PPE is used at scenes by Forensic Investigators, in the labs by the Toxicologists and by all of the morgue and pathology staff. New workflows and procedures had to go into place to allow for isolation of decedents who had tested positive.

- **March 3, 2020** – Gov. Mike DeWine announced that the 2020 Arnold Sports Festival would proceed, but without spectators due to fears of the spreading coronavirus
- **March 14, 2020** – First case of COVID-19 reported in Columbus
- **March 15, 2020** – Dr. Amy Acton MD, MPH Director of Ohio Department of Health issued a public health order restricting food and beverage sales to carry-out and delivery only. There was no onsite consumption
- **March 20, 2020**- First COVID-19 death is reported in Ohio
- **March 22, 2020**- Governor DeWine announced statewide stay-at-home order
- **March 27, 2020** – Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES), which

President Trump signed. This provided \$1,200 refundable tax credit for qualified individuals and \$2,400 for qualified joint filers

- **July 7, 2020** – Governor DeWine – ordered facial covering in seven counties, including Franklin County
- **November 19, 2020** – Stephanie McCloud Director of Ohio Department of Health issued a state order for all residents to stay at home during the hours of 10PM to 5AM starting immediately. Order was to remain in effect for 21 days
- **December 14, 2020** – The first shipment of COVID-19 vaccinations arrived at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center and were administered later that day
- **December 29, 2020** – 2nd round of stimulus payments were mailed out as part of the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act (HEROES). Each qualifying individual received an additional \$1,200.
- **March 11, 2020** – President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which allowed direct cash payment to individuals earning less than \$75,000 plus \$1,400 per dependent
- **April 5, 2021** - Stephanie McCloud Director of Ohio Department of Health rescinded order of facial coverings throughout the state from July 23, 2020
- **May 17, 2021** - Stephanie McCloud Director of Ohio Department of Health issued a second amended order for Facial Coverings to bring the State of Ohio in accordance with new CDC guidance. Fully vaccinated individuals can safely do most activities without a facial covering and without social distancing
- **June 17, 2021** – Governor DeWine issued Executive Order 2021-08D which ended the Declared State of Emergency for COVID-19



# FRANKLIN COUNTY FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER

In May of 2020, the Franklin County Coroner's Office moved from 520 King Avenue on The Ohio State University's campus to 2090 Frank Road on the city's south side. Not only was it challenging to move an entire facility but in the middle of a pandemic put a different twist on things. The new facility had been under planning and construction since 2014 and by May of 2020 the office was ready to move.

The Coroner's Office had been located on The Ohio State University's campus since 1975 and unfortunately was out of space and needed major improvements to be able to perform the work that needed to be provided. In the spring of 2019, a new director was added to help assist the project on behalf of the Coroner's Office. That position consisted of attending construction meetings, meeting on behalf of the agency, and constructing plans to move the entire facility from King Avenue to the new location on Frank Road. It was important

that every inch of the facility was accounted for when it came to moving plans. To make sure the office continued operations, a phased moving plan was put into place so that different departments were moving in at different times. The Toxicology department was the first to move, followed by the morgue, pathology, case management and then investigations.

The move could not have come at a better time due to the pandemic. The staff and caseload were quickly outgrowing the facility at King Avenue and the need for more space was crucial. The new facility has allowed for many departments to expand their work to do a larger number of cases in a safe and efficient manner. The morgue department has been able to perform more examinations due to the amount of autopsy spaces and the Toxicology Lab has been able to process samples at a much higher rate due to the lab space.





## CASE MANAGEMENT

The Case Management Department is responsible for processing case files and death certificates, assuring quality of data, as well as fulfilling requests for public records. This department also provides ancillary support, such as coordinating with transcription services for the pathology staff and technical support of the agency. The Case Management Department is comprised of one Office Administrator and three Case Secretaries, working closely with the Receptionist, an Office Assistant, and the Public Records Clerk. The main purpose is to serve the community through quality assurance and excellent customer service.

In 2020, the Case Management Department processed over 2000 cases, many of which required more than one death certificate to be processed by the time the case was completed. The goal in 2020, was to refine newly created measures for quality assurance from 2019. Those refinements started in early 2020, helped carry the department through an eventful year. Outside of COVID, the largest challenge for the department was the move of the agency. The King Avenue location had the department spread throughout the building making communication and team building a bit of a challenge. The new facility has allowed for easier collaboration, communication, and comradery.



## PATHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Forensic Pathology is the study of how injury and/or disease affect a person resulting in death. An autopsy is a detailed medical examination of the body, performed by a Forensic Pathologist, to determine the presence, nature, and extent of any disease or injury in order to ascertain the cause and manner of death.

At the Franklin County Forensic Science Center there are six Forensic Pathologists who, as Deputy Coroners, analyze the circumstances surrounding the death and determine whether an autopsy is indicated. Autopsies are performed at the discretion of the team of pathologists. For cases in which an autopsy is not indicated, an external examination is performed. An autopsy consists of the gross external and internal examination of a body with documentation of injuries and natural disease. Additional studies such as microscopic examination, immunohistochemistry, special tissue staining, toxicology, bacterial and viral cultures, molecular testing, sexual assault examinations, and analyses for inborn errors of metabolism are utilized as needed.

If the manner of death is certified as a homicide, the Forensic Pathologist may be asked to provide unbiased expert testimony utilizing the autopsy findings at the Grand Jury or in the Court of Common Pleas. Regardless of the manner of death, the Forensic Pathologist may be required to

give expert testimony in civil trials and proceedings as to the specific cause of death; for example, auto accidents or work-related accidents. Investigations of deaths in childhood help to confirm or allay any suspicions of abuse in cases of Sudden Unexpected Infant Deaths (SUID).

Not all autopsies reveal the cause of death even after thorough medical and police investigations are concluded. These cases are certified "undetermined" and can occur for a variety of reasons. Some causes of natural deaths, such as abnormal heart beat, do not leave anatomical clues and may be difficult or impossible to document after death.

The Forensic Pathologists participate in meetings at the Columbus Department of Public Health where they present specific case findings during the Traffic Fatality Review, Child Fatality Review, and SUID Review. These reviews occur quarterly to monthly and help to look for patterns that may be used to decrease mortality in our community. The Franklin County Forensic Science Center has formal agreements with Nationwide Children's Hospital, The Ohio State University, and Ohio University for teaching purposes. The Forensic Pathologists play a vital role in teaching future pathologists, medical students, nurses, various other medical professionals, and law enforcement officers.

## PATHOLOGY PUBLICATIONS

On October 16, 2020 Dr. Maneesha Pandey (Deputy Chief Coroner/ Forensic Pathologist) and Katelyn Yoder (Chief of Investigations Operations) presented virtually at the National Association of Medical Examiners Meeting (NAME) on the Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic On Cases & Medicolegal Death Investigation Policies At Franklin County Coroner's Office (Columbus, Ohio).

*The abstract about Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on cases and medicolegal death investigation policies at Franklin County Coroner's Office, in Columbus, Ohio was submitted to the 2020 annual conference of the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME), which is a global professional organization for forensic pathologists and medicolegal death investigation. Both Dr. Pandey, Deputy Coroner and Katelyn Yoder, Chief Investigator did a 15 minute presentation virtually to all the participants both in USA and internationally. The presentation informed other agencies on how the Covid-19 pandemic affected Franklin County Coroners office work flow and what measures were implemented as the pandemic evolved so that the office could continue to serve the Franklin County residents seamlessly. The purpose of the presentation was to help other agencies understand different efficient ways of working through the pandemic.*





## RADIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

In October of 2020 the Franklin County Forensic Science Center added new radiology equipment to the office – a LODOX eXero-dr X-ray scanning system and a Siemens SOMATOM go.NOW CT Scanner. Both devices have had a positive impact on the autopsy workflow, both in terms of the information and time efficiency they provide. The LODOX system is a low dose, high speed and high-resolution digital X-ray scanning system that can produce a full body X-ray image in 13 seconds. A CT scanner combines a series of X-ray images taken from different angles around the body, which can then be processed by the computer to provide cross-section images (which will include views of the internal organs) and even 3D reconstructions of the bone anatomy.

For autopsies, postmortem radiology is essential for many of the cases, predominantly those that involve trauma or require bullet recovery. Each radiology device has its own strengths and one or both devices may be used depending on the case. For example, for a decedent with a history of a fall, the LODOX can provide a high-resolution image to allow for quick easy assessment of bone fractures. In more complicated trauma cases, such as in a motor vehicle collision, the CT scanner can provide more detailed images through its 3D bone reconstruction program. The 2D images that the LODOX system provides allows for better visualization of fractures in parts of the body that may be more difficult to recognize. For homicides that involve gunshot wounds, all cases must be X-rayed using the LODOX system so that the determination of the number and location of retained bullets or bullet fragments

can be made. This information is necessary to ensure all bullets and fragments are removed from the body to provide as evidence to law enforcement. Prior to these machines, the office only had a portable x-ray device that typically required the morgue technicians to take multiple x-rays. Each x-ray only provided an image that could capture a small part of the body. With the increase in homicide cases (and total cases in general) over the last year, the LODOX system has been invaluable in reducing the amount of time spent performing X-rays. With the efficiency of the LODOX system, this has allowed for the staff to complete more autopsies on daily basis so that the decedents can be released to the funeral homes in a timely fashion.

Postmortem radiology is also useful for identification of decedents. Decedents often arrive at The Coroner's Office before they have been scientifically identified. Strict guidelines are utilized for how a decedent can be positively identified, with one method being comparison of antemortem X-rays (those that the decedent had taken while still alive at a hospital) to postmortem X-rays. These can involve any part of the body, including a dental comparison. Many times, decedents will have unique surgical hardware present that we can use for comparison. Other cases require comparing specific parts of the spine and other unique features of the bones. Our goal is to always identify decedents as quickly as possible, and our radiology machines have helped us accomplish this for many of our cases.

## MORGUE DEPARTMENT

The Morgue Department is responsible for assisting the Forensic Pathologists in postmortem examinations, forensic processing, evidence collection, postmortem radiology, and facilitating communication between law enforcement, funeral directors, and families. The postmortem examination is of vital importance in helping the pathologists determine cause and manner of death. Careful examination of the decedent is performed, and samples for toxicological and microscopic analysis are obtained. The department is staffed 7 days a week, with six (6) full-time technicians, and one (1) working supervisor.

In 2021, the staffing increased to six (6) full-time technicians, two (2) full-time morgue attendants, one (1) working supervisor and one (1) medical director of morgue operations which continued to

allow the department to better serve the needs of the community. This ensures that examinations are completed in a timely manner and with the highest measure of integrity. The morgue department performed more than 2330 postmortem examinations in 2020 and case completion rate and turnaround time finalized at 91.7% of examinations completed in less than 48 hours after arrival.

### APPOINTMENTS

Erika Wrigley, B.S., Morgue Supervisor – Chief Administrative Officer of the National Association of Forensic Morgue Technicians





## TOXICOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Toxicology is the scientific study of the adverse effects of drugs and chemicals on living things. Forensic toxicology is that application where the adverse toxicological effects have medicolegal consequences and the findings are likely to be used in a court of law.

The Franklin County Coroner's Office Forensic Toxicology Laboratory determines the presence or absence of drugs and chemicals in human tissues and fluids. Such investigations assist the Forensic Pathologist in the evaluation of toxicological implications regarding the death of an individual.

The Forensic Toxicology Laboratory's mission is *"To provide thorough, accurate and timely toxicology testing results for the Forensic Pathologist of the Franklin County Coroner's Office, as well as regional coroners, law enforcement agencies, and to apply our collective resources and abilities to assist in the solution or interpretation of forensic toxicology problems and issues."*

The Franklin County Coroner's Office Forensic Toxicology Laboratory is an industry leader in testing scope ensuring thorough and comprehensive results.

The Franklin County Coroner's Office Forensic Toxicology Laboratory is accredited by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology that is based upon compliance with professional standards as assessed by peer review, including onsite inspections and successful achievement in proficiency testing programs. The Franklin County Coroner's Office Forensic Toxicology Laboratory provides timely results by exceeding the National Association of Medical Examiner's toxicology completion time guidelines.

The Franklin County Coroner's Office Forensic Toxicology Laboratory is equipped with an enzyme linked immunosorbent assay system, a dual-column headspace gas chromatograph equipped with flame ionization detection, two liquid chromatograph tandem mass spectrometers, a liquid chromatograph time-of-flight mass spectrometer, and four gas chromatograph mass spectrometers, which allow the laboratory to accomplish its mission. Attesting to the toxicology staff's ability, four of the laboratory's scientists have earned Board Certification in Forensic Toxicology by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology, based upon their personal and professional record of education and training, experience, achievement, and a formal written examination.

In 2020, the Franklin County Coroner's Office Forensic Toxicology lab was awarded The Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant. The Coverdell Program awards grants to states and units of local government to help improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner/coroner services.

Toxicologists at the Franklin County Coroner's Office Forensic Toxicology Laboratory are available full time for consultation with Forensic Pathologists for interpretation of results, ordering additional tests, and ultimately documenting the scientific truth.

## TOXICOLOGY PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

### Presentations

R. DeRienz. "How to Question a Forensic Toxicologist" Licking County Prosecutor's Office, Newark, Ohio.

1 hour lecture via Zoom presented on April 15, 2020.

D. Baker. "Introduction to Forensic Toxicology" Anthropology 3211 – Introduction to Forensic Science, The Ohio State University. Two 1.25 hour virtual lectures presented Oct. 20th and Oct. 22nd, 2020.

### Appointments

Amber Raines, B.S., Assistant Toxicologist – Retained as Secretary of the Midwestern Association of Toxicology and Therapeutic Drug Monitoring

### Publications

A. Krotulski, D. Baker, N. Kelly, and B. Logan. "N-Ethyl-U-47700" Novel Psychoactive Substances report made available by NMS Labs and the Center for Forensic Science Research & Education. March 24, 2020.

A. Krotulski, D. Baker, N. Kelly, and B. Logan. "3,4-Difluoro-U-47700" Novel Psychoactive Substances report made available by NMS Labs and the Center for Forensic Science Research & Education. March 11, 2020.







## INVESTIGATIONS DEPARTMENT AND INTERVENTION SPECIALISTS

The Investigations Department is responsible for conducting death scene investigations for unnatural and unexplained deaths in Franklin County as well as taking calls regarding jurisdiction in hospital-reported deaths. Members of this department serve the community and are a part of the process to determine cause and manner of death. In addition to death investigation, the Investigators process bodies, and communicate with law enforcement, medical professionals, and families. There are ten (10) Investigators with two (2) working supervisors along with an Investigative Secretary. The coroner's office is staffed with investigators 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Investigators are required to complete a certification process with the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI).

In 2021, the Investigations Department has added two additional members to the team, which allow the office to begin to pioneer novel investigative work for the county. The additional members - an Overdose Investigations & Intervention Specialist and a Suicide Investigations & Postvention Specialist - will work alongside the investigative division to delve further into the histories of the county's decedents in order to validate the injury incident. This information, in partnership with local agencies, will allow for the possibility of policy and intervention methods to prevent similar deaths in the future. The specialists will also work to further assist the families of the decedents under the care of the coroner's office in order to ensure access to postvention resources.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In addition to investigating unnatural deaths, the Franklin County Coroner's Office engages in several community outreach initiatives. These include educational opportunities, Interagency Informational Sessions, Drug Overdose Death Initiative, and conferences. In addition, the Coroner, if requested, will give presentations on a variety of topics to organizations in the community.

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The purpose of the 'Professional Development Series' is to broaden and develop our team members through information and education, self-awareness and development, professionalism, and networking. The presenters are local community members and professionals that live, work or support the community of Franklin County. This series is held monthly for one hour at the Franklin County Coroner's Office. Additionally, the Franklin County Coroner's Office has not only presented to colleges and universities but also presented to and participated in job fairs for high school and tweens through the Columbus Public Library branches. Internships and shadowing opportunities are offered year-round to college and university students with emphases in forensic science or the medical field. The Franklin County Coroner's Office also participates in different family and adult educational events through various programs within the county.

## ADDICTION CRISIS

In March of 2015, the Franklin County Coroner's Office initiated a poison death review of decedents who had died of overdoses. This was due to the increase in deaths observed since 2014. The review became known as the Drug Overdose Death Initiative or DODI. Members of the review are from multiple disciplines and work on providing information on decedents to look for patterns. In addition to DODI, the Franklin County Coroner's Office hosted the Opiate Crisis Summit in 2016 and 2017. The Summit provided people from multiple disciplines information on the opiate crisis, especially on a local level. The 2017 Summit had over 600 attendees. In 2018, the City of Columbus and the Franklin County Commissioners created the Franklin County and City of Columbus Addiction Action Plan. The Franklin County Coroner's Office supports the plan through the overdose death initiative.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In March of 2020, FCCO partnered with the Center for Family Healing to initiate a Domestic Violence Fatality Review. DVFR occurs quarterly and has a number of county agencies and organizations that work on domestic violence, as members. The goal is to look at gaps in the system and provide recommendations on how to close these gaps or on preventive measures. In 2020, Center for Family Healing and the Coroner's office began working with Rep. Kristin Boggs on legislation to create domestic violence fatality reviews throughout Ohio.

## ORGAN, TISSUE, AND EYE DONATION

Once every 48 hours, an Ohioan dies waiting for a life-saving organ transplant. Right now, there are more than 108,000 men, women and children on the national transplant waiting list for a lifesaving organ. In the last ten years, more than 2,000 Ohioans have died waiting. In Ohio, there are more than 3,100 people, approximately 700 in Central Ohio waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant. As transplantation of hearts, kidneys, lungs, pancreas and livers has emerged as the preferred and most successful treatment of many life-threatening diseases, the need for these life-saving gifts has increased. Franklin County Coroner's Office continues to support organ, tissue and eye donation with its partners, the Central Ohio Lion's Eye Bank and Lifeline of Ohio (LOOP).

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide is a major public health concern. Suicide is among the leading causes of death in the United States. Based on recent nationwide surveys, suicide in some populations especially in youth is on the rise. A report, released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), showed that rates of death by suicide in the United States have risen by roughly 25% in the last couple decades. Franklin County Coroner's Office continues to support Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) in providing grief support for those impacted by suicide. In addition, the Coroner is a member of the Franklin County Suicide Prevention Coalition.



# Fiscal Department

The Franklin County Coroner's Fiscal Department strives to assure that tax dollars are spent prudently and judiciously while assuring that all identified needs are met as cost effectively as possible. It oversees all financial and purchasing matters of the Coroner's Office including annual performance-based budgets, payroll, expenditures, and revenue.

## 2020 BUDGET OVERVIEW

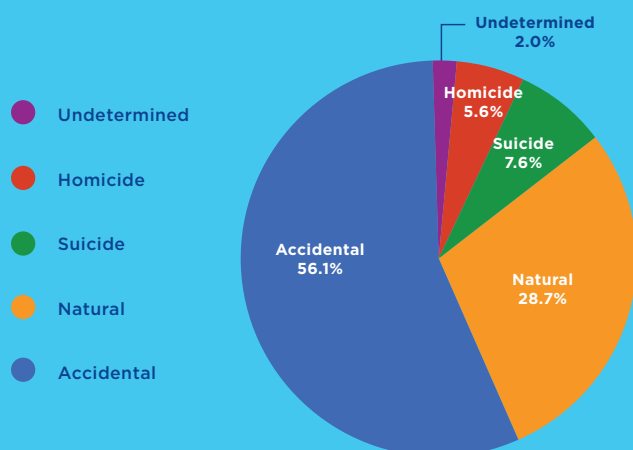
Franklin County Coroner's Office	2020 Original Budget	2020 Revised Budget
Staffing Services	\$3,706,338.00	\$3,810,420.00
Benefits	\$1,338,506.00	\$1,362,363.00
Materials and Services	\$1,117,380.00	\$1,302,701.00
Capital Outlays Total	\$146,370.00	\$133,314.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,308,594.00</b>	<b>\$6,608,798.00</b>

## HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resource Specialist is responsible for maintaining personnel records, FMLA leave, and payroll for the staff of the Coroner's Office. Employees are encouraged to get involved with the healthy Thrive On program through the Benefits Department. This year (2021) we scheduled regular visits with Michelle Crow-Yeatts our EAP Consultant. One of the goals this year is to encourage more employees to get involved with the ThriveOn program.

## Statistics

Manners of Death (2020)



<b>Total Reported Cases</b>	<b>5,816</b>
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Accepted as Coroner's Cases	2,845
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Not Assigned As Coroner's Cases	2,971
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### Manner Of Death After Investigation

Accidental	1,596
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Homicide	215
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Natural	816
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Suicide	161
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Undetermined	56
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Fetal Demise*	1
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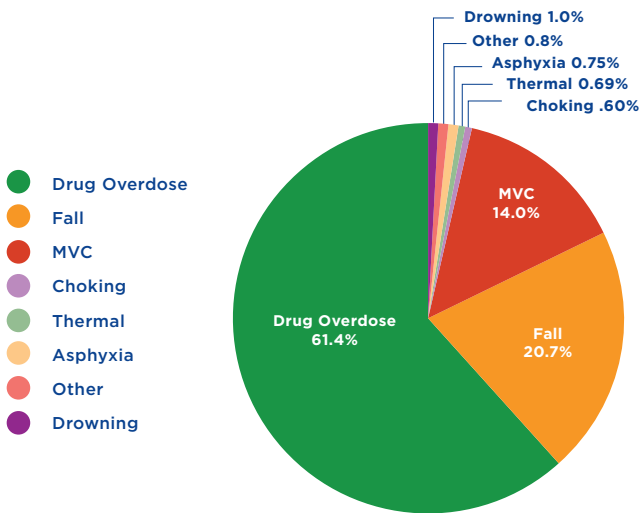
	2845
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Autopsies	
Total Autopsies Performed	1,519
Franklin County Autopsy Cases	1,517
Out of County Autopsy Cases	2
Total External Examinations	702
Franklin County External Examinations	702
Out of County External Examinations	0
Partial Examinations	40
Death Certificate Only	585

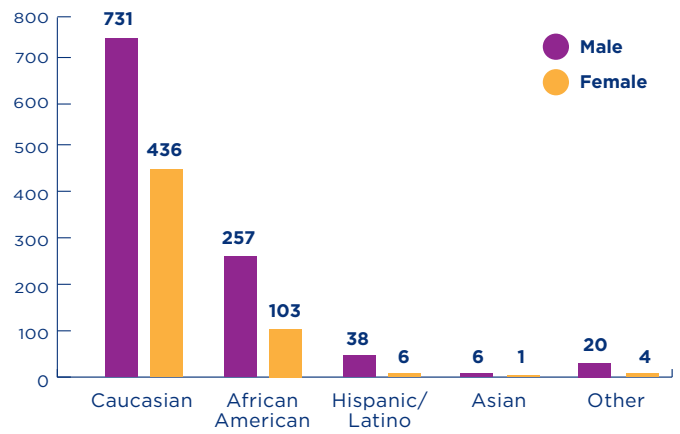
Additional Figures	
Bodies Transported	2,324
Storage Cases	59
Scene Investigations	1,725
Toxicology Investigations	2,378
Sudden Infant Deaths were reported in compliance with the Ohio Revised Code 313.121. SID total is also reflected in the Manner of Death categories; Natural, Accidental, & Undetermined. Present language also identifies this cause of death as Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID)	
	10
Non-Human Bones Found	20

### Manners of Death: Accidental

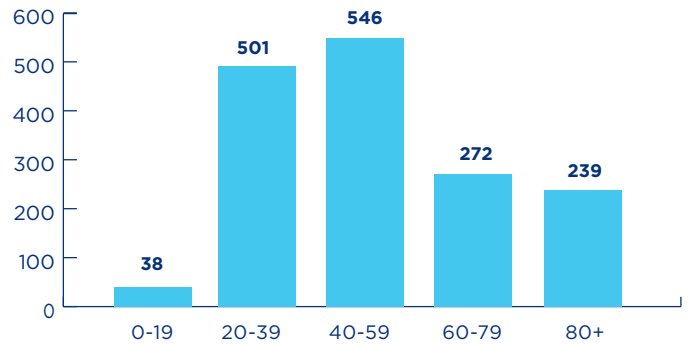
An accidental death is a result of an unnatural cause where there is no evidence of intent to cause harm and the fatal outcome was unintentional.



### Accidental Deaths By Race And Gender (2020)

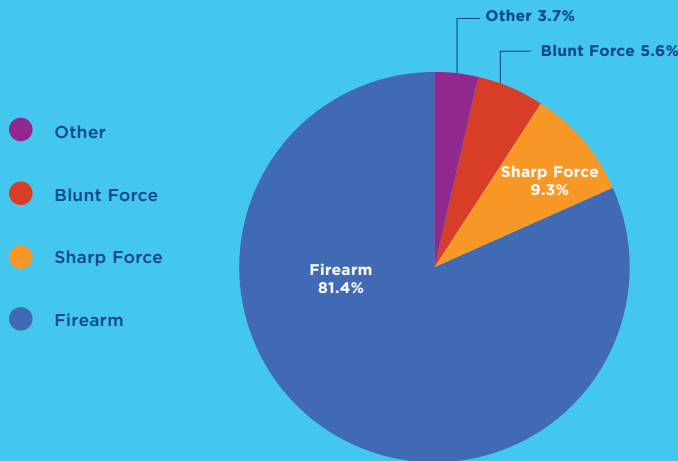


### Accidental Deaths By Age (2020)

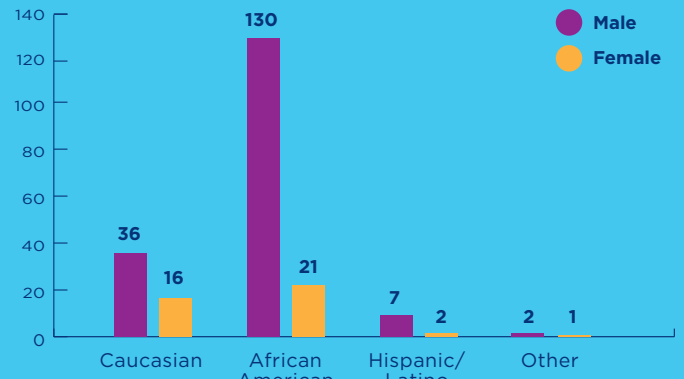


## Manners of Death: Homicide

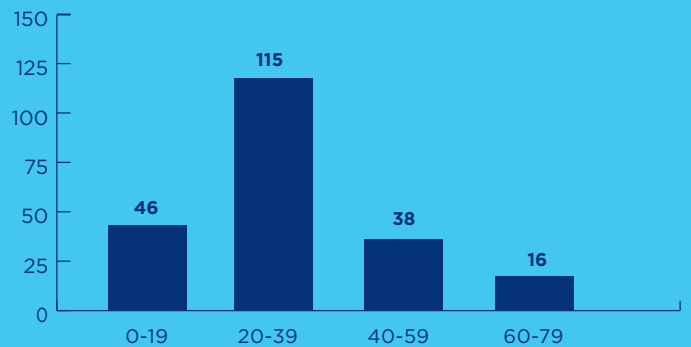
A homicide death is a death resulting from a voluntary action committed by another person. A homicide is not necessarily a murder. This classification does not necessarily indicate criminal intent, which is determined by the legal process



## Homicide Deaths By Race And Gender (2020)

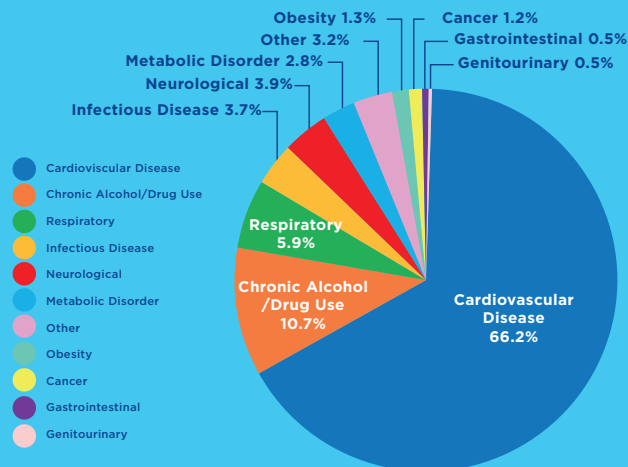


## Homicide Deaths By Age (2020)

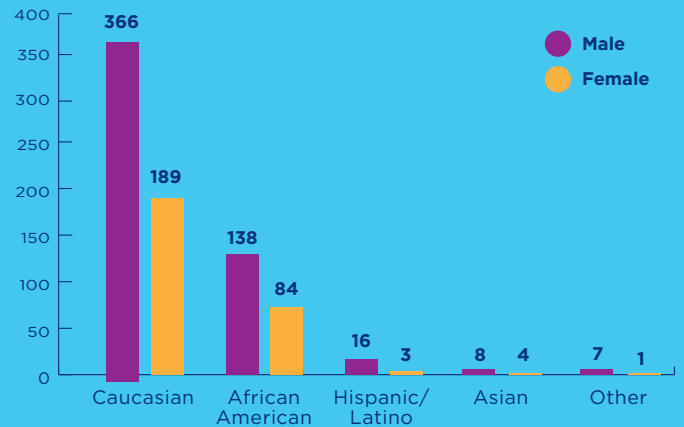


## Manners of Death: Natural

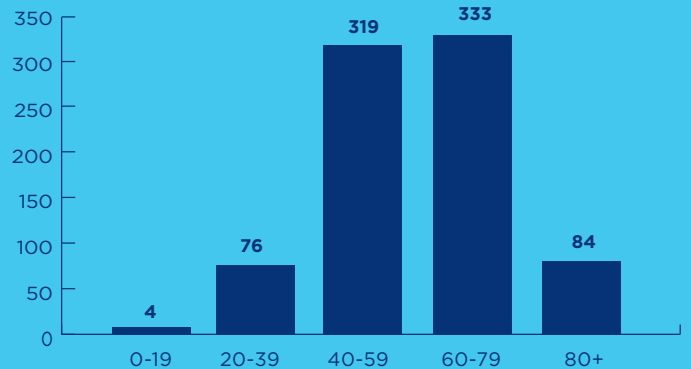
A natural death is one due to a spontaneous or naturally occurring disease or degenerative process. A death so classified can fall under the jurisdiction of the Coroner because of the sudden or unexpected nature of the death, because there was no physician with knowledge or awareness of the decedent's condition, or when circumstances surrounding the death arouse suspicion.



## Natural Deaths By Race And Gender (2020)

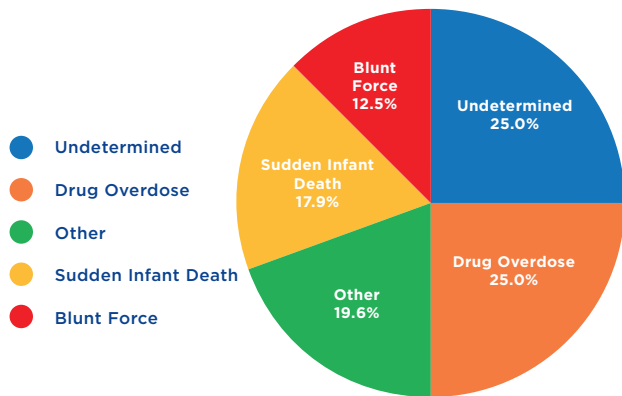


## Natural Deaths By Age (2020)

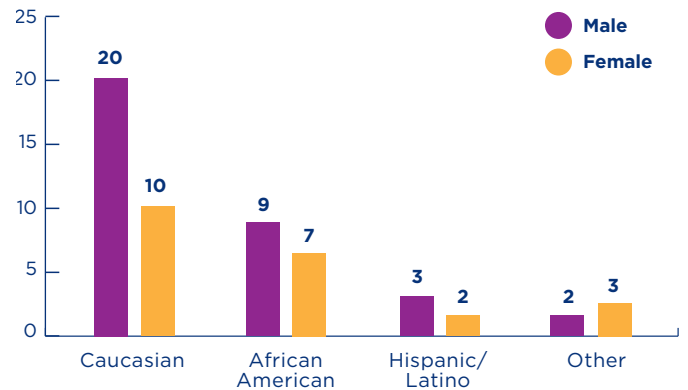


## Manners of Death: Undetermined

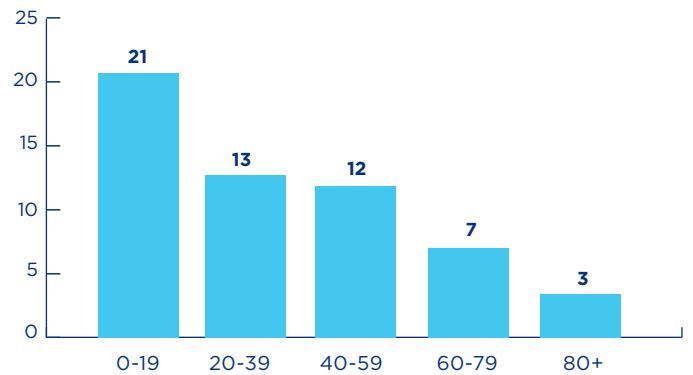
A homicide death is a death resulting from a voluntary action committed by another person. A homicide is not necessarily a murder. This classification does not necessarily indicate criminal intent, which is determined by the legal process



## Undetermined Deaths By Race And Gender (2020)

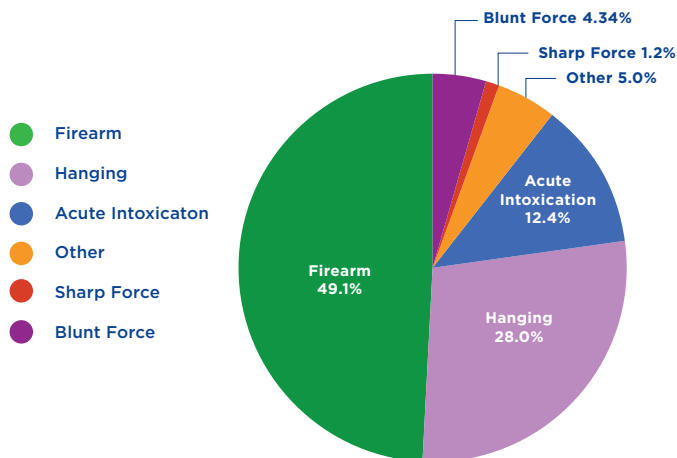


## Undetermined Deaths By Age (2020)

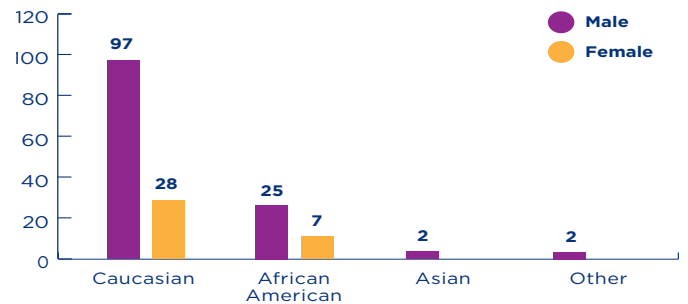


## Manners of Death: Suicide

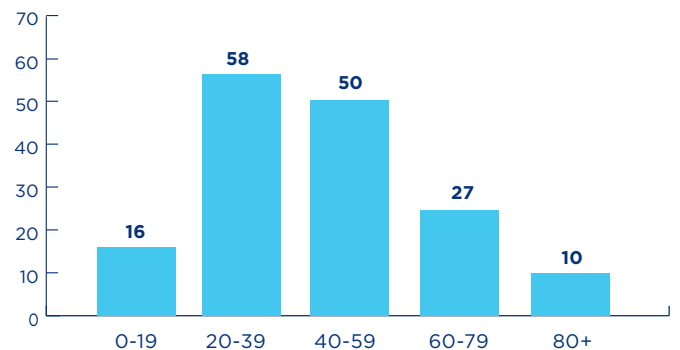
A suicide is a death resulting from a self-inflicted injury which ends one's life.



## Suicide Deaths By Race And Gender (2020)



## Suicide Deaths By Age (2020)



# Unidentified Individuals

The investigations and morgue departments of the Franklin County Forensic Science Center are responsible for identifying any person under the jurisdiction of the Coroner. Immediate response is made by forensic investigator and law enforcement to initiate identification. Initial presumptive information may lead to the identity of the decedent. When visual identification is not obtainable, the process for scientific identification continues utilizing available fingerprints, dental, medical documentation and/or radiology. Within these processes the subject matter experts are identifying unique anatomical features that have beneficial characteristics for a positive identification to be made. In situations where there is no presumptive identification and the local resources have been exhausted, next steps are to coordinate with Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCI) to submit to all samples including DNA, as well as National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs).

Returning unidentified individuals to their loved ones is a priority and it is a continuous process. For additional information on these cases please visit our website [www.coroner.franklincountyohio.gov](http://www.coroner.franklincountyohio.gov).

For over 20 years two women have been unidentified and through re-evaluation of their cases and collaboration with the Ohio Attorney General's Office Bureau of Identification and Investigation, they have been identified, as Turina Jeffries and Karen Frank. Inquiries were sent through NamUs across the State of Ohio and the United States regarding other missing females, who matched the description of both women in hopes of learning their identity.

Frank and Jefferies were identified through investigation with assistance from Ohio BCI. Their identities were confirmed with fingerprints and DNA. We have been able to provide closure to their families; everyone has a name and a life, everyone counts.

FCCO Case #	Date Located	John or Jane Doe?	BCI Unidentified #	NamUs #	Notes
89-2994	11/3/1989	John Doe	2005	14619	Body of a white male located on 11/03/1989 located on Walcutt Road.
92-2730	9/20/1992	John Doe	202	17871	Body located 09/20/1992 gunshot wound to the head.
93-2908	10/11/1993	John Doe	203	17869	The body of a black male found in woods between Alum Creek & Rt. 33 on 10/11/1993.
97-2573	8/9/1997	Jane Doe	187	17868	Remains of a black female located on the west bank of the Scioto river.
98-0402	2/1/1998	John Doe	184	4751	Remains of an elderly white male discovered along Winkler Hill Rd., Dover OH. about 2 miles northeast of 1-77.
98-1632	5/17/1998	Jane Doe	<b>IDENTIFIED</b>	4747	The body of a black female was found 05/17/1998 in a parking lot.
99-4013	11/28/1999	Jane Doe	<b>IDENTIFIED</b>	17866	The body of a Caucasian woman found in front of the 3583 East Broad Street (Kahiki Restaurant) on 11/28/1999.
06-1082	3/26/2006	John Doe	192	263	White male found in Scioto River
07-1801	5/30/2007	John Doe	1959	616	Unknown Hispanic male found in Scioto river

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
Photography/Visual	1	5	4	3	8	3	18	2	2	7	14	8	73
Fingerprints	51	32	40	43	47	31	59	42	54	57	54	62	563
Dental	11	5	6	8	7	2	2	4	2	2	0	0	49
Radiology	3	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	1	3	4	7	31
DNA	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	6
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>722</b>
	<b>Quarter 1</b>			<b>Quarter 2</b>			<b>Quarter 3</b>			<b>Quarter 4</b>			
Number of Does	174			157			183			220			
Unidentified	10			23			11			4			
% Increase* previous Quarter							14			18			



# The Franklin County Forensic Science Center

OFFICE OF THE CORONER

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