Washtenaw County Medical Examiner

2013 Annual Report

Washtenaw County Medical Examiner
300 North Ingalls
NI2D19
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109

Accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners

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Message to the Board of Commissioners and Citizens of Washtenaw County

It is our pleasure to provide the Washtenaw County Medical Examiner’s 2013 Annual Report. The Office of the Medical Examiner is responsible for investigating sudden, violent, unexpected or suspicious deaths in Washtenaw County. The report contains detailed information on 2013 investigations.

Located on the University of Michigan medical campus, the Medical Examiner operated under an annual budget of $612,748 in 2013 and collected $91,250 in revenue, primarily from cremation fees. Overall, the Medical Examiner investigated 942 deaths and performed 322 complete autopsies, six partial autopsies and 31 external examinations in order to determine and document the cause and manner of death. The Medical Examiner also processed 2,248 cremation requests, a 12% increase over 2012.

The past year brought significant personnel changes. Dr. Bader Cassin retired in 2013, after 17 years of dedicated service to Washtenaw County. We are indebted to Dr. Cassin for his work.

Also in 2013 – Washtenaw County saw an epidemic of heroin-related deaths. There were 31 heroin-related deaths this past year. If Washtenaw County continues to keep pace with national trends, the number of deaths attributed to heroin will likely increase in 2014.

In addition, routine toxicology testing provides some insight into trends in the Washtenaw County population as a whole. Opiates, alcohol and cotinine (the metabolite of nicotine) are the three most common drugs detected through routine screening. Notably, detection of opiates increased to 37% in 2013, up from 24% in 2012. During the same time, detection of cotinine decreased to 27% (down from 46% in 2012) which suggests legislative and other efforts to reduce cigarette smoking are having a positive impact in Washtenaw County.

We extend our gratitude to the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners for
their continued support of the Office of the Medical Examiner. We welcome any comments or inquiries. Washtenaw County Public Health can be reached at 734-544-6700 and the Medical Examiner at 734-232-1127.

Sincerely,

Ellen G. Rabinowitz, MUP
Washtenaw County Public Health Officer
Jeffery Jentzen, MD, PhD
Chief Medical Examiner University of Michigan Department of Pathology
Types of Deaths Reportable to the Medical Examiner

The Michigan County Medical Examiner Law, Act 181, P.A. of 1953, as amended, and the Michigan Public Health Code, Act 368, P.A. of 1978, as amended, mandates that specific types of death be referred to the Medical Examiner for investigation (see list below). These deaths include sudden and unexpected deaths, accidental deaths, and violent deaths. The medical examiner has the authority under these Acts to order an autopsy at any time it is deemed necessary to determine or confirm the cause and manner of death.

Deaths Reportable to the Medical Examiner:

- Violent death (e.g., strangulation, gunshot, stabbing, poisoning, etc.)
- Accidental deaths (e.g., falls, drowning, motor vehicle collisions, burns, overdose, etc.)
- Death of a prisoner (e.g., deaths in any county or city jail while imprisoned or in custody).
- Suspicious Circumstances (e.g., Unidentified Bodies or events surrounding death)
- Sudden and Unexpected deaths (e.g., all deaths during a surgical procedure, in recovery,
  anesthesia-related, unexpected natural death, occupational-related deaths)*
- Without medical attendance within 48 hours of death:
  In cases of chronic illness, the attending physician may sign the death certificate if s/he can be reasonably certain of the cause of death.
- Death of a mother due to an abortion.
- Unexpected infant deaths

The medical examiner would generally order an autopsy for any of the reportable deaths listed above.
### Washtenaw County Medical Examiner Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>322,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases Reported to Medical Examiner</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Number of deaths certified after postmortem examination</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Number of Medical Examiner Cases with Complete Autopsy</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Number of Medical Examiner Cases with External Examination</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of Medical Examiner Cases with Limited Examination</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Number of deaths certified without postmortem examination</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Number of deaths not certified by Medical Examiner's Office after</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>investigation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Definitions

- **Full Autopsy**: A complete external and internal examination of a decedent
- **Limited Examination**: An examination which is focused on a specific organ or region of the body, i.e., heart. The limited examination also includes an external examination.
- **External Examination**: An examination of the exterior of a decedent.
Medical Examiner Staff

Autopsy and Forensic Service
University of Michigan Department of Pathology
Washtenaw County Medical Examiner

Dr. Jeffrey Jantz
Medical Examiner

Dr. Bader Cassin
Deputy Medical Examiner

Diana French
Manager / Investigator

Ann Jackson
Administrative Asst. II

Kristin Lamerie
Administrative Asst. I

Teri Bollinger
Investigator

Mark Deming
Photographer / Investigator

Chris Heinke
Investigator

Bren Johnson
Investigator

Deanna Grills
Investigator

Michael Lange
Investigator

Camella Prescott
Investigator

Roger Simpson
Investigator

Jodi Tracy
Investigator
Manner of Death by Postmortem Examination

Deaths by Natural Causes
Deaths by Unnatural Causes

Accidental Deaths by Type
Accidental Deaths - Motor Vehicle Crashes

- Auto/SUV: 49
- Motorcycle: 1
- Pedestrian: 6
- Other: 1
### Positivity Rates Washtenaw Cty:

#### Basic Panel 2012
- Ethanol: 35.0%
- Cocaine: 13.0%
- Amp: 12.0%
- THC: 36.4%
- Opiates: 13.6%
- Benzo: 4.3%

#### Basic Panel 2013
- Ethanol: 33.4%
- Benzo: 13.2%
- Opiates: 22.1%
- Amp: 7.4%
- Cocaine: 1.5%
- Barb: 2.9%
- Buprenorphine: 3.0%

### Expanded Panel Washtenaw CTY:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expanded Panel</th>
<th>2012 Pos rate</th>
<th>2013 Pos Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opiates</td>
<td>23.91%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>19.66%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>45.05%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannabinoids</td>
<td>10.06%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diphenhydramine</td>
<td>17.29%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzodiazepines</td>
<td>15.21%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ectotherm / Pseudoephedrine</td>
<td>15.21%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fentanyl</td>
<td>10.06%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zolpidem</td>
<td>10.06%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluoxetine</td>
<td>5.69%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quetiapine</td>
<td>5.69%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzamine</td>
<td>8.69%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonoram / Clonapram</td>
<td>2.17%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buprenorphine</td>
<td>6.82%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilazem</td>
<td>6.82%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine / Metabolites</td>
<td>4.34%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carisoprodol</td>
<td>2.17%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meprodamate</td>
<td>4.34%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methadone</td>
<td>4.34%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drugs Contributing to Cause of Death

- Alcohol: 1
- Analgesics: 6
- ATD: 0
- BZ: 1
- Illicit: 7
- Mixed: 28
- Narcotics: 31
- Therapeutic: 2
- Chemical: 0
- Other: 2
Suicide by Means

Homicide Deaths
Deaths by Age Group