



MEDICAL EXAMINER'S ANNUAL REPORT

Staff

Marcie Rosas, Dunn/ Eau Claire County Medical Examiner
Lynn Johnson, Dunn/ Eau Claire County Chief Deputy Medical Examiner

Joe Gribowski, Deputy Medical Examiner (Leave of Absence)
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Brenda Falk, Deputy Medical Examiner
Mark Pugmire, Deputy Medical Examiner
Serena Krejchi, Deputy Medical Examiner
Luke Miller, Deputy Medical Examiner (Limited Term)

ANNUAL REPORT

DUNN COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER OFFICE

A. Mission Statement:

- The mission of the Dunn County Medical Examiner's Office is to provide a voice for the deceased in terms of investigating and ultimately ruling on manner and cause of death. We are statutorily responsible to investigate any unexplained, unusual or suspicious deaths. These include: accidents, homicides, suicide, deaths unattended by a physician, deaths following a medical intervention, deaths within 24 hours of admission to a health care facility and deaths where the attending physician is unavailable or unwilling to sign the death certificate. We strive to provide a compassionate, complete and accurate medicolegal investigation.

B. Summary of Responsibilities:

- The Dunn County Medical Examiner's Office is keenly aware of the tragedy that accompanies sudden and unexpected death. Our office realizes that each case represents an individual who is deeply missed by his/her loved ones. Our investigators are trained to deliver the news of death with compassion, empathy, courtesy and professionalism. A thorough investigation into the circumstances of death, complete postmortem examination and necessary lab studies are conducted to determine cause and manner.

C. The Dunn County Medical Examiner's Office works diligently to:

- Promote and maintain the highest professional standards to the field of death investigation;
- Provide timely, accurate and legally defensible determinations as to cause of death;
- Issue death certificates for deaths investigated by this office;
- Conduct cremation investigations for all Dunn County and Eau Claire County deaths in which cremation is selected as a means of disposition;
- Protect the interests of deceased individuals, their loved ones, and the communities we serve.

D. Accomplishments:

- Our department is represented on the WI Coroners and Medical Examiners Association board of directors with Lynn Johnson appointed as Member at Large and my election as Three-Year Trustee.
- We have maintained consistency in our department staffing with 4 deputies who are now in their 3rd year of employment and one in his 1st year. We have not had any turnover.
- Representation at Eau Claire County Child Death Review and Suicide Death Review Boards.
- Improved record keeping and data tracking for death reporting.
- Our department is working to expand continuing education opportunities for our deputies via conference attendance and in-house training.

E. Concerns:

- We continue to face high run volume and case complexity. While the competencies of our deputies are increasing, there are still many cases that require on scene presence of the Chief or Deputy Chief Medical Examiner.
- Increasing numbers of accidental overdoses secondary to the opioid crisis. Our department now serves a more diverse demographic of victims/families than ever before. The stereotype of a "typical" drug overdose victim no longer exists. Many victims are beloved adult children of supportive parents who were unable to help them beat their addictions. We are seeing more elderly overdose victims. This epidemic presents a very real and very local threat. Widespread Narcan utilization to reverse potentially deadly effects of drug overdoses has likely saved many lives, some more than once, but more overdose deaths can be anticipated in our near future.
- Increasing rates of homicides and suicides. At the current rate we are on a projected track to see potential for 48 suicide deaths in our counties in 2019. The age range continues to widen; last year we served families of individuals from 12 to 78 years of age.
- Presence of substances and paraphernalia associated with illegal drug use poses considerable personal health and safety risk to our department.

F. Restraints:

- Increasing burdens stemming from abandonment of bodies. More families are unable or unwilling to take responsibility for final disposition. This contributes to increased demands on our department resources. Many hours of our time are diverted to communication attempts with families who refuse to sign necessary documents. This leaves the county with the financial obligation of paying for cremations when no other pay sources are forthcoming. The Medical Examiner Budget does not support the financial burden of proper final disposition for these abandoned bodies, we can expect a minimum impact of \$1,000 per body. These incurred costs include Funeral Home charge for Cremation, removal fee and lost fees for Cremation Permit authorization and Death Certificate certification; this does not include potential autopsy fees, court fees and body storage fees.
- Our department has no clerical support for either Dunn or Eau Claire county contracts; our Chief ME and Chief Deputy ME are currently fulfilling most secretarial aspects of the department including time logs, records request, invoicing of funeral homes and collection of fees for Cremation permit and Death Certificate certification fees, photocopying, filing, mail management and ordering supplies. These time-consuming tasks challenge our capability to meet the needs of the families we serve.

G. Goals and Objectives for 2019:

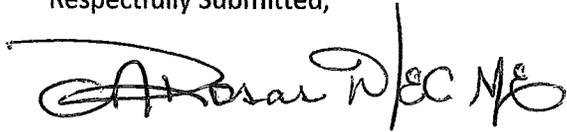
- Continue to improve competencies of our department staff across more complex cases to reduce need for oversight.
- The ME Office is in collaboration with other local agencies to establish a Dunn County Death Review Team. The Dunn County death review team will use national best practices to review local deaths involving children and potentially overdose fatalities or suicide. The team is made up of partners in the medical community, local school districts, law enforcement, human services and public health. The reviews will help the multifaceted team design local interventions to prevent future local deaths. Examples of local interventions developed in other counties include free to check-out life vests at popular public beaches

to address child drownings in Eau Claire and free gun locks following accidental child fatality in Barron County.

H. Conclusion:

- Holding the position of Medical Examiner for Dunn and Eau Claire Counties continues to bring me great satisfaction and pride. I continue to work on developing my administrative skills and have appreciated the support I have received. Our department is prepared to serve our communities in 2019 with the dedication and professionalism our staff has demonstrated in 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Rosas" with "D/C M.E." written below it. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Marcie M. Rosas
Dunn/Eau Claire Medical Examiner

DUNN COUNTY ME RECAP 2018

	M	F	TOT DEATHS	NATURAL	SUICIDE	HOMICIDE	UNDETERMINED	ACCIDENTAL					SCENE	CREMATION	BURIAL	Autopsy
								FALL	MVA	OD	DROWNING	OTHER				
JAN	7	12	19	16	0	0		2	1	0	0	0	7	14	5	0
FEB	15	10	25	22	0	0		1	1	0	0	1	5	17	8	2
MAR	15	12	27	24	1	1		0	0	0	0	1	4	24	3	3
APR	16	12	28	27	1	0		0	0	0	0	0	6	15	13	0
MAY	14	17	31	28	0	0		0	3	0	0	0	8	22	9	0
JUN	18	8	26	22	1	0		0	3	0	0	0	7	21	5	0
JUL	8	10	18	14	0	0		1	0	2	0	1	7	13	5	2
AUG	11	14	25	25	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	4	18	7	2
SEP	12	8	20	15	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	4	14	6	1
OCT	20	12	32	27	2	0		2	1	0	0	0	6	23	9	0
NOV	9	16	25	22	2	0		1	0	0	0	0	4	17	8	1
DEC	13	17	30	25	1	1		1	1	0	1	0	8	19	11	1
TOTAL	158	148	306	267	8	2	1	9	11	2	1	5	70	217	89	12

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY ME RECAP 2018

M	F	TOT DEATHS	NATURAL	SUICIDE	HOMICIDE	ACCIDENTAL							SCENE	CREMATION	BURIAL	Autopsy	UNCLAIMED BODY
						FALL	MVA	OD	DROWNING	OTHER							
JAN	50	93	87	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	26	74	19	4	1	
FEB	45	101	90	1	0	5	2	1	0	2	13	86	15	3	0		
MAR	59	110	102	1	0	4	1	0	1	1	23	83	27	2	0		
APR	63	112	108	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	17	89	23	4	0		
MAY	43	106	101	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	26	88	18	2	0		
JUN	42	86	81	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	20	69	17	3	0		
JUL	40	86	81	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	20	71	15	3	0		
AUG	49	93	85	2	0	5	0	1	0	0	12	74	19	4	0		
SEP	40	80	73	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	8	65	15	2	0		
OCT	55	91	82	1	0	5	0	1	0	2	11	76	15	2	3		
NOV	45	99	86	4	0	5	1	2	0	1	17	73	26	4	1		
DEC	38	80	74	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	15	61	19	6	0		
TOTAL	564	573	1050	16	0	40	6	11	2	12	208	909	228	39	5		