

**EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH
CORONER'S OFFICE**



ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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A Letter from the Coroner



To the Citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish:

Enclosed you will find the Coroner's Annual Report for 2018. When I ran for Coroner in 2011, my platform was based on four fundamental goals for the East Baton Rouge Parish Coroner's Office:

- Dignity for the Deceased
- Compassion for the Family
- Service to Law Enforcement
- Integrity of the Office

I promised you that I would work on your behalf to make the East Baton Rouge Parish Coroner's Office an office of which we can all be proud. As our seventh year has come to a close, I am pleased to report that we have made great strides in accomplishing our goals and serving all citizens in East Baton Rouge Parish.

The following are some of our accomplishments for 2018:

- We provided expert testimony in the Louisiana and Federal Criminal Court system.
- In accordance with Louisiana Statutes, we maximized collection of revenue totaling \$846,870. We have increased self-generated revenue from 12% when I took office to now 26% to date.
- We are having continued success with our Regional Autopsy Program for the parishes surrounding East Baton Rouge Parish - Ascension (124 cases), Pointe Coupee (8 cases), West Feliciana (41 cases) and Livingston (87 cases).
- I now serve as President of the Louisiana State Coroner's Association.
- I continue to serve on multiple boards and committees.

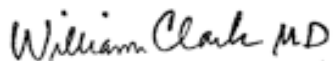
While we accomplished much in 2018, there is more to be done in the coming years to make the Coroner's Office a model for other coroners' offices in the state, region and the nation. Our focus for the future will involve several areas:

- **Death investigations-** I will maintain the gold standard of death investigation and continue to work with public leaders to reduce the rate of homicides and other preventable deaths in East Baton Rouge Parish.
- **Infant Mortality-** My goal continues to be to prevent 100% of these tragic losses. In 2012, my office recognized the high number of infant deaths. We began working towards a solution. In 2016 my office participated in the Cribs for Kids Safe Sleep Initiative and formed a Safe Sleeping Task Force with regional stakeholders. In 2018 we maintained focus on a Safe Sleeping Education Campaign and continued to see a decrease in infant deaths that were due to unsafe sleeping environments. We will remain steadfast in working towards zero unsafe sleeping infant deaths.

- **Heroin Deaths-** In 2018 my office continued an anti-heroin/opioid campaign. Our office worked with the Louisiana Opioid Task Force and the Office of the Governor to create impactful public policies to protect our citizens. I will continue to address our opioid epidemic in both our death investigations and with those in our community suffering from substance abuse problems.
- **Mental Health-** I will continue my efforts to implement an automated system for Physician Emergency Certificates and Coroner Emergency Certificates by working with Louisiana Department of Health and other stakeholders. I will continue to work with community partners to open a new mental health stabilization center, The BRIDGE Center for Hope, to prevent the inappropriate incarceration of our citizens with mental illness and the overcrowding of emergency departments.
- **Sexual Assault-** When I took office in 2012, I recognized the need for all victims of sexual assault, including men, women and children, to receive appropriate, efficient and consistent forensic medical exams with the highest level of dignity and in full compliance with state law. I understood that Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) are considered national best-practice when conducting forensic medical exams. In 2016, I successfully implemented a SANE protocol that includes not only East Baton Rouge Parish but the entire Louisiana Department of Health Region 2 of Ascension, Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge, Iberville, East Feliciana and West Feliciana. We have a solid team of SANEs with two full time SANEs, including our SANE Coordinator. We conducted 249 adult/adolescent exams beginning what I feel will be the gold standard in sexual assault forensic medical exams. Our goal for 2019 is to complete training in pediatric forensic medical examinations and begin 24/7 response for men, women and children of all ages.

I pledge to serve with continued tenacity to fulfill the promises I made when you saw fit to elect me. I understand that my staff and I are servants of this community and we pledge to be good stewards of your tax dollars.

Thank you for your support,



William "Beau" Clark, M.D.
East Baton Rouge Parish Coroner



About the Coroner's Office

Qualifications for coroners are set by individual states and counties/parishes in the U.S. and vary widely. In many jurisdictions, little or no training is required, even though a coroner may overrule a forensic pathologist in naming a cause of death. Because of the differences between jurisdictions, the terms "coroner" and "medical examiner" are defined differently from place to place. In some places, stringent rules require that the medical examiner be a forensic pathologist. In others, the medical examiner must be a physician, though not necessarily a forensic pathologist or even a pathologist. General practitioners, obstetricians, and other types of physicians with no experience in forensic medicine have become medical examiners.

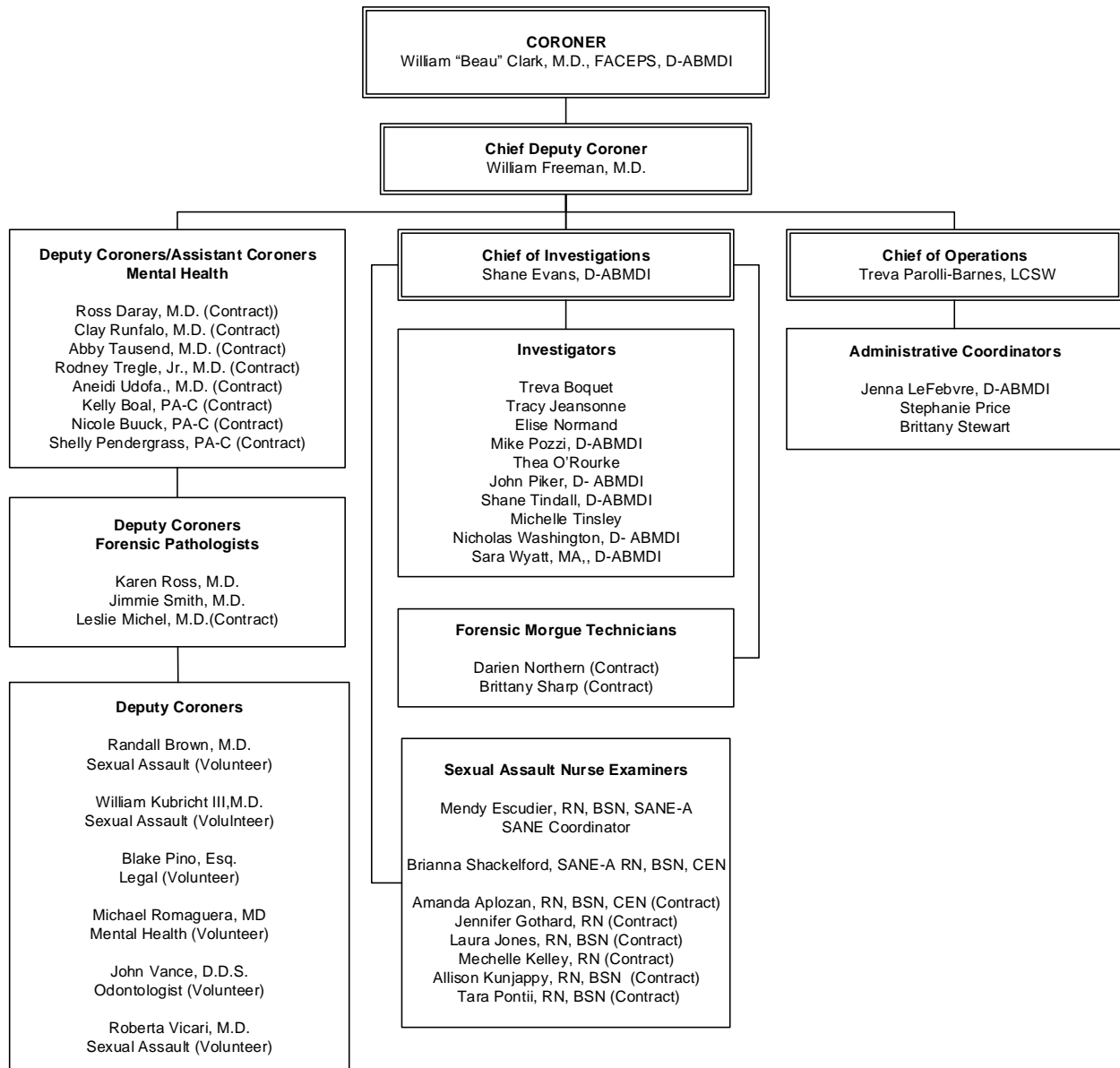
Local laws define the deaths a coroner must investigate, but most often include those that are sudden, unexpected, suspicious, violent, or have no attending physician. In some places in the United States, a coroner has other special powers, such as the ability to arrest the sheriff.

According to Louisiana Revised Statute 13:5701, in each parish, there shall be a coroner. Except for the parish of Orleans, he shall be elected at the gubernatorial election, shall serve for a term of four years, and shall take office and begin his term on the fourth Monday in March following an election. The coroner shall be a conservator of the peace. Louisiana Revised Statute 13:5704 states that the coroner shall be a physician licensed by the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners to practice medicine in the state of Louisiana. This requirement shall be waived in any parish in which no licensed physician qualifies to run for the office. Each coroner may appoint one or more deputy or assistant coroners to perform his duties. The tenure of the appointment shall be determined by the appointing coroner but shall not be longer than the coroner's term of office. The coroner shall be responsible for the acts of his deputy or assistant coroners.

The East Baton Rouge Coroner's Office is a governmental agency whose jurisdiction includes mental health investigation, medicolegal death investigation, forensic pathology services, and sexual assault investigations. The Coroner's Office is a state constitutional office and is funded by the East Baton Rouge City-Parish Government. William "Beau" Clark, M.D. was inaugurated as Coroner of East Baton Rouge Parish on March 26, 2012.

In the fall of 2015, Dr. Clark ran unopposed for a second term. He was sworn into office for this second term on March 11, 2016.

2018 Organizational Chart





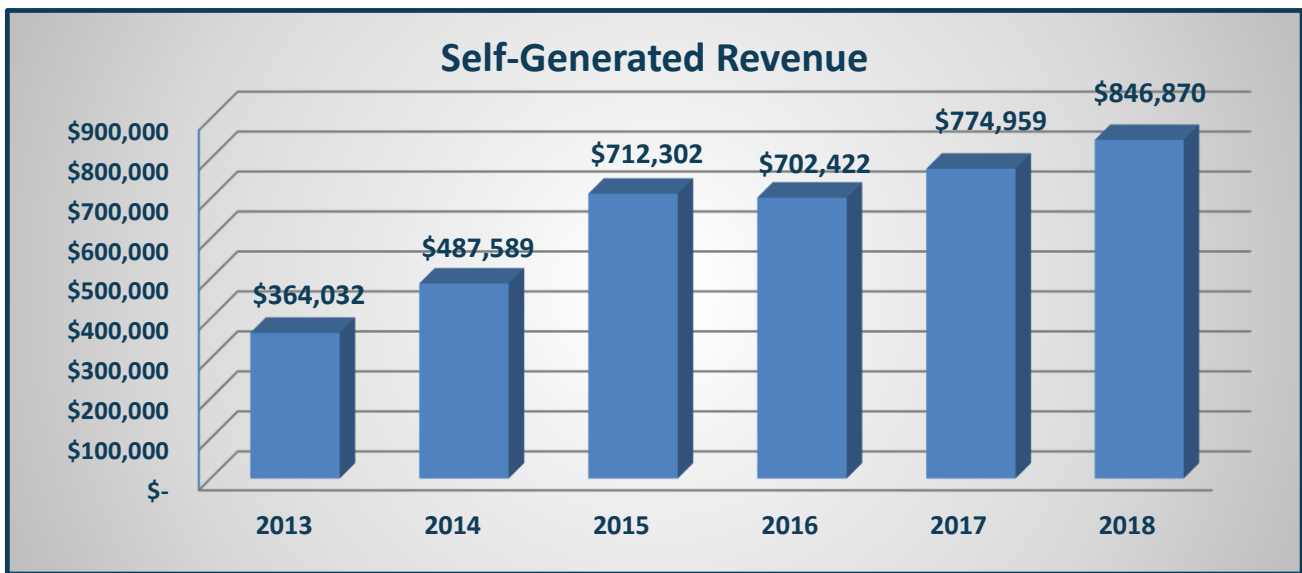
Accomplishments

Financial Management

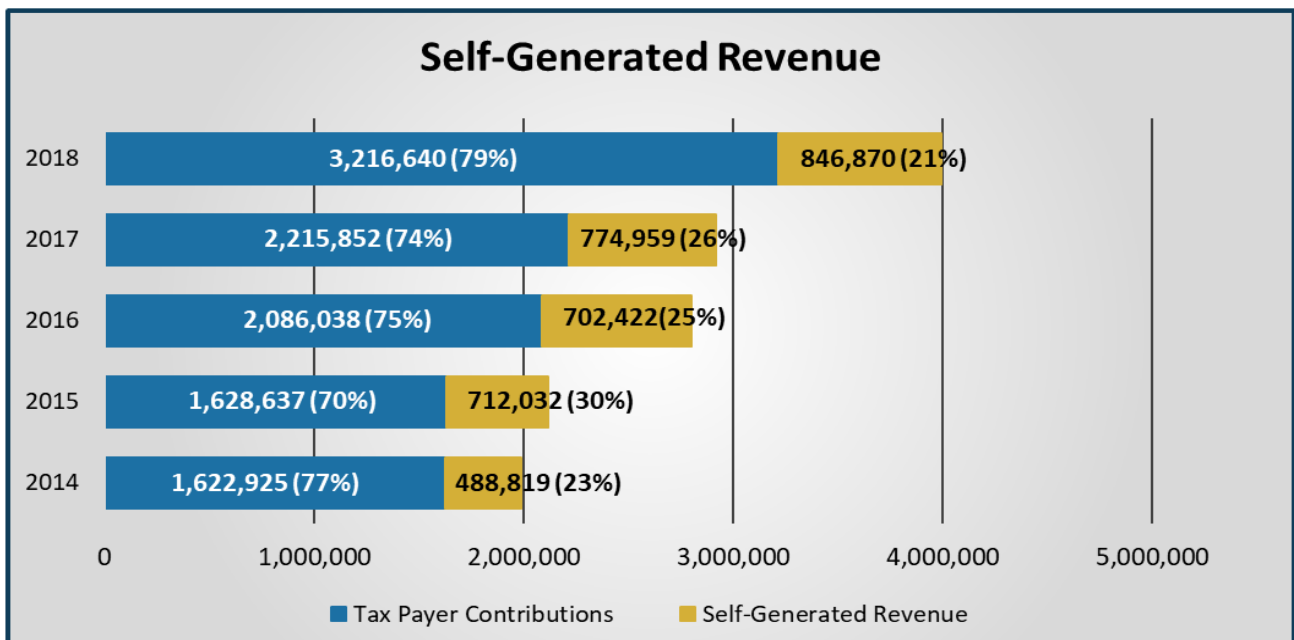
The approved 2018 operating budget was \$3,004,850. The amended 2018 operating budget was \$3,216,640. This increase was due to both increased revenues collected by optimizing all revenue sources and a general fund subsidy. The final 2018 expenditures totaled \$3,089,135.

We continue to be fiscally responsible by pursuing all possible revenue sources. We had a 9% increase in SGR in 2018. We have increased SGR from 12% when I took office to 26% in 2018.

Graph 1: Self-Generated Revenue 2014-2018



Graph 2: Self-Generated Revenue vs Taxpayer Contribution 2014-2018



Mental Health

We recognize the emotional needs of the survivors of those who have died. We continued to collaborate with with the Baton Rouge Children’s Advocacy Center and other community agencies to provide resources to the families who have suffered a traumatic loss. Traumatic loss can be defined as any manner of death including: accident, homicide, suicide, infant death, unexpected, and natural. We recognize the need for more expansive mental health resources. During 2018, we worked with individual community stakeholders along with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and Capital Area Human Services District to develop a plan for a new mental health stabilization center, the BRIDGE Center for Hope, to prevent inappropriate incarceration of our citizens with mental illness and the overcrowding of emergency departments and will continue to support these efforts.

Sexual Assault

The Coroner’s Office continued to enjoy a cooperative, invaluable relationship with members of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) including other agencies such as, the Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response Advocacy Center (STAR), the Baton Rouge Children’s Advocacy Center, local law enforcement agencies, the East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney’s Office, surrounding hospitals, and the Louisiana State Police Crime Lab. We succeeded with our efforts to redirect the assignment of collecting forensic evidence regarding sexual assault in this parish to the Coroner’s Office. We again requested a budget increase to add Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners to our staff and were successful. We worked with Region 2 agency stakeholders and developed and implemented a sexual assault response protocol that includes Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners. In 2019 we are working to complete training for the pediatric response to our program.

Investigations

In 2018, the Coroner’s Office investigated:

- 100 homicides compared to 124 in 2017
- 44 deaths related to heroin in comparison to 45 deaths in 2017
- 58 non-heroin overdoses as compared to 66 in 2017
- 6 infant deaths related to an unsafe sleeping environment compared to 7 in 2017
- 54 deaths related to suicide in comparison to 58 in 2017

See Graph 3: 2018 Coroner’s Death Cases

Public Relations

Dr. Clark presented education and information to the following Community Partners in 2018:

- Woman’s Hospital Baby Grand – “Back to Sleep and the ABC’s of Safe Sleeping”.
- Behavioral Health Constituency Presentation
- Crisis Intervention Training
- Celebrity Waiter – Baton Rouge Children’s Advocacy Center
- LDH Presentation regarding Heroin Deaths in the Capital Region
- St. Michaels High School Career Day
- Kiwanis Club
- Louisiana Hospital Association
- Louisiana State Medical Society
- Louisiana Public Broadcasting
- Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana “Pinwheels for Prevention”
- Mental Health Association “Beat the Odds”
- National Association of Social Workers Conference
- Baton Rouge Press Club
- Saint Francisville Rotary Club
- LSU Public Safety Day
- Annual Recovery Day Event
- Baton Rouge Retired Social Workers
- Louisiana Primary Care Association Conference
- Broadmoor Methodist Church
- Louisiana Department of Justice
- Louisiana Attorney General’s Office
- Mayor’s Health City Initiative
- CAHS Collaborative and Community Summit
- Lion’s Club
- Southern States Correctional Association Conference
- Garden District Civic Association
- New Orleans Bio Innovation Center Conference
- St. Vincent de Paul

Community Programs and Partnerships

Board and Committee Participation

Dr. Clark actively participated in the following local, regional, and statewide boards and committees:

- Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency (LOPA), Coroner's Committee
- Baton Rouge Regional Eye Bank
- Crisis Intervention Center Board
- Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response Center (STAR)
- State of Louisiana Child Death Review Panel
- State of Louisiana Regional Maternal and Child Health, Fetal Infant Mortality Review and Child Death Review Case Review Team
- Capital Area Health and Human Services Collaborative and the Mental Health Court
- Louisiana Behavioral Health Coalition
- Baton Rouge Victims Crime Unit
- The East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness
- State of Louisiana Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Coalition for Region 2 Hospitals
- Past President of the Capital Area Medical Society
- Past President of the Louisiana State Medical Society
- Louisiana Coroners Association President
- Bridge Center Board
- Baton Rouge Community College Criminal Justice Advisory Board

Key Business Partnerships

The East Baton Rouge Parish Coroner's Office continues to partner with the many entities to initiate and improve relationships to better serve the citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish.

Educational Partnerships

The East Baton Rouge Parish Coroner's Office partnered with the following institutions to educate students and citizens in the area of death investigation, forensic science and mental health:

- Louisiana State University
- Southern University
- Our Lady of the Lake School of Nursing
- Central High School Sports Medicine Program
- East Baton Rouge Parish Emergency Medical Services Program
- Baton Rouge Community College
- East Baton Rouge Parish Fire Department Recruitment Trainees
- St. Michael the Archangel High School Forensic Science Program
- Episcopal High School
- Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center
- Zachary High School Medical Program
- St. Joseph's Academy

Statistical Information

Investigations

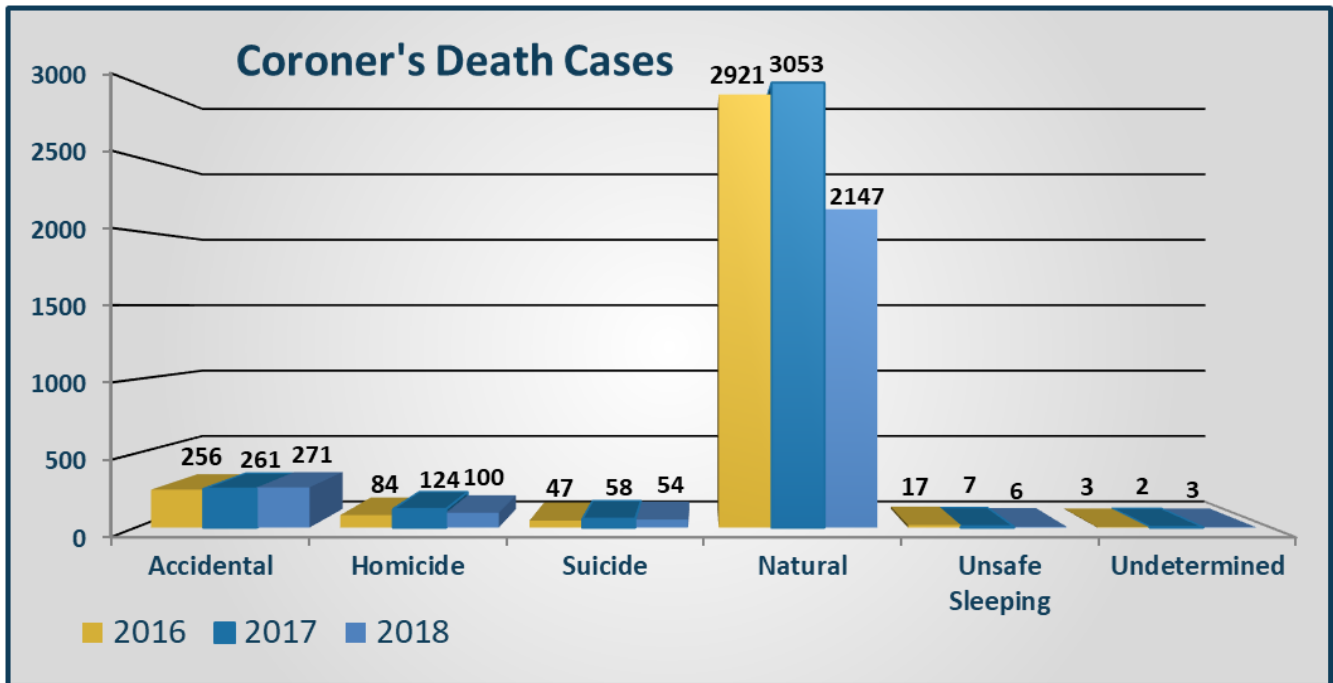
Type of Investigation	2016	2017	2018
<i>Number of Coroner's Death Cases</i>	3311	3502	3583
<i>Number of Bodies Transported</i>	337	421	391
<i>Number of Scene Responses</i>	944	992	1049
<i>Number of Toxicology Analysis Performed</i>	624	672	777
<i>Number of Histology Analysis Performed</i>	77	47	72
<i>Number of Cremation Permits Issued</i>	1234	1300	1406
<i>Number of Pauper Cremations Facilitated</i>	26	80	81
<i>Number of Unidentified Bodies</i>	0	0	0
<i>Number of East Baton Rouge Parish Autopsies</i>	208	235	207
<i>Number of Regional Autopsy Program Autopsies</i>	223	220	260
<i>Number of Exhumations</i>	0	1	0
<i>Number of Sexual Assault Forensic Exams</i>	148**	253**	249**
<i>Total Referrals to LOPA</i>	337	427	264
<i>Total Organ and Tissue Donations</i>	60	52	90
<i>Total of Enhanced Lives from Organ/Tissue</i>	2870	2590	1470
<i>Total Cornea Donations</i>	47	52	41
<i>Total Prescriptions Donated</i>	95,384	82,116	0*
<i>Continuing Tutorships</i>	9	10	12

**SAFE Adults/Adolescents Only

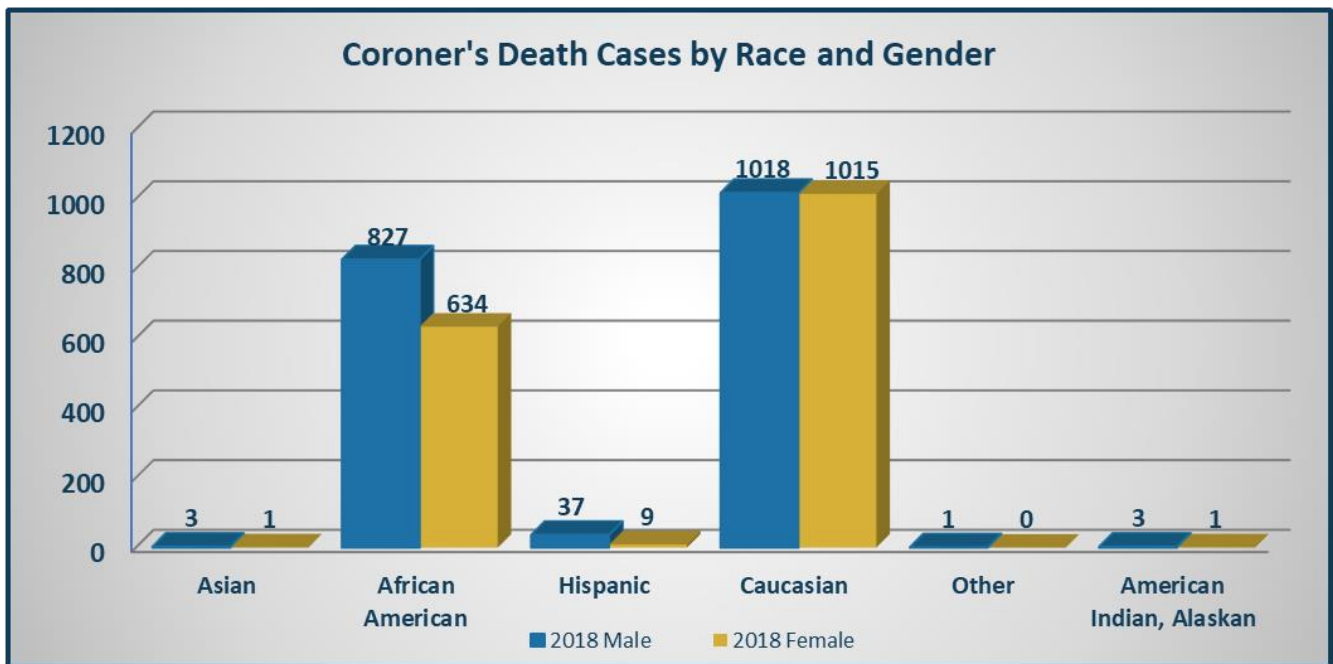
*We are no longer able to donate prescriptions due to state regulations

Graph 3: 2018 Coroner's Death Cases

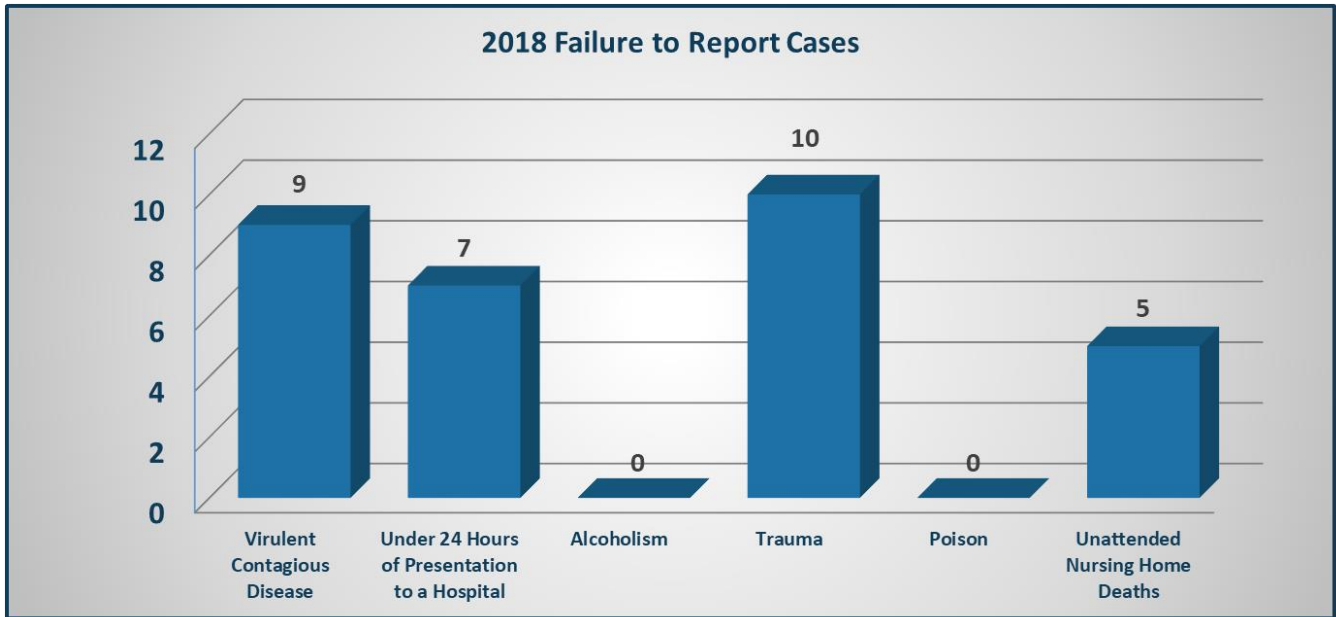
Compared to 2017 data, there were 10 more accidental deaths investigated in 2018. Suicides decreased in 2018 by 4. Natural deaths increased by 94 and homicides decreased by 24. The number of undetermined cases decreased. Overall, the Coroner's Office investigated more deaths in 2017.



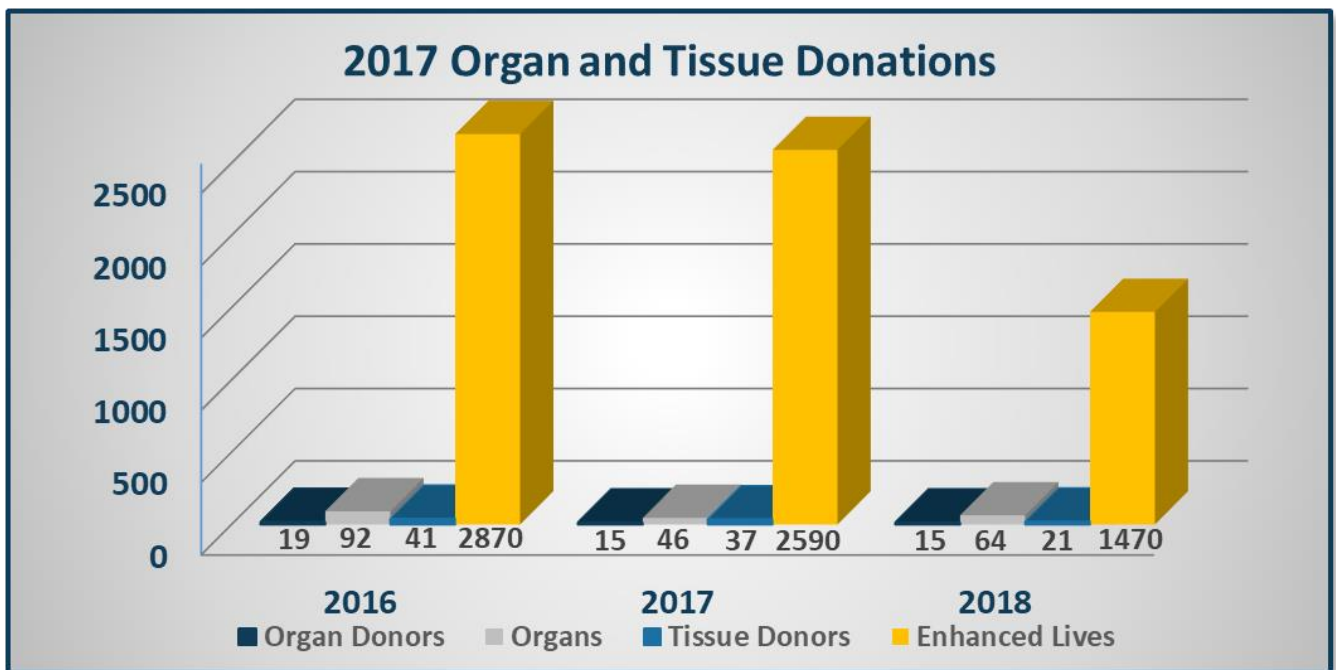
Graph 4: 2018 Coroner's Cases by Gender and Race



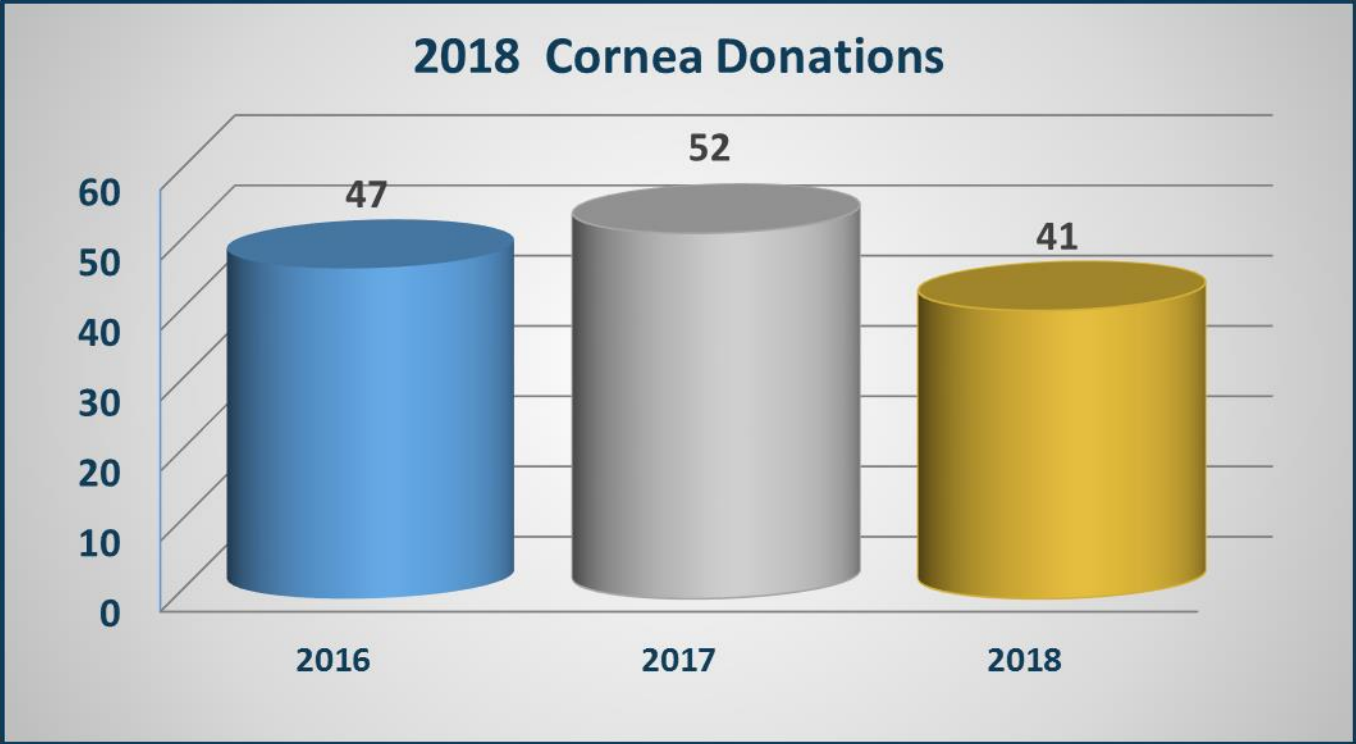
Graph 5: 2018 Failure to Report Coroner Death Cases



Graph 6: 2018 Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency Organ and Tissue Donations

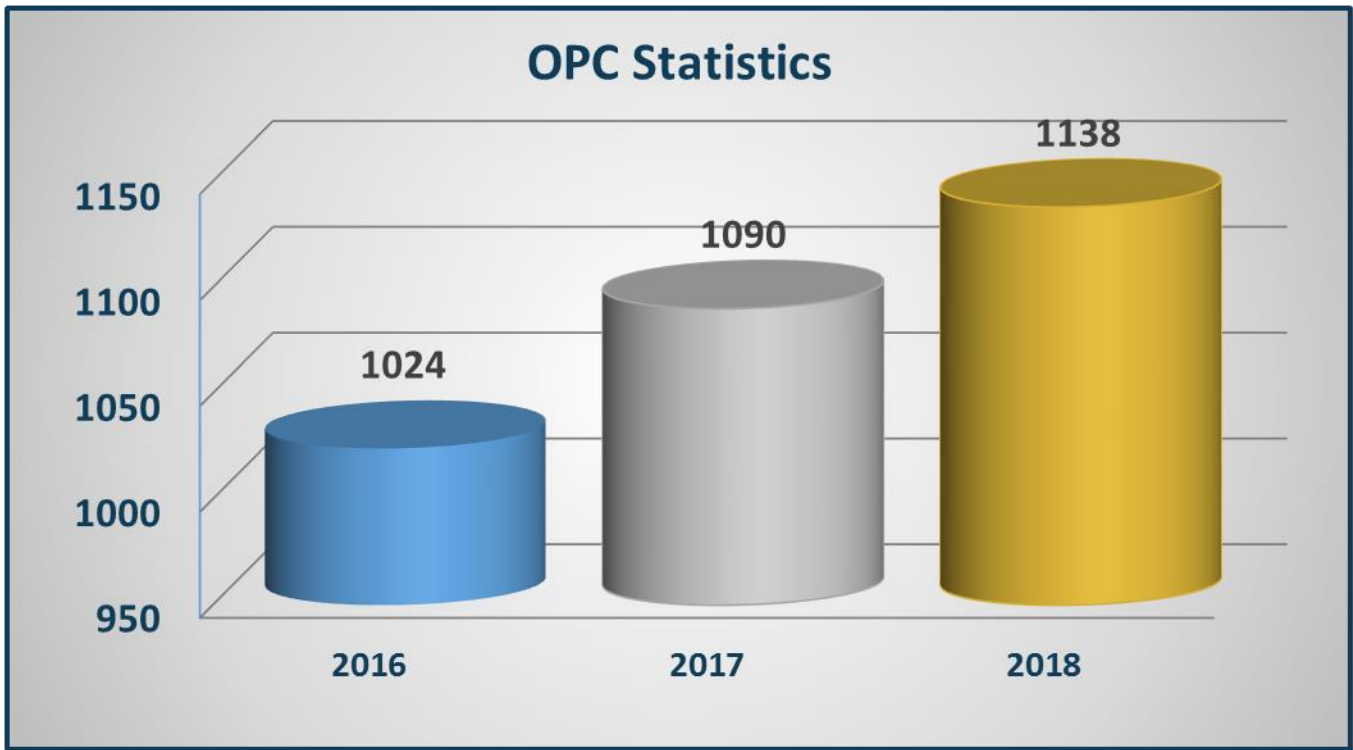


Graph 7: 2018 Baton Rouge Eye Bank Cornea Donations



Mental Health

Graph 8: 2018 Order of Protective Custody (OPC)



Graph 9: 2018 Coroner Emergency Certificate (CEC)

