

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



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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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 2015. 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 fourth year has come to a close, I am pleased to report that we have made great strides in accomplishing our goals.

The following are some of our accomplishments for 2015:

- We provided expert testimony in the Louisiana and Federal Criminal Court system.
- In accordance with Louisiana Statutes, we maximized collection of revenue totaling \$712,032.
- Our Regional Autopsy Program for the parishes surrounding East Baton Rouge Parish continued to grow- Ascension (102 cases), Pointe Coupee (15 cases), West Feliciana (30 cases) and Livingston (76 cases).
- We donated 82,429 prescription drugs to the St. Vincent de Paul Community Pharmacy.
- I now serve as First Vice President of the Louisiana State Coroner's Association and played an active role as chairman of the legislative committee which saw the successful passage of Act No. 229, Regional Sexual Assault Plan and Act 270.
- I continue to serve on multiple boards and committees.

While we accomplished much in 2015, 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:

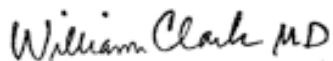
- **Death investigations-** I will maintain the gold standard of death investigation.
- **Infant Mortality-** My goal continues to be to prevent 100% of these tragic losses. In 2015 my office participated in the Cribs for Kids Safe Sleep initiative. In 2016 we will focus on a Safe Sleeping Education Campaign. With this campaign I will continue to work with community partners to better educate families on infant safe sleeping environments.
- **Heroin Deaths-** In 2015 my office initiated an anti-heroin campaign. Our office worked with CAHSD to create impactful public service announcements. I will continue to

address our heroin epidemic in both our death investigations and with those in our community suffering from substance abuse problems.

- **Synthetic Marijuana**- In addition to the anti-heroin campaign, our office included anti-mojo campaign public service announcements. I will continue to work with our law-enforcement partners and the district attorney's office to rid the streets of "MOJO", a synthetic marijuana poison.
- **Mental Health**- I will continue my efforts to implement an automated system for Physician Emergency Certificates and Coroner Emergency Certificates by working with DHH. I will continue to work with community partners to open a new mental health stabilization center 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) were considered best-practice when conducting forensic medical exams. In 2015, I was successful in supporting Act 229 and as a result, implemented a SANE protocol that includes not only East Baton Rouge Parish but the entire DHH Region 2 of Ascension, Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge, Iberville, East Feliciana and West Feliciana. We have hired 10 SANEs with 2 SANE Training Coordinators to begin what I feel will be the gold standard in sexual assault forensic medical exams.

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



At the end of 2004, there were 2,342 death investigation offices in the United States of which 1,590 are coroner's offices. Of those, only 82 serve jurisdictions of more than 250,000 people. East Baton Rouge Coroner's Office is one of the 82.

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.

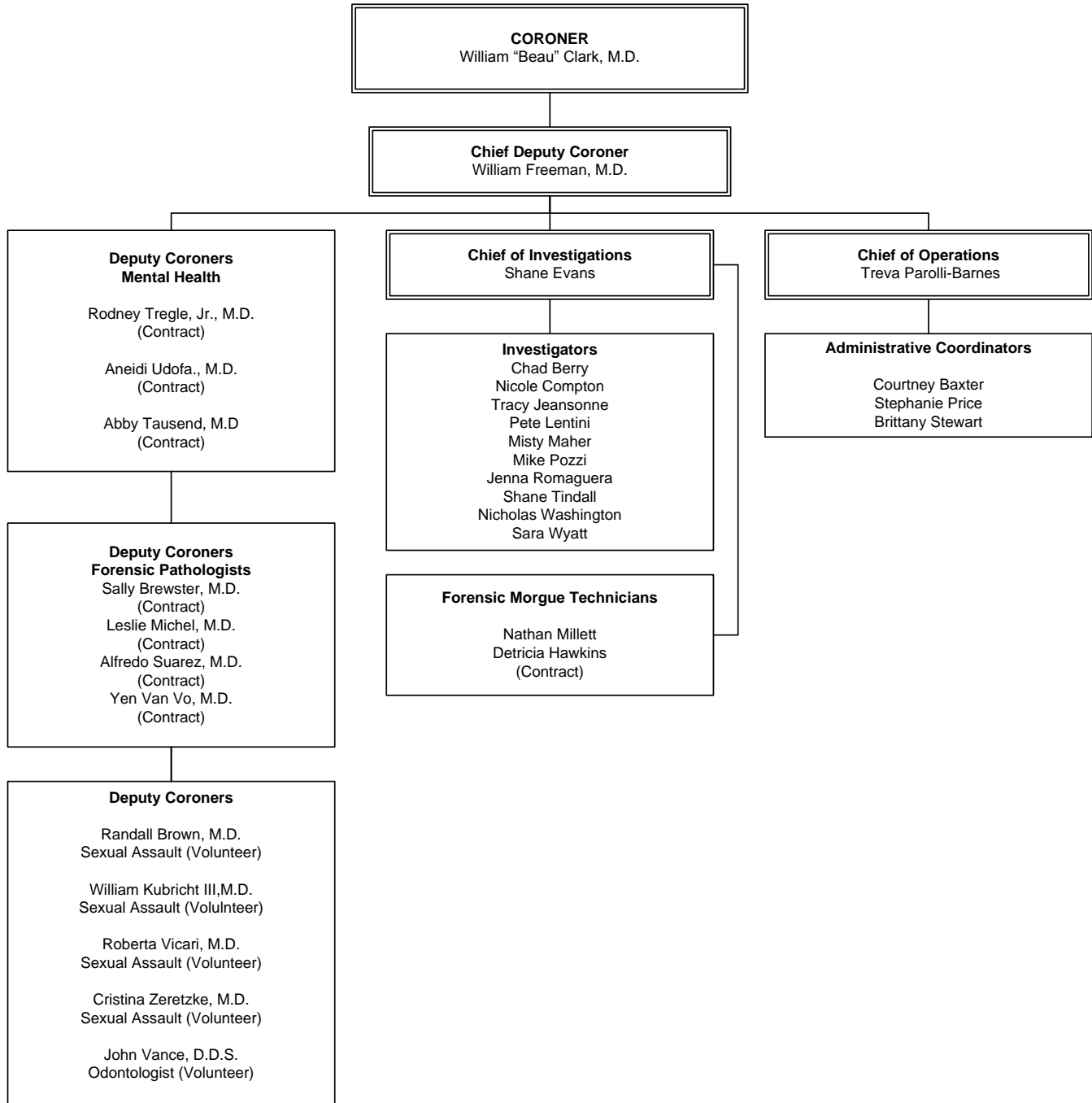
According to Louisiana Revised Statute 13:5701, in each parish, there shall be a coroner. Except for the parish of Orleans, he shall be elected at the gubernatorial election, shall serve for a term of four years, and shall take office and begin his term on the fourth Monday in March following election. 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. The coroner shall be a resident of the parish. However, a licensed physician who is not a resident of the parish but who maintains a full-time medical practice at a principal medical office facility in the parish may qualify for and hold the office. Each coroner may appoint one or more deputy or assistant coroners to perform his duties, who need not be residents of the parish. However, any person appointed as a deputy or assistant coroner, who is not a resident of the parish, shall be a licensed physician. They shall possess the same qualifications as the coroner and be paid by the coroner appointing them or by arrangement with the parish governing authority if the coroner is on a salary basis. A person may serve as a deputy or assistant coroner on a part-time basis in more than one parish. 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 coroner may appoint any necessary secretaries, stenographers, clerks, technicians, investigators, official photographers, or other helpers. The salaries of these employees shall be paid by the coroner out of his fees or by arrangement with the parish governing authority if the coroner is on a salary basis.

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 and was elected to a four year term.

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.



2015 Organizational Chart





Accomplishments

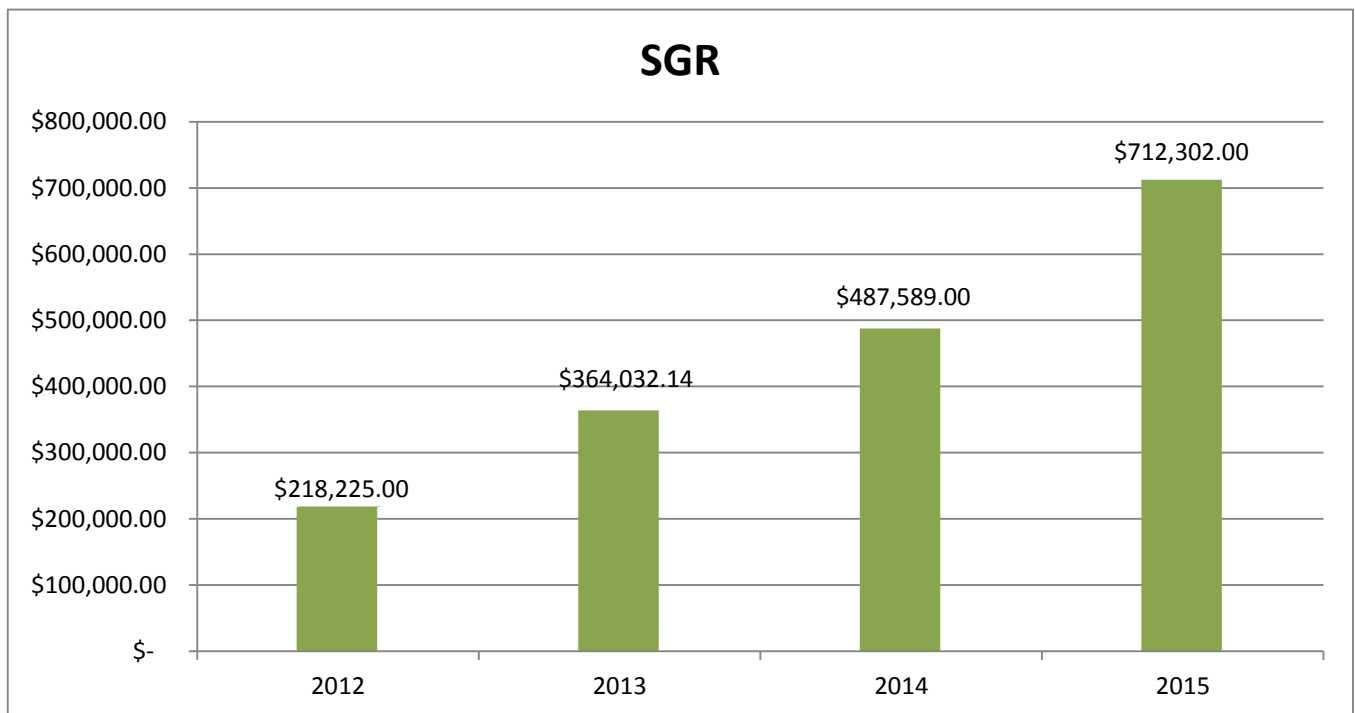
Financial Management

The approved 2015 budget was \$2,200,220. The amended 2015 budget was \$2,395,064. This increase was due to increased revenue collected by optimizing all revenue sources. The final 2015 expenditures totaled \$2,340,669; therefore. **The Office spent \$54,395 less than budgeted.**

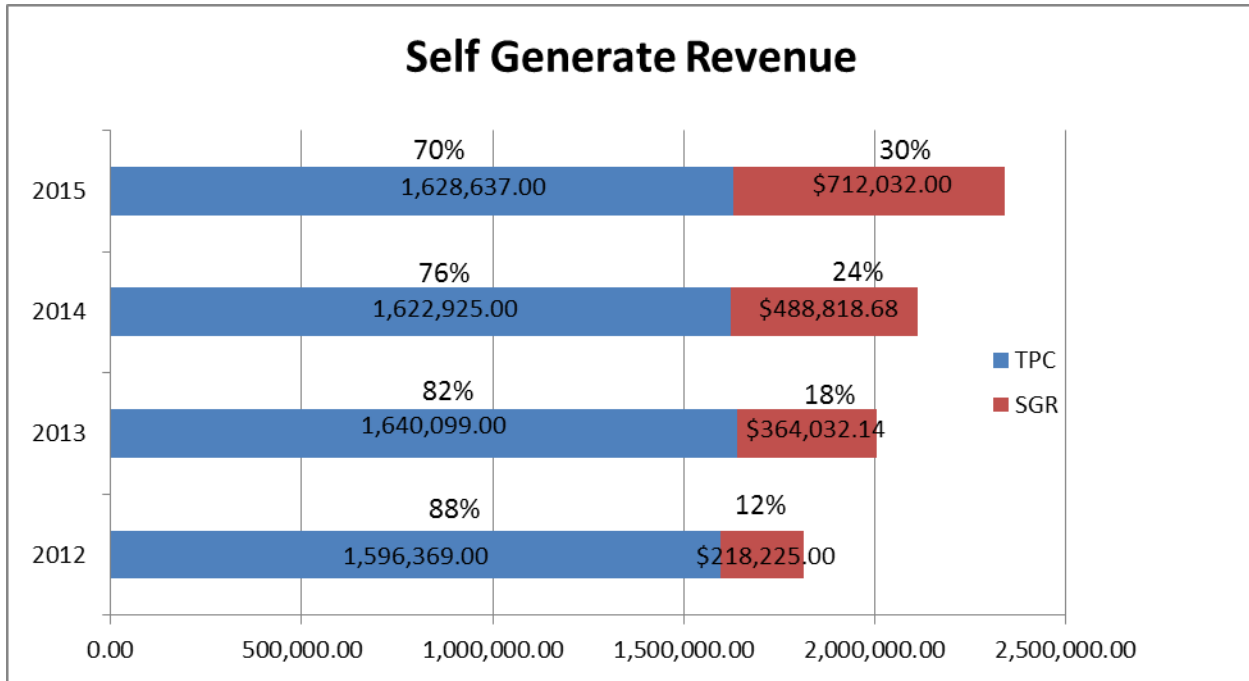
We collected past debts owed to the taxpayers via this Office in the amount of \$7,400.

Since taking office in 2012, we increased self-generated revenue (SGR) by 226%.

Graph 1: Self-Generated Revenue 2012-2015



Graph 2: Self-Generated Revenue versus Taxpayer Contribution 2012-2015



Mental Health

We recognize the emotional needs of the survivors of those who have died. We continued to collaborate with the Crisis Intervention Center and with the Baton Rouge Children's Advocacy Center 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 2015, 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 to prevent inappropriate incarceration of our citizens with mental illness and the overcrowding of emergency departments and will continue these efforts.

Sexual Assault

The Coroner's Office continued to enjoy a cooperative, invaluable relationship with the Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response (STAR) Center.

We continued our efforts to redirect the assignment of duties regarding sexual assault response 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 to develop and implement a sexual assault response protocol that includes Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners.

Investigations

In 2015, the Coroner's Office Investigated 94 homicides compared to 73 in 2014.

In 2015, the Coroner's Office investigated 41 deaths related to heroin in comparison to 28 deaths in 2014.

In 2015 the Coroner's Office Investigated 12 infant deaths related to positional asphyxia compared to 15 in 2014.

In 2015 the Coroner's Office Investigated 49 deaths related to suicide in comparison to 55 in 2014.

*see Graph 3: 2015 Coroner's Death Cases

Public Relations

Dr. Clark presented education and information to the following Community Partners in 2015:

- Woman's Hospital Baby Grand – “Back to Sleep and the ABC's of Safe Sleeping”.
- EBRPP Female Inmate Graduation
- 2015 Esprit de Femme Award Recipient attendee
- Leader with Vision
- Mental Health Educational Presentation
- Behavioral Health Constituency Presentation
- Crisis Intervention Training
- Public Defender Presentation
- Honoring and Remembering Ceremony
- Celebrity Waiter
- HCR 129 Task Force
- DHH Presentation regarding Heroin Deaths in the Capital Region
- LSU Health Unit Mental Health Presentation
- Woodlawn High School Career Day
- St. Michaels High School Career Day
- Thanksgiving Service for Light and Sight

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
- 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
- Crisis and Intervention, Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS)
- 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
- Member of the Louisiana State Medical Society
- Louisiana Coroners Association 2nd Vice President
- FORT Executive Board

Key Business Partnerships

The East Baton Rouge Parish Coroner's Office continued to partner with the following entities to initiate and improve relationships to better serve the citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish:

- Local, regional and statewide law enforcement agencies
- Local, regional and statewide public safety agencies
- Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Vital Statistics
- Capital Area and surrounding parish funeral homes
- East Baton Rouge Parish acute care hospitals
- East Baton Rouge Parish hospice agencies
- East Baton Rouge Parish nursing homes
- East Baton Rouge Parish Mental Health Advocate
- Accidental Death Support Group
- Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination (BRAVE)

Educational Partnerships

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

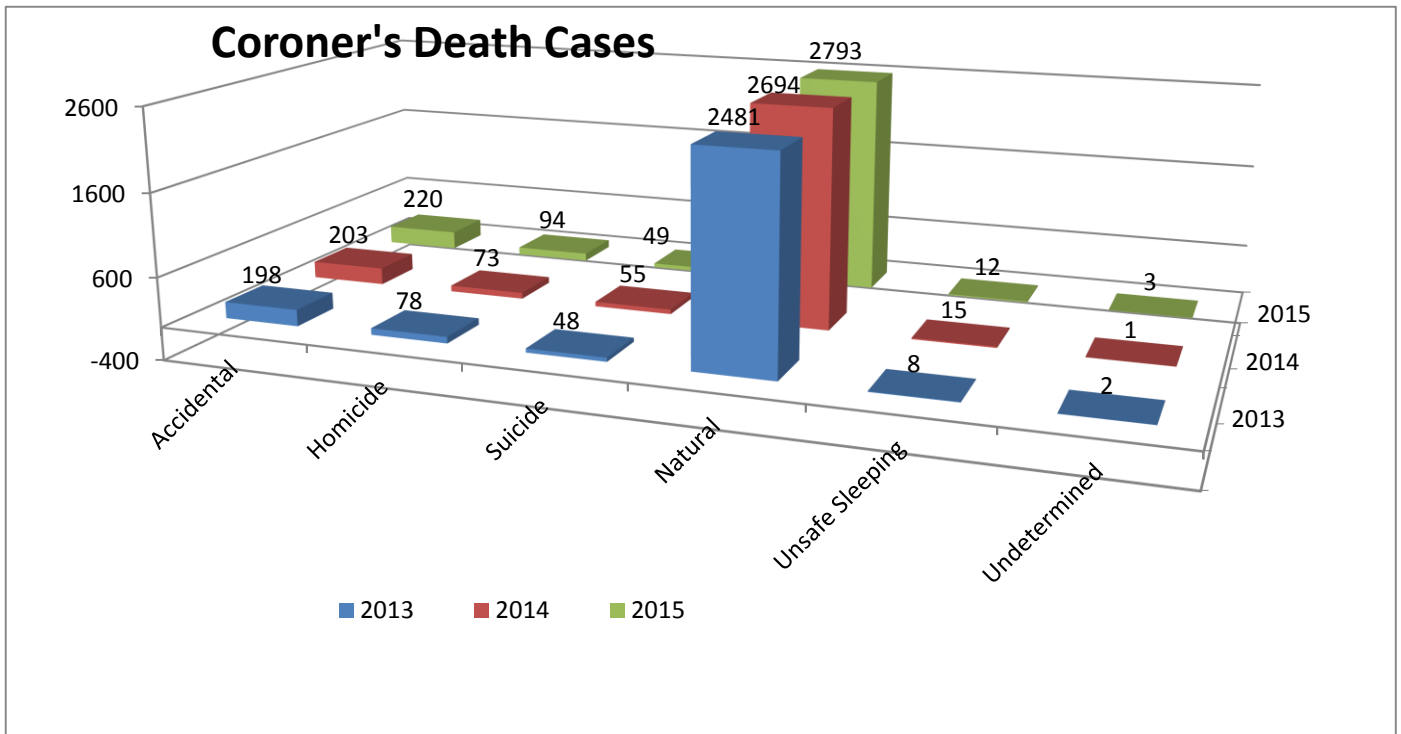
- Louisiana State University
- Southern University
- Our Lady of the Lake School of Nursing
- ITT Technical Institute School of Criminal Justice
- Central High School Sports Medicine Program
- East Baton Rouge Parish Emergency Medical Services Program
- Baton Rouge Community College
- East Baton Rouge Parish Fire Department Recruitment Trainees
- St. Michael the Archangel High School Forensic Science Program

Statistical Information

Death Investigations

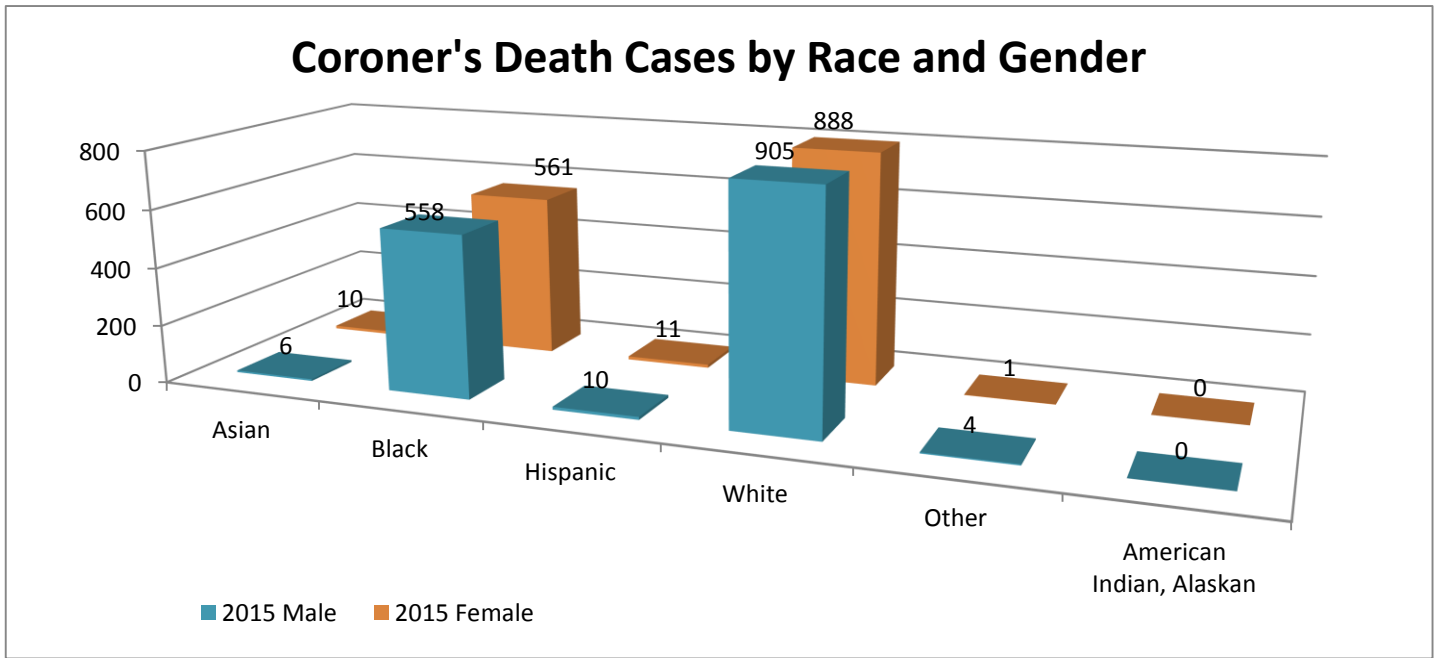
	2013 Total	2014 Total	2015 Total
<i>Number of Coroner's Death Cases</i>	2837	3025	3153
<i>Number of Bodies Transported</i>	369	403	385
<i>Number of Scene Responses</i>	745	931	884
<i>Number of Toxicology Analysis Performed</i>	330	441	558
<i>Number of Histology Analysis Performed</i>	498	158	156
<i>Number of Cremation Permits Issued</i>	880	1038	1126
<i>Number of Pauper Cremations Facilitated</i>	57	69	44
<i>Number of Unidentified Bodies</i>	0	0	0
<i>Number of East Baton Rouge Parish Autopsies</i>	215	246	248
<i>Number of Regional Autopsy Program Autopsies</i>	106	155	223
<i>Number of Exhumations</i>	0	0	1
<i>Total Referrals to LOPA</i>	253	314	298
<i>Total Organ and Tissue Donations</i>	58	84	57
<i>Total of Enhanced Lives from Organ/Tissue</i>	2730	2940	2730
<i>Total Cornea Donations</i>	15	43	44
<i>Total Prescriptions Donated</i>	69,426	84,054	82,429
<i>Tutorships</i>	3	0	5

Graph 3: 2015 Coroner's Death Cases

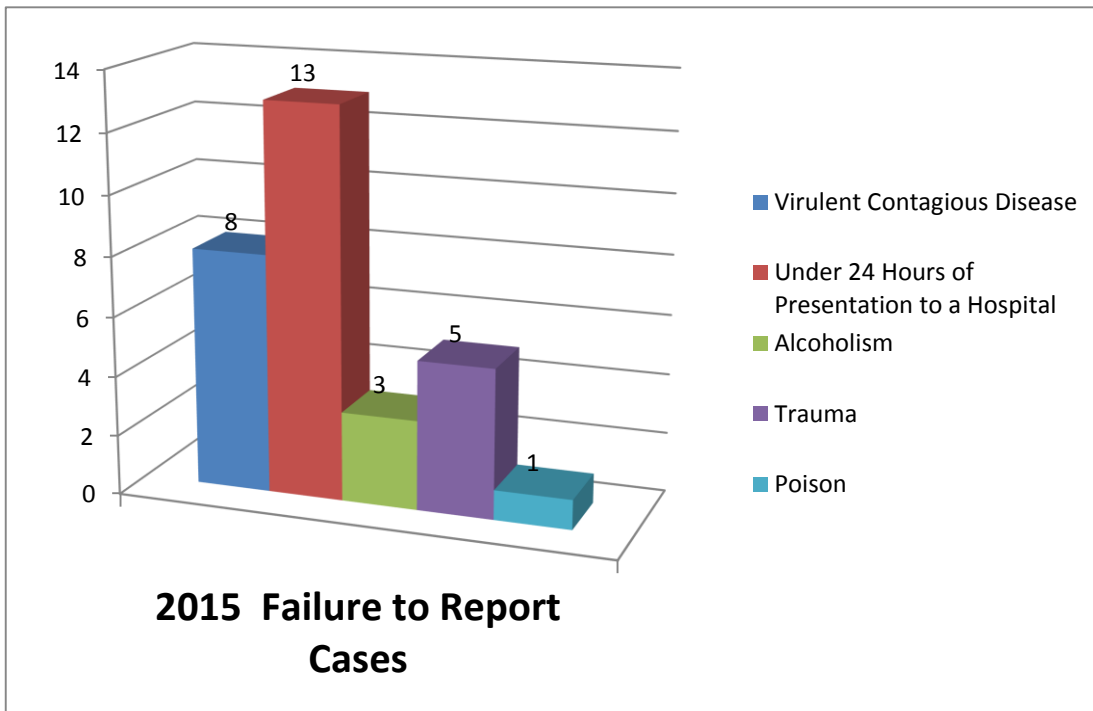


Compared to 2014 data, there were 17 more accidental deaths investigated in 2015. Suicides decreased in 2015 by 6. Natural deaths increased by 99 and homicides increased by 21. The number of undetermined cases increased by 2. Overall, the Coroner's Office investigated 118 more deaths in 2015.

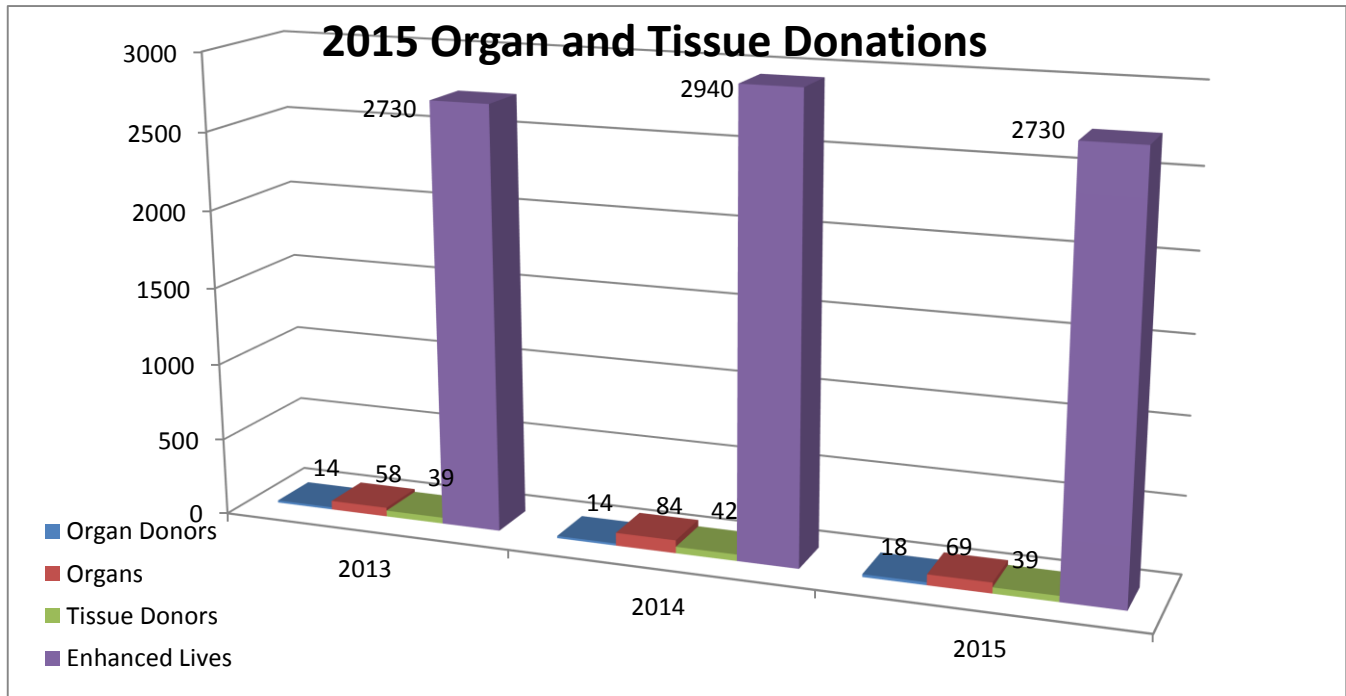
Graph 4: 2015 Coroner's Cases by Gender and Race



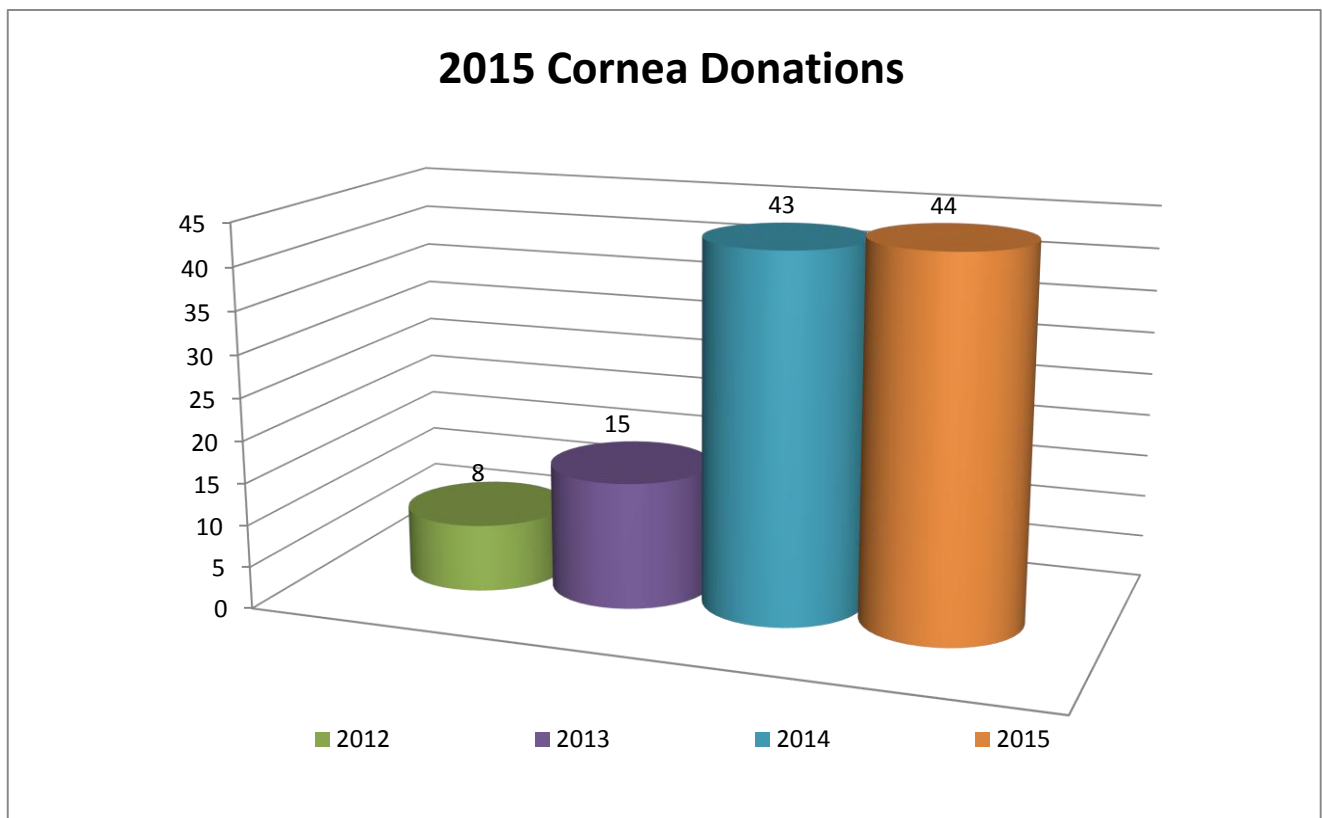
Graph 5: 2015 Failure to Report Coroner Death Cases



Graph 6: 2015 Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency Organ and Tissue Donations

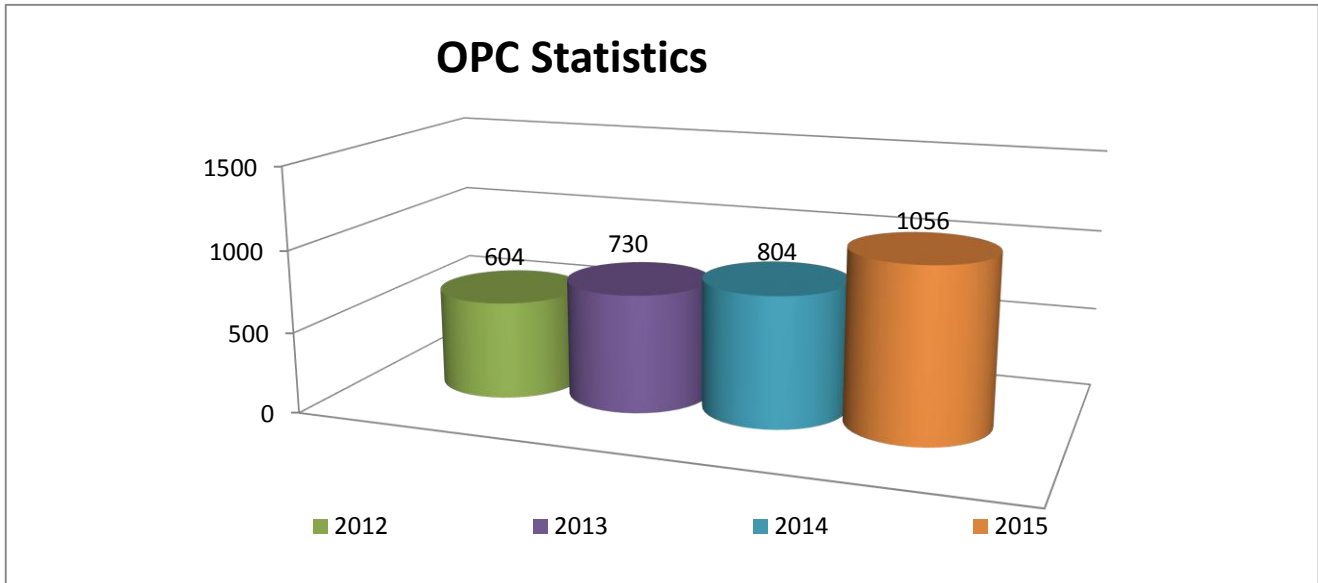


Graph 7: 2015 Baton Rouge Eye Bank Cornea Donations



Mental Health

Graph 8: 2015 Order of Protective Custody (OPC)



Graph 9: 2015 Coroner Emergency Certificate (CEC)

