

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



ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Table of Contents

A Letter from the Coroner	3
About the Coroner’s Office	5
Organizational Chart	7
Accomplishments	8
Organizational Improvements	8
Human Resource Management	8
Business Management	8
Financial Management	8
Graph 1: Self-Generated Revenue 2010-2014	8
Graph 2: Self-Generated Revenue versus Taxpayer Contribution 2010-2014	9
Mental Health	9
Sexual Assault	9
Investigations	9
Public Relations	10
Community Programs and Partnerships	11
Board and Committee Participation	11
Key Business Partnerships	11
Educational Partnerships	12
Statistical Information	13
Death Investigations	13
Graph 3: 2014 Coroner’s Death Cases	14
Graph 4: 2014 Coroner’s Cases by Gender and Race	14
Graph 5: 2014 Failure to Report Coroner Death Cases	15
Graph 6: 2014 Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency Organ and Tissue Donations	15
Graph 7: 2014 Baton Rouge Eye Bank Cornea Donations	16
Mental Health.....	16
Graph 8: 2014 Order of Protective Custody	16
Graph 9: 2014 Coroner Emergency Certificate	17

A Letter from the Coroner



To the Citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish:

Enclosed you will find the Coroner's Annual Report for 2014. 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 third 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 2014:

- We continue to operate under the first ever Coroner's Business and Strategic Plan.
- We refined the electronic processing of Death Certificates with 100% compliance in the LEERS System.
- The Disaster Preparedness Plan was presented and accepted by East Baton Rouge Parish Emergency Response partners to include response to a virulent contagious disease such as Ebola.
- We provided expert testimony in the Louisiana and Federal Criminal Court system.
- In accordance with Louisiana Statutes, we maximized collection of revenue totaling \$488,458.
- Our Regional Autopsy Program for the parishes surrounding East Baton Rouge Parish continued to grow- Ascension (97 cases), Pointe Coupee (18 cases), West Feliciana (27 cases) and Livingston (13 cases).
- We donated 84,054 prescription drugs to the St. Vincent de Paul Community Pharmacy.
- Physical plant improvements made included a security gate between the administrative offices and the morgue.
- Purchases included a new morgue table for autopsies and three new computers for investigative purposes.
- I continue to serve as Second 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. 390 updating 40 year old coroner law.
- I served on 14 boards and committees and identified 10 key business partnerships and 9 educational partnerships.

- We expanded our educational program with the rotation of one medical student from the Southhampton School of Medicine, United Kingdom, and 40 student interns from local colleges, as well as partnerships with Central High School Sports Medicine Program, St. Michaels's High School Forensic Science Program, Baton Rouge Fire Department, East Baton Rouge Parish Emergency Medical Services, LSU Fire Emergency Training Institute and Zachary Fire Department.

While we accomplished much in 2014, 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 is to prevent 100% of these tragic losses. I will continue work with community partners to better educate families on infant safe sleeping environments.
- **Heroin Deaths-** 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-** 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 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 overuse of emergency departments.
- **Sexual Assault-** I will continue our efforts to ensure that all victims of sexual assault, including men, women and children, receive appropriate, efficient and consistent forensic exams with the highest level of dignity and in full compliance with state law.

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

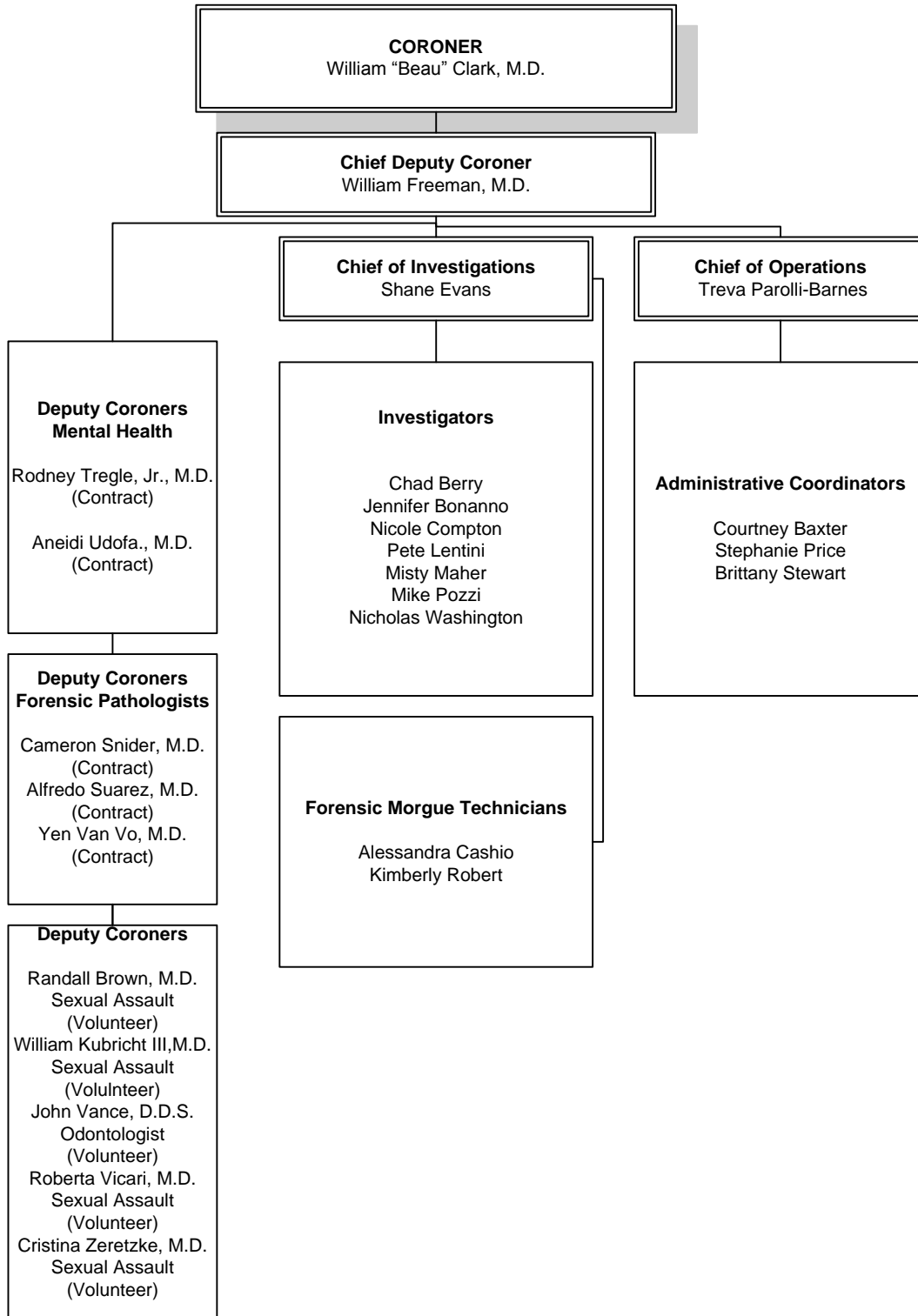
At the end of 2004, there were 2,342 death investigation offices in the United States of which 1,590 are coroner's offices. Of those, only 82 serve jurisdictions of more than 250,000 people. East Baton Rouge Coroner's Office is one of the 82. Qualifications for coroners are set by individual states and 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. In the U.S., the terms "coroner" and "medical examiner" vary widely in meaning by jurisdiction, as do qualifications and duties for these offices. 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.



Organizational Chart





Accomplishments

Organizational Improvements

Human Resource Management

We converted one of our Administrative Coordinator positions from a contract position to a full-time employee position.

We welcomed an additional Board Certified Forensic Pathologist.

We added a part-time Forensic Pathologist Technician.

We continue random drug testing procedures in accordance with our Business and Strategic Plan.

Business Management

We added Livingston Parish to our Regional Autopsy Program to promote self-generated revenue. We will continue to seek self-generated revenue opportunities.

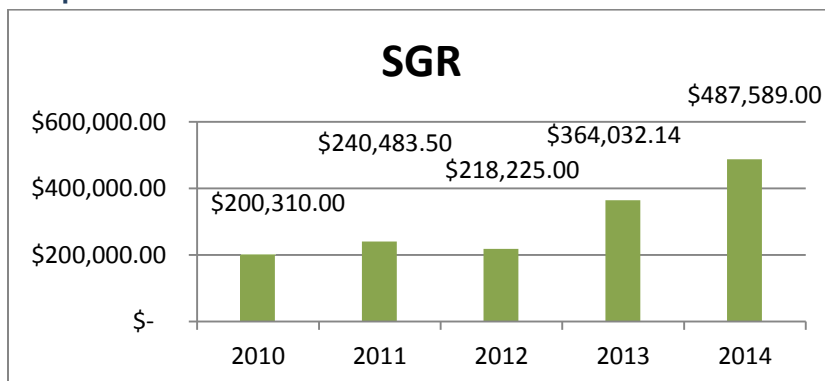
Financial Management

The approved 2014 budget was \$1,994,860. The amended 2014 budget was \$2,099,860. This increase was due to increased revenue collected by optimizing all revenue sources. The final 2014 expenditures totaled \$2,061,417; therefore, the Office spent \$38,443 less than budgeted.

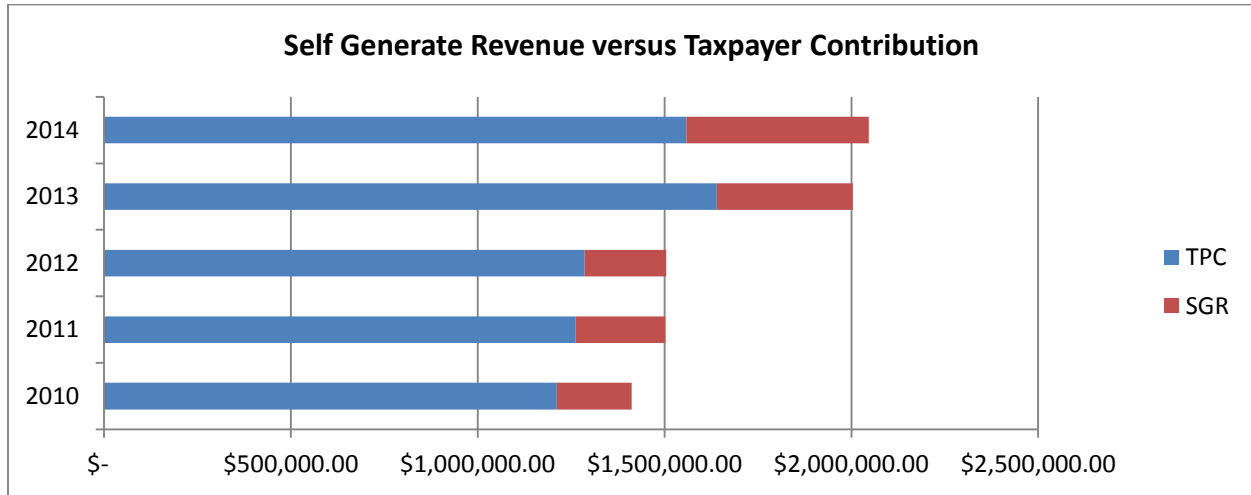
We pursued collection of past debts owed to the taxpayers via this Office in the amount of \$50,660.

Since taking office in 2014, we increased self-generated revenue by 101%.

Graph 1: Self-Generated Revenue 2010-2014



Graph 2: Self-Generated Revenue versus Taxpayer Contribution 2010-2014



Mental Health

We recognize the emotional needs of the survivors of those who have died. We collaborated with the Crisis Intervention Center to develop the Traumatic Loss Outreach Team to provide resources to our 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. This program allowed us to provide grief and bereavement assistance to more than 657 families who experienced such a loss. We will continue to work with the Crisis Intervention Center to provide resources to the citizens of our parish in such difficult times.

In accordance with Louisiana Civil Code Article 355, I signed tutorships for minor patients within the community.

Sexual Assault

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

This office continued its efforts to cease the abdication of duties regarding sexual assault response in this parish. We again requested a budget increase to add four Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners to our staff. This part of our budget request was not approved by the parish governing authority. Further, we requested an Attorney General's opinion clarifying the responsibility of the Coroner's jurisdiction regarding sexual assault. Based on the final forthcoming opinion, we will act accordingly.

Investigations

In 2014, the Coroner's Office Investigated 73 homicides compared to 79 in 2013.

In 2014, the Coroner's Office investigated 28 deaths related to heroin in comparison to 34 deaths in 2013.

In 2014 the Coroner's Office Investigated 15 infant deaths related to positional asphyxia compared to 8 in 2013.

In 2014 the Coroner's Office Investigated 55 deaths related to suicide in comparison to 48 in 2013.

*see Graph 3: 2014 Coroner's Death Cases

Public Relations

Dr. Clark presented education and information to the following Community Partners in 2014:

- LPB Panel Discussion: "Defining Dangerous"
- Woman's Hospital Mental Health
- Woman's Hospital Baby Grand – "Back to Sleep and the ABC's of Safe Sleeping".
- Lane Hospital Pregnancy Workshop – "Back to Sleep and the ABC's of Safe Sleeping".
- Panel Discussion on the "Loss of Young Black Males"
- CommUNITY Supper: "An Open Dialogue and Exchange"
- Boys' Hope Girls' Hope of Baton Rouge – "The Road to Excellence"
- Northdale Academy Death Investigations and Pathology Presentation
- Sudden Impact – Broadmoor High School and McKinley High School

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
- Baton Rouge 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
- President of the Capital Area Medical Society
- Member of the Louisiana State Medical Society
- Louisiana Coroners Association 2nd Vice President

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:

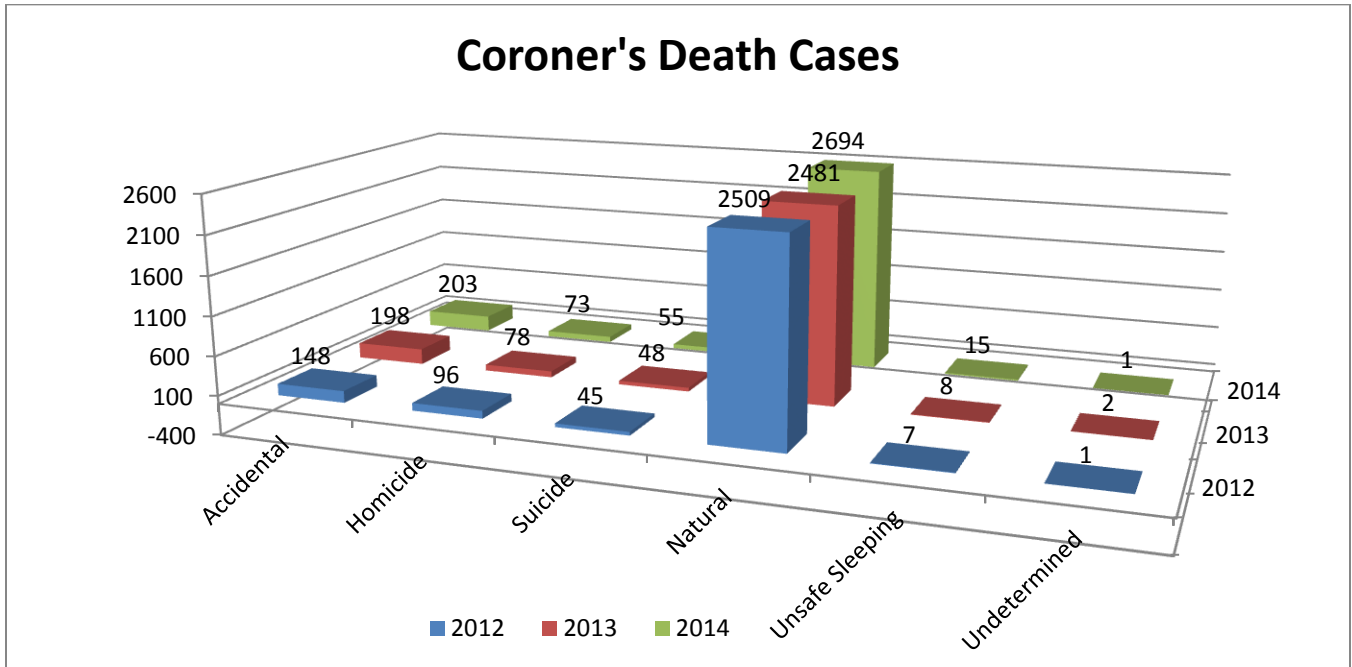
- Louisiana State University
- Southern University
- Our Lady of the Lake School of Nursing
- ITT Technical Institute School of Criminal Justice
- Central High School Sports Medicine Program
- East Baton Rouge Parish Emergency Medical Services Program
- Baton Rouge Community College
- East Baton Rouge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

Statistical Information

Death Investigations

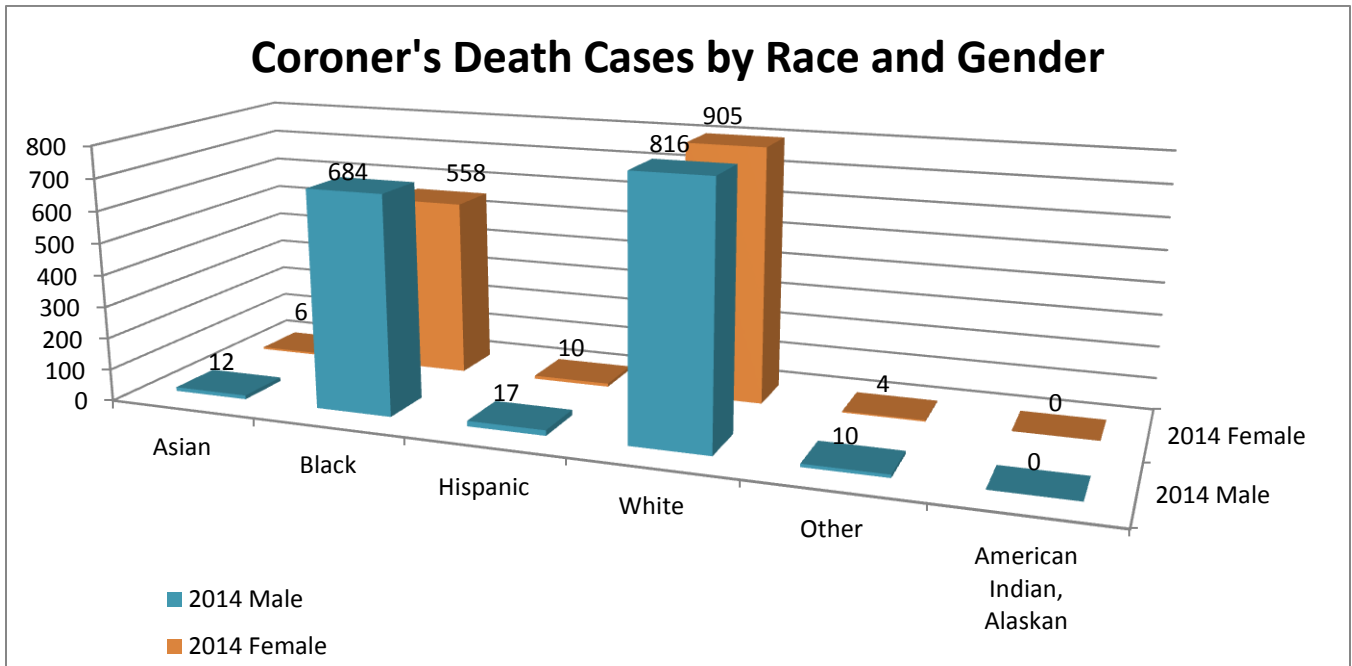
	2012 Total	2013 Total	2014
<i>Number of Coroner's Death Cases</i>	2824	2837	3025
<i>Number of Bodies Transported</i>	279	369	403
<i>Number of Scene Responses</i>	598	745	931
<i>Number of Toxicology Analysis Performed</i>	248	330	441
<i>Number of Histology Analysis Performed</i>	440	498	158
<i>Number of Cremation Permits Issued</i>	655	880	1038
<i>Number of Pauper Cremations Facilitated</i>	77	57	69
<i>Number of Unidentified Bodies</i>	0	0	0
<i>Number of East Baton Rouge Parish Autopsies</i>	186	215	246
<i>Number of Regional Autopsy Program Autopsies</i>	24	106	155
<i>Number of Exhumations</i>	1	0	0
<i>Total Referrals to LOPA</i>	138	253	314
<i>Total Organ and Tissue Donations</i>	111	58	84
<i>Total of Enhanced Lives from Organ/Tissue</i>	2440	2730	2940
<i>Total Cornea Donations</i>	8	15	43
<i>Total Prescriptions Donated</i>	45,904	69,426	84,054

Graph 3: 2014 Coroner's Death Cases

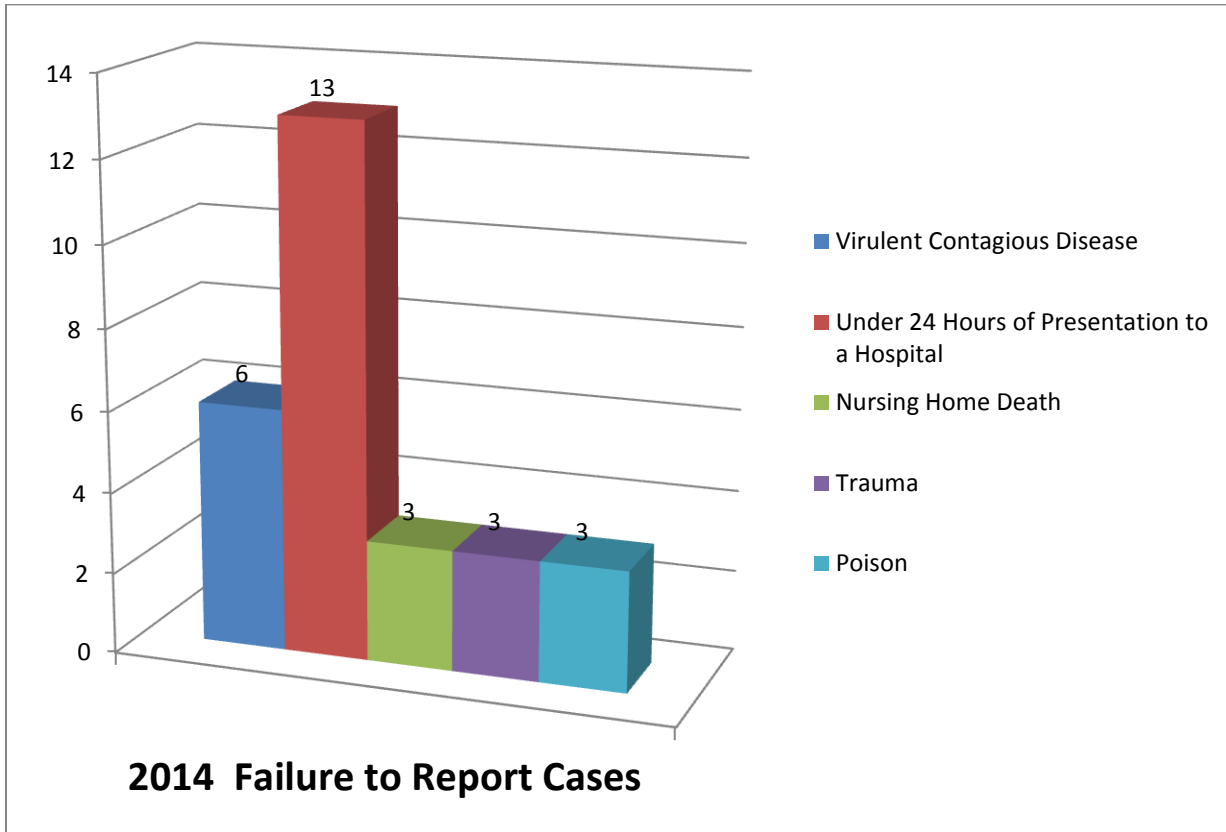


Compared to 2013 data, there were 5 more accidental deaths investigated in 2014. Suicides increased in 2014 by 7. Natural deaths increased by 213 whereas homicides decreased by 5 and the number of undetermined cases decreased by 1. Overall, the Coroner's Office investigated 226 more deaths in 2014.

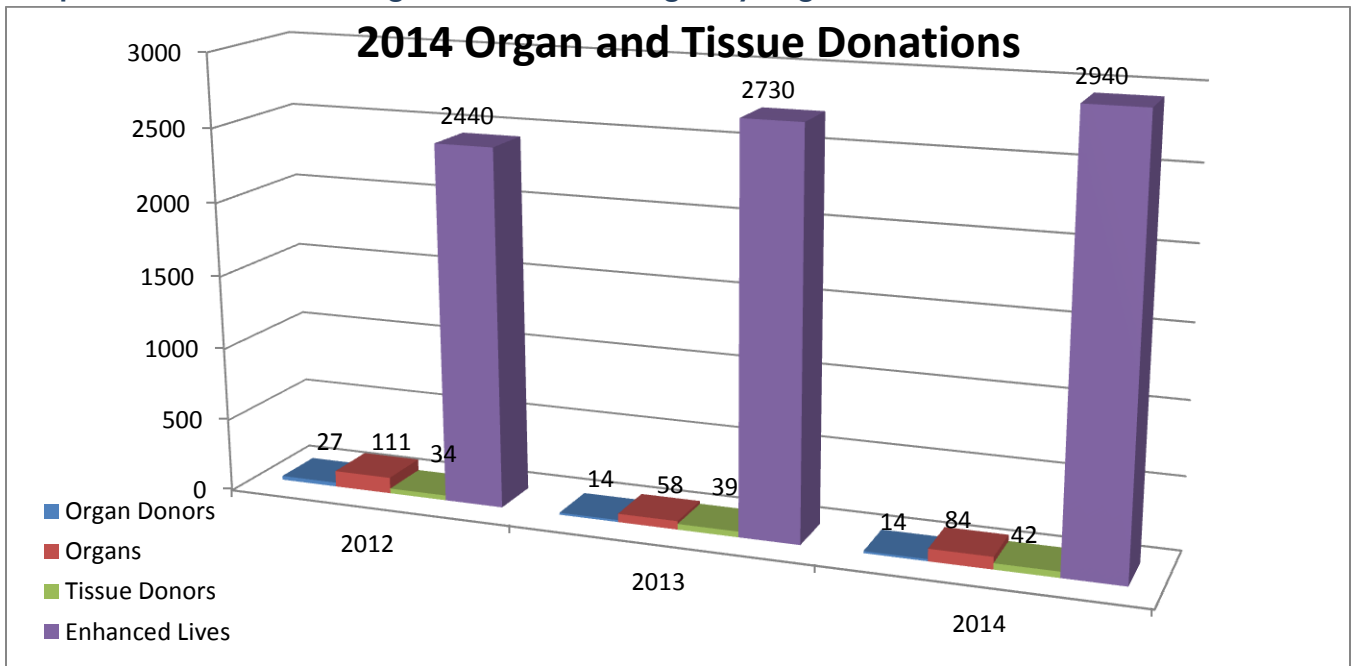
Graph 4: 2014 Coroner's Cases by Gender and Race



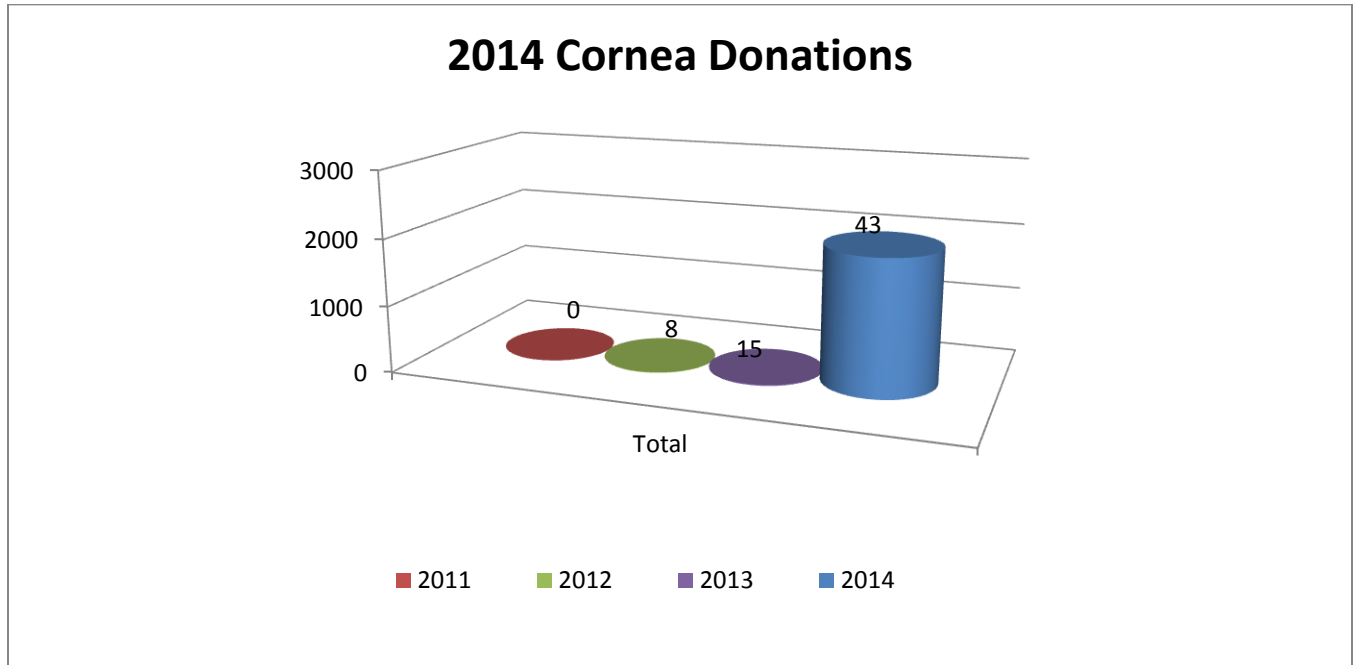
Graph 5: Failure to Report Coroner Death Cases



Graph 6: 2014 Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency Organ and Tissue Donations

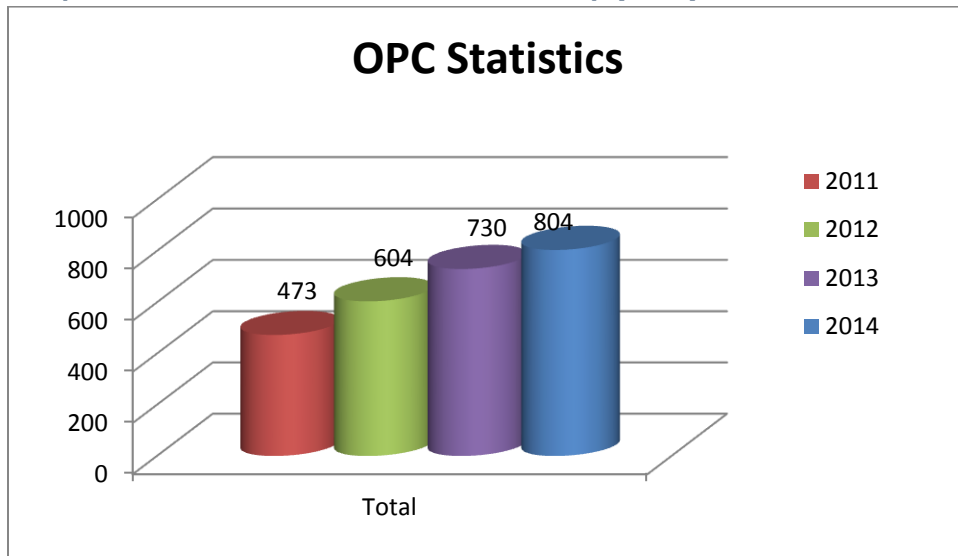


Graph 7: 2014 Baton Rouge Eye Bank Cornea Donations



Mental Health

Graph 8: 2014 Order of Protective Custody (OPC)



Graph 9: 2014 Coroner Emergency Certificate (CEC)

