

St. Tammany Parish Coroner



Science - Service - Compassion

2021 Annual Report

St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office (STPCO)

65278 Hwy 434

Lacombe, La. 70445

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St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office Dr. Charles Preston

Science – Service – Compassion

This is not just the motto of the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office (STPCO), it reflects our core values. The most critical of these values is science.

Our office collects data, analyzes it, and acts upon it every day. Death Investigators collect information and photographs from the scene of an unexpected death so that the pathologist can have a complete picture of the circumstances surrounding the death. The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners collect an independent history and physical evidence from the survivor of sexual assault. STPCO's federally certified DNA Lab, which primarily serves St. Tammany Parish Law Enforcement Agencies and the 22nd JDC apply the latest in technology and techniques. The results of their work can either convict or exonerate those accused of serious crimes.

Our commitment to service encompasses our role in providing the families the reports they need and guiding them through the process with our Case Coordinator; our key role in the mental health care delivery system in St. Tammany Parish; our participation in suicide prevention programs, life safety initiatives; and extraordinary educational opportunities for college students through our internship programs.

Our pervasive mandate to be compassionate is consistently demonstrated through our death investigators' interaction with the decedent's family members, our Mental Health Outreach Specialist guidance for families navigating the mental health care delivery maze, to our incredible Chaplain Corps. The Chaplains provide coverage 24/7 to respond to the scene of unexpected deaths and provide our neighbors with spiritual support as well as guidance through the coroner's office procedures.

When I was elected Coroner in 2014, the foundation for greatness was in place. Now, in 2021, through our expanded autopsy services and SANE coverage being offered on a fee-for-service basis to neighboring parishes; the offices' expanded role in the mental health field; and our life safety initiatives designed to preserve life, not just respond to death; the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office has become the regional forensic science center that the voters of St. Tammany Parish were promised when the coroner millage was first introduced.

I am very proud of this team of extraordinary people who come to work every day knowing that they will interface with our neighbors in some of the worst times of their lives. Every day I see multiple demonstrations that the entire team recognizes our **dedication to science, our privilege to serve, and the blessing to exercise compassion.**

Regards,

Charles A. Preston, M.D.
Coroner, St. Tammany Parish

(985) 781-1150 Office

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Louisiana Revised Statute Title 13 Section 5726

A. The governing authority of St. Tammany Parish shall levy and the sheriff of St. Tammany Parish, as tax collector, shall receive all tax revenues collected from ad valorem tax for coroner purposes each year as first approved by a majority of the electors of the parish at an election held for that purpose on November 2, 2004, including any extensions or renewals of the ad valorem tax B.(1) All tax proceeds collected under Subsection A of this Section shall be deposited by the sheriff, as tax collector, directly into a special account with the governing authority of St. Tammany Parish to be advanced to the coroner by January thirty-first of the year following the collection of such tax proceeds, after requiring sufficient tax revenues to be paid first to St. Tammany Parish.(2) The governing authority of St. Tammany Parish shall make all payments with respect to any present or future bonds or debt obligations issued and secured by St. Tammany Parish. These payments shall include but are not limited to all of the following:(a) Principal.(b) Interest.(c) Redemption premiums.(d) Expenses.(e) Other administrative costs.(3) The governing authority of St. Tammany Parish and the coroner shall enter into a cooperative endeavor agreement setting forth permitted use of facilities financed with St. Tammany Parish bonds or other debt obligations, to ensure continued tax-exempt status of any such bonds or other debt obligations.(4) The coroner shall be responsible for all salaries and operational expenses of the St. Tammany Parish coroner's office, thereby relieving the governing authority of St. Tammany Parish of any funding responsibility under R.S. 13:5706.(5) The coroner shall receive a salary set by the governing authority of St. Tammany Parish for his full-time services as parish coroner, ex officio parish physician, or health officer. The salary shall be the average of the salaries of the St. Tammany Parish sheriff, assessor, and clerk.(6) The coroner shall establish an annual salary for all deputy or assistant coroners, secretaries, stenographers, clerks, technicians, investigators, official photographers, or other helpers. C.(1) The St. Tammany Parish coroner's office may acquire and own any immovable property upon which the daily operations of the coroner's office are conducted.(2) **All immovable property previously transferred to the governing authority of St. Tammany Parish by the St. Tammany Parish coroner's office including but not limited to buildings, component parts, and other appurtenances, shall be transferred to the St. Tammany Parish coroner's office free and clear of all mortgages, liens, or other encumbrances no later than October 1, 2021.** D. The St. Tammany Parish coroner's office shall comply with the provisions set forth in the Louisiana Bid Laws, R.S. 38:2211 et seq., the Louisiana Procurement laws, R.S. 39:1551 et seq., and the Louisiana Local Government Budget Act, R.S. 39:1301 et seq. The office shall also be subject to all audit laws including but not limited to any audit called for and conducted by the governing authority of St. Tammany Parish. E. The coroner of St. Tammany Parish shall prepare and present to the governing authority of the parish an annual report showing the operations of his office, the monies received by the office, and the purposes for which the monies were expended. The coroner shall include in each annual report an estimate of prospective revenues and proposed expenditures and expenses for the ensuing year. The date upon which the annual report shall be presented may be determined by the governing authority of the parish.

La. R.S. § 13:5726

Added by Acts 2021, No. 151,s. 1, eff. 8/1/2021.

St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office Staff (2021)

Coroner

Charles Preston, M.D.

Chief Deputy Coroner

Robert Sigillito, M.D.

Chief Forensic Pathologist

Michael DeFatta, M.D.

Staff Forensic Pathologist

Amelia Nakanishi, M.D.

Director of Mental Health

Balminder Mangat, M.D.

Administrator/Director of Operations

Stephen D. Saussy, Jr.

Director of Human Resources/Quality Control

Laura White

Case Coordinator

Ana Welch

Technical Leader of DNA

Natasha Poe, MNS

Mental Health Outreach Specialist

Adele Bruce-Smith

Director of Investigations

Pamela Little, ABMDI

Deputy Director of Investigations

Mark Ford, ABMDI

SANE Coordinator

Ginesse Barrett, RN, BSN, SANE-A, SANE-P

Education and Community Outreach Coordinator

Chris Knoblauch, ABMDI

Director of Chaplain Corps

Pastor Donald Bryant

Overview St. Tammany Parish 2021

Population (Est. 2021)	265,187
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Housing Units (Est. 2019)	105,699
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St. Tammany Parish ranks among the top three parishes in the state in population growth.

Municipalities and Communities of St. Tammany Parish served by STPCO

Cities

Covington, Mandeville, and Slidell.

Towns

Abita Springs, Madisonville, and Pearl River.

Villages

Folsom and Sun

Census Designate Places

Eden Isle and Lacombe

St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office

Overview

The St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office (STPCO) is under the direction of Charles Preston, M.D., Coroner, elected in 2014. STPCO is staffed by highly trained forensic pathologists, certified death investigators (ABMDI), morgue technicians, Certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE), DNA Analysts and trained administrative staff. STPCO is also supported by a robust volunteer Deputy Chaplain Corp.

The St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office is the only Coroner's Office in the State of Louisiana with its own ANAB, American National Standards Institute National Accreditation Board, certified DNA lab. Under the direction of the Chief Forensic Pathologist, the lab is staffed with Forensic DNA Analysts and Technicians. Ninety-Six percent (96%) of the DNA analysis performed is for the law enforcement agencies of St. Tammany Parish.

State statute (LSA R.S. 13:3713) mandates that STPCO provide death investigations, mental health evaluations and the examination of victims of sexually oriented criminal offenses. Coroner's Office staff members are available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year to provide skilled scientific death investigations, to issue orders for protective custody, to provide psychiatric evaluation for Coroner's Emergency Certificate, and to collect evidence from victims of sexual assault.

The Coroner may order an autopsy as he deems necessary to determine the cause and manner of a death. Information collected during the initial scene investigation helps clarify the circumstances such as the sequence of events prior to death. Evidence collected during a postmortem forensic examination (autopsy) helps the pathologist ascertain whether a death was natural, homicide, suicide, or accident. Sexual assault nurses may assist if needed, by postmortem collection of evidence. All of these efforts may culminate in the arrest and successful conviction of a suspect in a homicide case or may exonerate an innocent person with the use of St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office DNA lab.

We are an independent and autonomous agency under the state judicial branch of government who works for neither the prosecution nor the defense. We serve the people of St. Tammany Parish in a quest to discover truth through science. Complete findings of the death investigation are distributed to families and law enforcement agencies when appropriate. Our team of professionals are also available to answer questions and address concerns regarding deaths within the Parish. Death Investigators frequently make personal contact with family members, and assist them by referring Chaplain services when requested, giving answers to common questions and facts about autopsies and coroner procedure, and distributing resource information for grief counseling and veteran's services.

Dr. Preston has created one of the most multi-faceted coroner's offices in the country.

Education: An Investment in Our Community

When most people hear the word Coroner, they think of one thing, and that, of course, is death. At the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office, we believe we have an equal professional responsibility and obligation to educate, collaborate and prevent unnecessary deaths.

Summer Internship Program

The 2021 College Summer Internship program was a great success. The program gave 15 highly qualified Forensic Sciences or pre-medical students the opportunity to spend two to eight weeks working at the STPCO gaining valuable knowledge and hands-on experience in their field of interest. Several of the students were able to obtain college credits for participating in the program and all had a diverse and valuable look at Forensic Pathology, DNA analysis, Forensic Nursing, and Forensic Death Investigations. Each intern had the chance to observe a wide variety of forensic autopsies and gain first-hand experience in human anatomy.



Louisiana Coroner's Collaborative

The St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office is an active participant in the Louisiana Coroner's Collaborative Education Conference which is sponsored twice a year by the Louisiana Organ Procurement Association (LOPA). As well as participating in the collaborative, our office develops educational programs and provides presentations to help with the continuing education of Coroners and Forensic Death Investigators throughout the state.



Professional Continuing Education

Continuing education and training are an important part of our commitment to staff development at the STPCO. Employees are provided with multiple educational opportunities to enhance their skill set and professional performance. Under Dr. Preston's tenure, we have presentations from several nationally recognized experts in such topics as Child Death Investigation, Fire and Explosive Death Investigation, and Water Related Deaths. In addition to education of our own staff, we invite other members of the community (death investigators, law enforcement, fire, medical, EMS and social services) to participate in these cutting-edge training opportunities.

Additionally, in the face of the pandemic and limitations on live meetings and presentations, employees are provided with job related on-line and virtual offerings meet their continuing education

requirements and enhance their professional knowledge. Our educators are also involved with curriculum development for continuing education programs that are approved by numerous accrediting agencies. These opportunities are being converted to virtual presentations to make training available to investigators around the country.

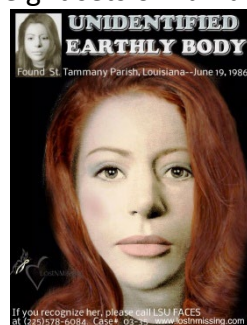
American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI)

The St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office strives to meet or exceed professional standards by certifying our investigators as diplomats of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (D-ABMDI). Certification requires a year of investigative field experience (640 hours) as well as a comprehensive written examination and confirmation of a detailed hands-on skill set. Currently, the agency has eight full-time investigators who are Registry Certified. The education and Community Outreach Coordinator is a Board-Certified Fellow with ABMDI (F-ABMDI). All new full-time investigators must be certified by ABMDI within 18 months of employment. Several of our investigators have published work in the *ABMDI Journal* and have developed continuing education presentations which have been reviewed and nationally accredited by the ABMDI for continuing education credits. Additionally, one of our investigators sits on the Board of Directors for the Society of Medical Legal Death Investigators (SOMDI).



Cold Case Investigation

The St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office believes that all decedents need a name and that all families deserve closure for their loved one. Currently, investigators are working to identify eight sets of human remains that have remained unidentified since discovered. Although some of these remains were discovered 40 years ago, they remain an open case under our watch. STPCO continues to use cutting edge technology to identify these individuals. Genealogy based DNA, Stable Isotope Analysis, as well as other emerging testing methods have been utilized to bring the advanced science of forensics to St. Tammany Parish. Investigators will continue to explore emerging technologies and continue to pursue the identity of these souls and lay them to rest with their families.



Chaplain Corps

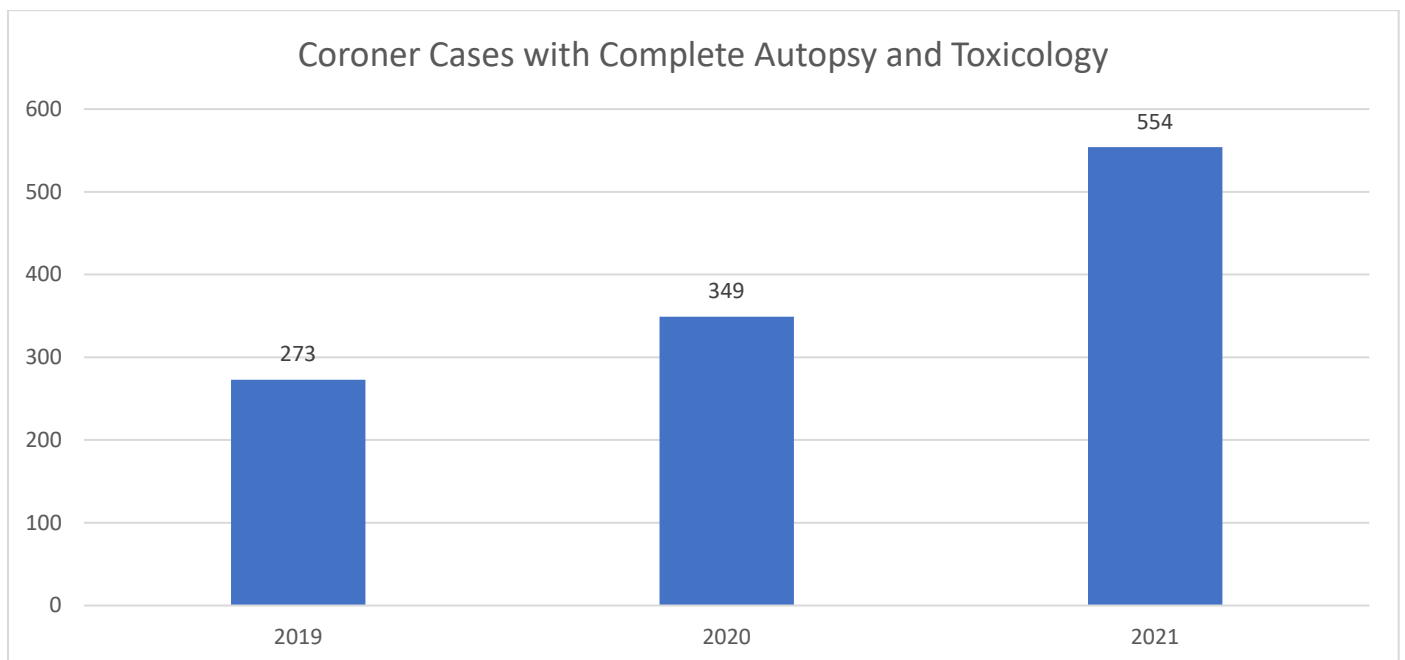
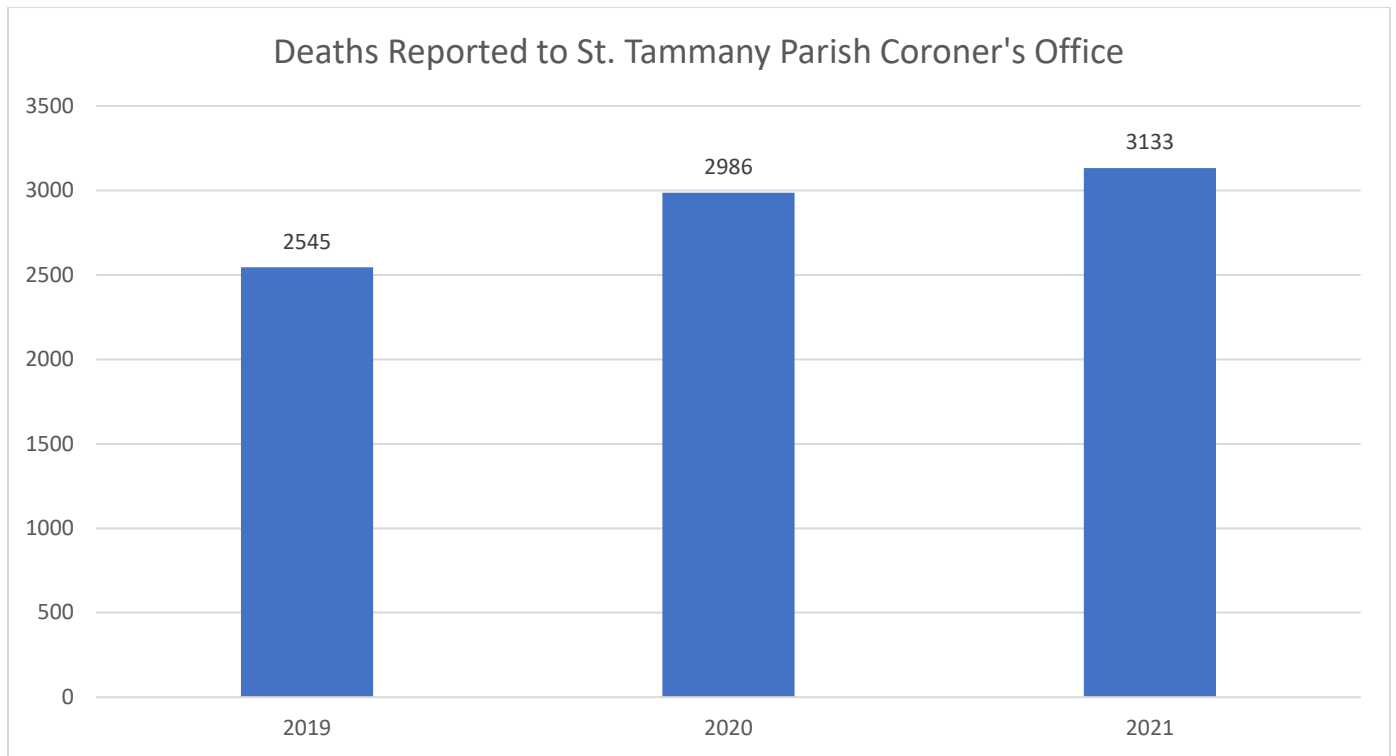
In 2014, Dr. Preston, as the newly elected Coroner of St. Tammany Parish had a vision to develop a volunteer corps of chaplains to be available to attend death scenes when requested by the family or investigator. These men and women are trained in Critical Incident Stress Management to provide comfort for the survivors, particularly in cases of suicide or other unexpected deaths. In addition, they can assist the coroner's investigators by guiding family members to a safe place while death investigators perform necessary postmortem tasks. They are trained in the philosophy of "ministry of presence," that is, being at the scene to answer questions from the survivors, take care of their loved ones, to listen, talk, pray with the survivors, and generally do whatever would help them in their time of stress and uncertainty.

In subsequent meetings with Pastor Donald Bryan, Pastor Morris St. Angelo, and retired Missionary Robert Ryals of the newly formed Slidell Minister's Association, a plan was developed to recruit both Clergy and lay ministers to volunteer for the program. A training program was developed, guidelines were formalized, and the program began recruiting volunteers. The goal has been to have a volunteer chaplain available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. That goal has been met continuously since the Chaplain Corps' creation. There are currently forty-three volunteer deputy chaplains in the Chaplain Corps.

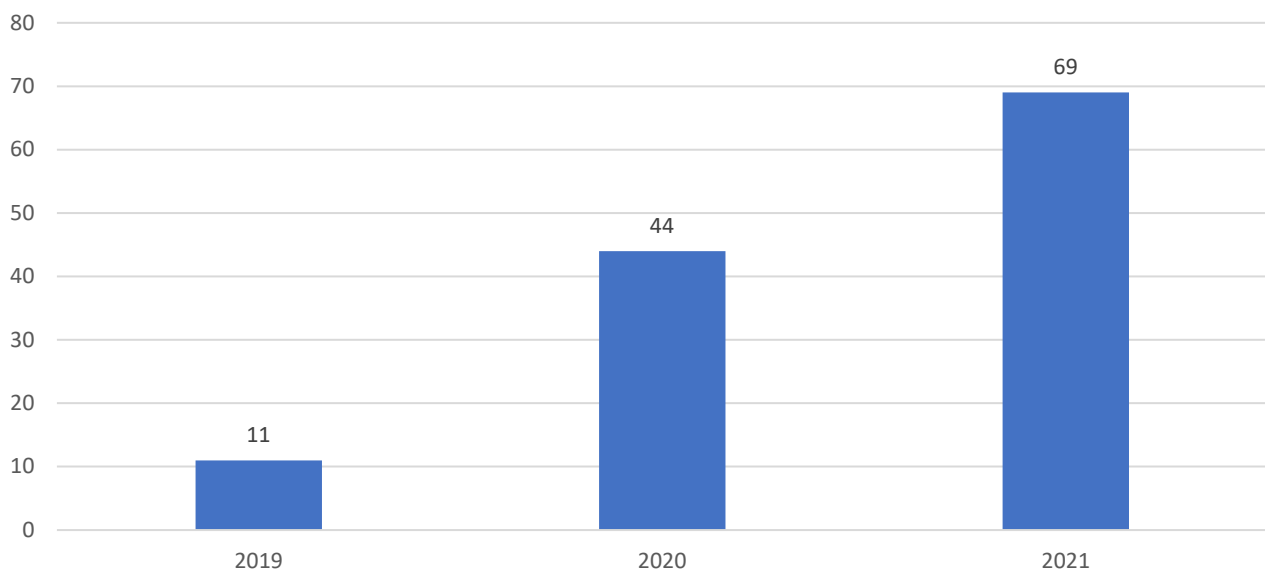
After vetting and training, chaplains are issued a commission from the State of Louisiana and given a badge and identification credentials, which are necessary to enter a death scene. The on-call chaplain can be contacted 24/7/365 by the Coroner's on-call Director of Investigations and directed to the death scene to be available minister to the survivors.

Dr. Preston's vision to care for the families and loved ones of a person who has died under has become a successful reality. The Chaplain Corps is comprised of caring ministers who have dedicated themselves to help the citizens of St. Tammany Parish who need help in a crisis. The chaplains represent every belief, faith, race, gender to minister to the needs of their community. They have accomplished a unity in this community that reflects the love of God.

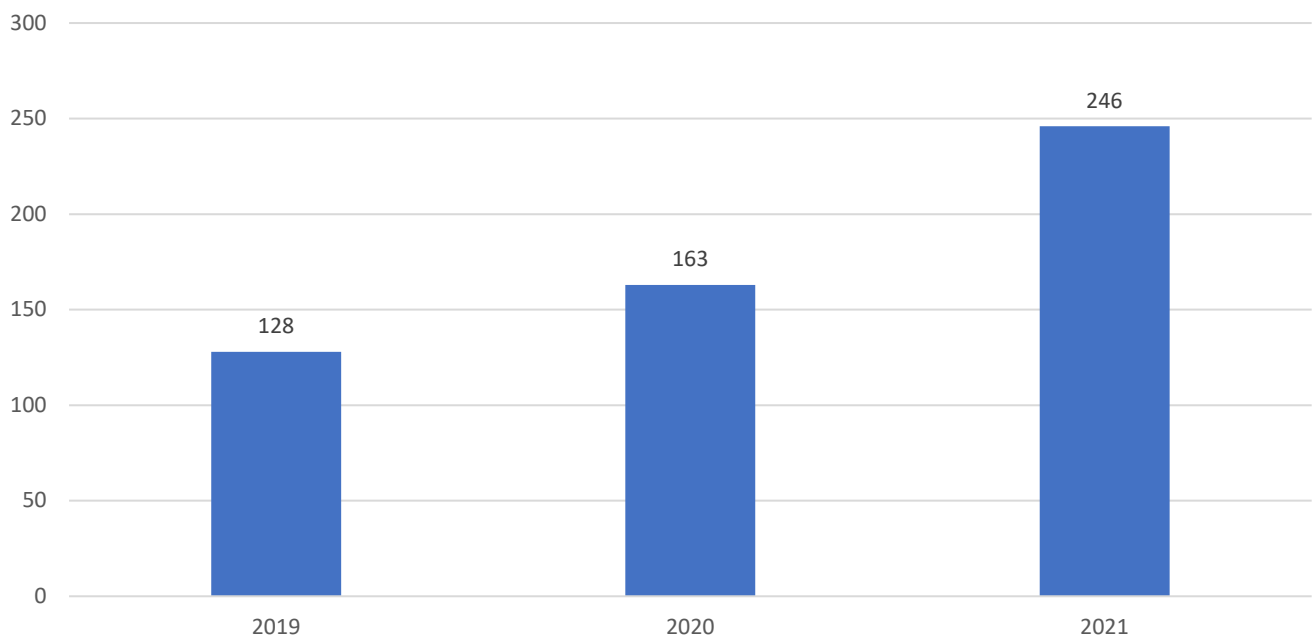
Annual Statistics

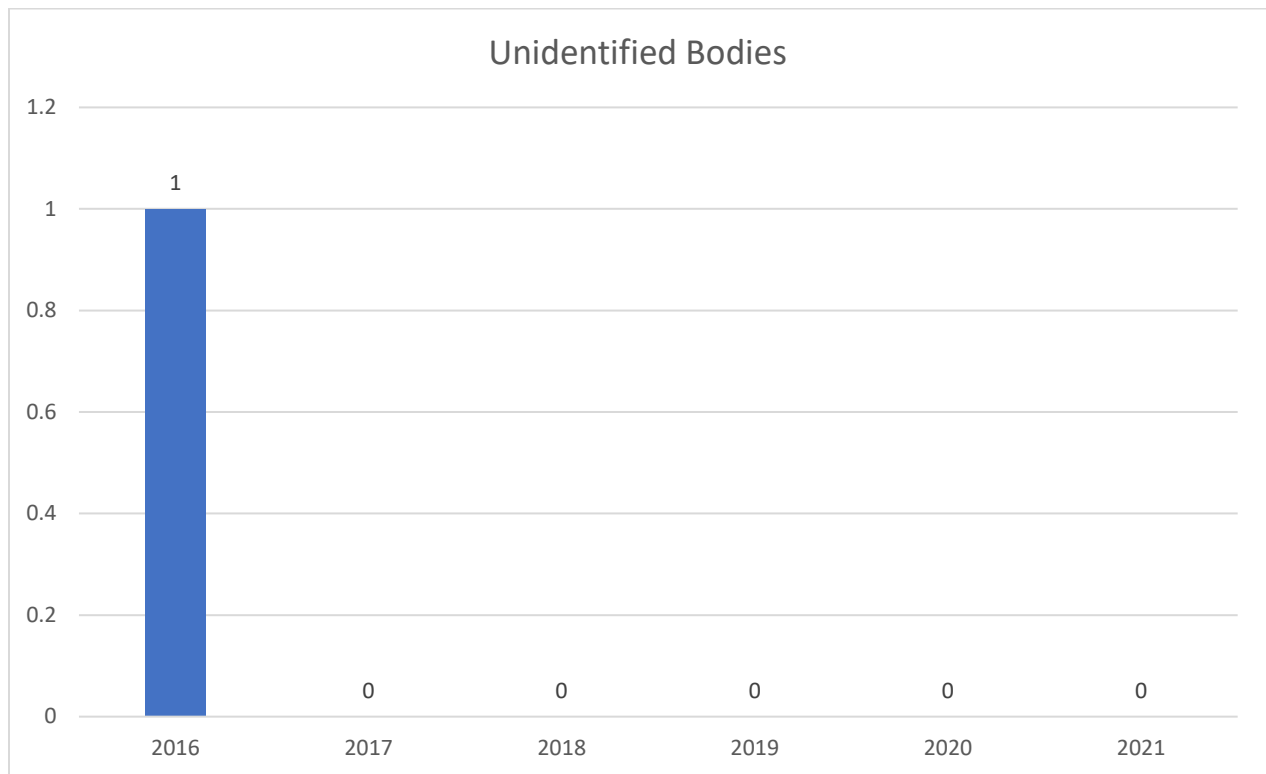


Coroner Cases with External and Toxicology



Number of Deaths Certified without Postmortem Examination





- **Hospitals Autopsies Retained Under Coroner's Office Jurisdiction – 0**
- **Number of Exhumations Performed - 0**

Division Reports

DNA LAB

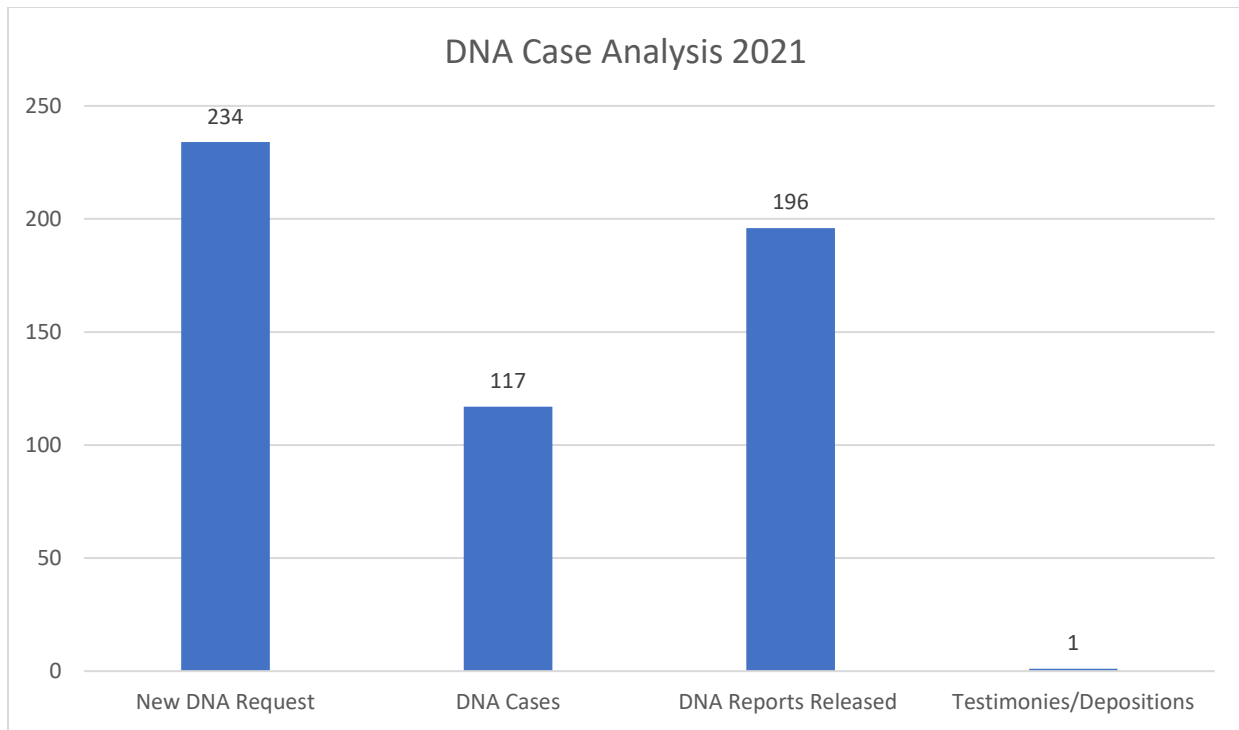
Forensic DNA analysis is used by law enforcement as a tool to help in the fight against crime. It also serves to prevent miscarriages of justice. Through its use in successful prosecutions, the STPCO DNA Lab should be a deterrent to at-risk populations of would-be criminals.

Over the years, DNA analysis has moved from a new emerging technology to a reliable and increasingly sensitive method of identifying suspects involved in criminal activities. With today's technology, Forensic DNA laboratories can use small amounts of DNA left behind at a crime scene to determine the DNA profile of a potential suspect, thereby providing leads to law enforcement that they might not otherwise have pursued.

Prior to the opening of the DNA lab at STPCO, the DNA cases from St. Tammany Parish were sent to the Louisiana State Police Crime Lab in Baton Rouge where there was an extensive backlog of cases waiting for analysis. Wait times for analysis were sometimes longer than two years. With the opening of STPCO's DNA Lab, cases from St. Tammany Parish were no longer delayed by the State Police Crime Lab's backlog of cases. Through streamlining and implementation of new technologies, the STPCO DNA Lab has reduced the number of cases waiting to be analyzed. In crime laboratories where backlogs exist, property crimes receive a lower priority than violent crimes such as homicides, sexual assault, and armed robberies and are either worked sporadically or not at all. At STPCO's DNA lab, property crimes such as burglaries, are assigned with the violent crimes so that they can be processed in a reasonable time frame. Cases where the crime is a threat to the community are processed as a "rush" so that all available information can be provided in a timely manner (2-3 days) to aid the law enforcement agency in their investigation. STPCO DNA analysts also provide courtroom testimony to the 22nd Judicial District Court, explaining to juries what information they were able to obtain from evidence left at the scene of a crime so that jury members can reach a proper verdict.

With the changing technologies in DNA analysis comes not only more sensitive results with faster turnaround times but unfortunately higher costs. STPCO's DNA Lab is cognizant of this dilemma and strives to be as cost effective as possible, working within the budget to operate an efficient laboratory.

Over the last 14 years, the STPCO DNA lab has produced numerous success stories of both **convictions and exonerations**. It has aided the community by providing valuable investigative information to law enforcement for the apprehension of criminals and to positively identify human remains in our custody. With the DNA analysis results, the 22nd Judicial District Attorney's Office has also been able to obtain guilty pleas, which results in lower costs to the court system and the citizens of St. Tammany Parish. We hope to continue serving the citizens of St. Tammany Parish and parish law enforcement agencies for many years to come.



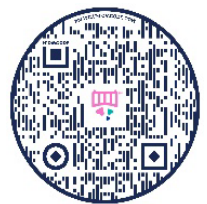
Life Safety Initiatives Programs

When most people hear the word Coroner, they usually think of death. But at the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office, we believe we have a professional responsibility to mitigate the risk of deaths as much as respond to them. Therefore in 2020, Dr. Preston approved the Life Safety Education Initiative to decrease and, hopefully, eliminate preventable deaths and tragedies in our community.

2021 has been a banner year in the development of this program and the recruitment of partners through professional and private organizations and individuals in and around our community. Additionally, we have met the challenges of COVID-19 by developing innovative technology-based methods of presentation so that our programs can continue to be presented despite the current pandemic. To date our programs, include:

Cribs for Kids

The St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office has partnered with the Southwest Louisiana Safe Sleep Task Force and the national *Cribs for Kids*® organization to provide education and training to parents and caregivers to overcome generational bias and familial traditions that lead to the deaths of infants due to unsafe sleep practices. The program addresses how babies should be placed for sleep and deadly risks such as co-sleeping and other conditions that lead to the accidental suffocation of infants in their sleep. After completing the presentation, the parents are provided with a Graco Pack N' Play crib free of charge so that the infant has a safe sleeping platform. These cribs are purchased with funds donated by generous businesses, groups, and individuals in and around our community. Since the first class on March 30, 2021, the program has distributed over 100 cribs to expectant parents. We currently offer one daytime and one evening class per month with COVID-19 attendance restrictions. As a result of COVID-19, we have developed a virtual option so that there is no interruption in the availability of this important program.



In addition to the Cribs for Kids Program, Dr. Preston and one of our investigators sit on the State of Louisiana Region IX Child Death Review Panel, which evaluates the preventability of cases which have occurred where decedents were under the age of eighteen.

Firearm Safety in the Home

With the right of gun ownership comes serious responsibilities. The most important of which is keeping firearms out of the hands of children and other persons who might do harm with them.

To bring this important issue to the forefront, the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office has partnered with the National Sports Shooting Association and the national *Project Child Safe™* program to make homes with firearms safer in our community. As part of this initiative, the STPCO distributes not only important educational information but physical gun locks as well so that owners can temporarily render their firearms inoperable while stored securely.



<https://projectchildsafe.org>



Swimming Pool Safety and Carbon Monoxide Safety

Our Life Safety Educator made appearances on local Access St. Tammany to talk about how both swimming pools and carbon monoxide safety are not just seasonal but year-round safety issues. These presentations focused on how the homeowner can better protect their families and pets by securing and better monitoring pools as well as installing monitoring systems which could detect the dangerous buildup of deadly gases in their homes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1MBMWAUpAo>

<http://75.131.66.146/CablecastPublicSite/show/1908?channel=1>



Suicide Prevention

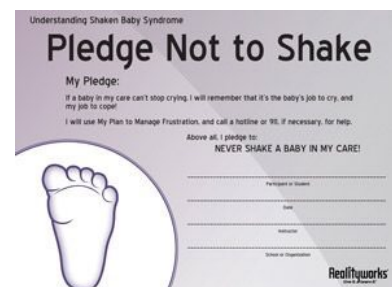
Our office maintains a close working relationship with the St. Tammany Outreach for the Prevention of Suicide (STOPS) program by hosting suicide prevention education classes for the public and first responders in our community meeting room. Our investigators work directly with members of the Local Outreach to the Survivors of Suicide (LOSS) Team to refer survivors of these tragic events for counseling and mental health services. We have instructors on staff who volunteer to help teach suicide intervention and prevention for the school based "Teen Life" training program sponsored by the Jewish Family Service of Greater New Orleans. Additionally, our previously mentioned gun lock distribution provides an extra level of security so that firearms will not be accessible to teens or others who may have suicidal ideation in a moment of crisis.



<http://www.stops-la.com/home.aspx>

Shaken Baby Prevention

Shaken Baby Syndrome is a tragic condition of neurologic injury or death to the most vulnerable of our community. Our Shaken Baby Syndrome prevention program is designed to demonstrate what little force it takes to cause devastating or fatal injuries to an infant if shaken in a moment of frustration. The program combines education and a demonstration using a state-of-the-art doll which shows participants using led lights where injuries occur in the infant's brain when shaken. The course materials also include techniques for parents and caregivers to de-escalate situations before they become critical. Our Educator has also prepared a special presentation on this syndrome to be presented to the Louisiana State Coroner's Collaborative in the Spring of 2022.



<https://www.dontshake.org/>

Access St. Tammany Television, Life Safety Campaigns

Dr. Preston and staff have developed and presented several of our life safety campaigns which have been produced by Access St. Tammany Television. These included our [Carbon Monoxide Safety](#), [Swimming Pool Safety](#), [One Pill Can Kill](#), and our [Cribs for Kids](#) safe sleep initiative. These presentations may be viewed on ATT U-verse, Charter.com, You Tube, Fire TV, Facebook, LiveWeb, and Roku making these important life safety messages available to not only our community but world-wide. You can view these presentations by clicking the above links to see what your Coroner's Office is doing to promote life safety as part of our mission.

Opioids and Dangerous Drugs

Faced with the daily results of the opioid epidemic in our nation, the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office has partnered with the Florida Parishes Human Services Authority Mobile Opioid Task Force to assist with outreach events and forums in the community and to distribute Naloxone (Narcan) to the families of opioid users. Narcan can save a loved one's life at the time of a potentially fatal overdose. STPCO participates in statewide monitoring of opiate related deaths and also promotes the "One Pill Can Kill" campaign which targets curious teens and others who may become victims of counterfeit prescription pills being sold illicitly in the community. STPCO office also diligently tracks the incidence of all drug related fatalities to ascertain and alert law enforcement and citizens to trends involving drug related deaths in our community.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKDoE-zmTHM>

Human Trafficking Partnership

The St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office is a member of the Greater New Orleans Human Trafficking Task Force. Our goal is to bring awareness of this situation to our community and support and protect victims of this heinous



crime whenever possible. Our SANE nurses are specially trained and particularly vigilant looking for signs of trafficking when they respond to the call for service for a survivor of sexual assault.

<http://www.nolatrafficking.org/>

Other Community Partnerships

The St. Tammany Coroner's Office has formed numerous partnerships with community organizations and outside agencies to make St. Tammany Parish a safer and better place to live and raise a family. STPCO staff serve on multiple committees and attend numerous events to help improve the quality of life in St. Tammany Parish. STPCO offers our community classroom to outside organizations to provide a quality venue for their workshops, meetings, and classes.

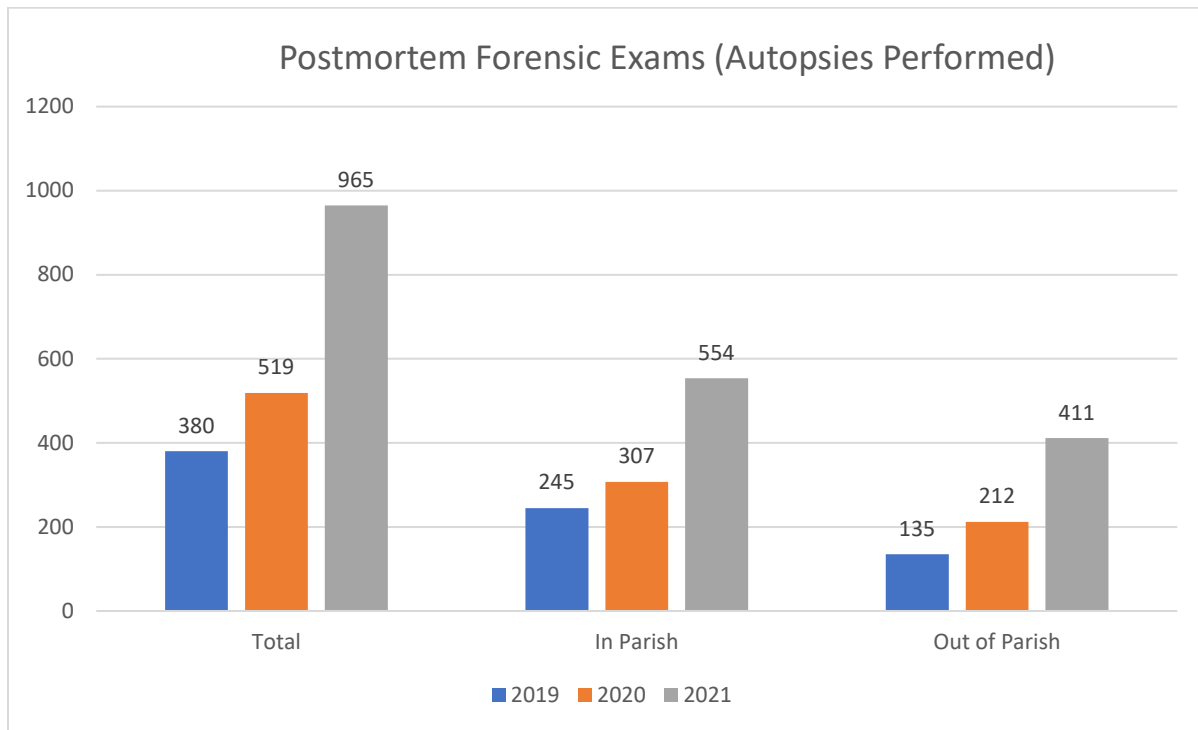


Types of Deaths Reportable to the Coroner's Office

As per Louisiana R.S. 13:5713 (A): the coroner shall either view the body or make an investigation into the cause and manner of death in all cases involving the following:

- 1) Suspicious, unexpected, or unusual deaths
- 2) Sudden or violent deaths.
- 3) Deaths due to unknown or obscure causes or in any unusual manner.
- 4) Bodies found dead.
- 5) Deaths due to suspected suicide or homicide.
- 6) Deaths in which poison is suspected.
- 7) Any death from natural causes occurring in a hospital under twenty-four hours of admission.
- 8) Deaths following an injury or accident either old or recent.
- 9) Deaths due to drowning, hanging, burns, electrocution, gunshot wounds, stabs or cutting, lightning, starvation, radiation, exposure, alcoholism, addiction, tetanus, strangulation, suffocation, or smothering.
- 10) Deaths due to trauma from whatever cause.
- 11) Deaths due to criminal means or by casualty.
- 12) Deaths in prison or while serving a sentence.
- 13) Deaths due to virulent contagious disease that might be caused by or cause a public hazard, including AIDS.

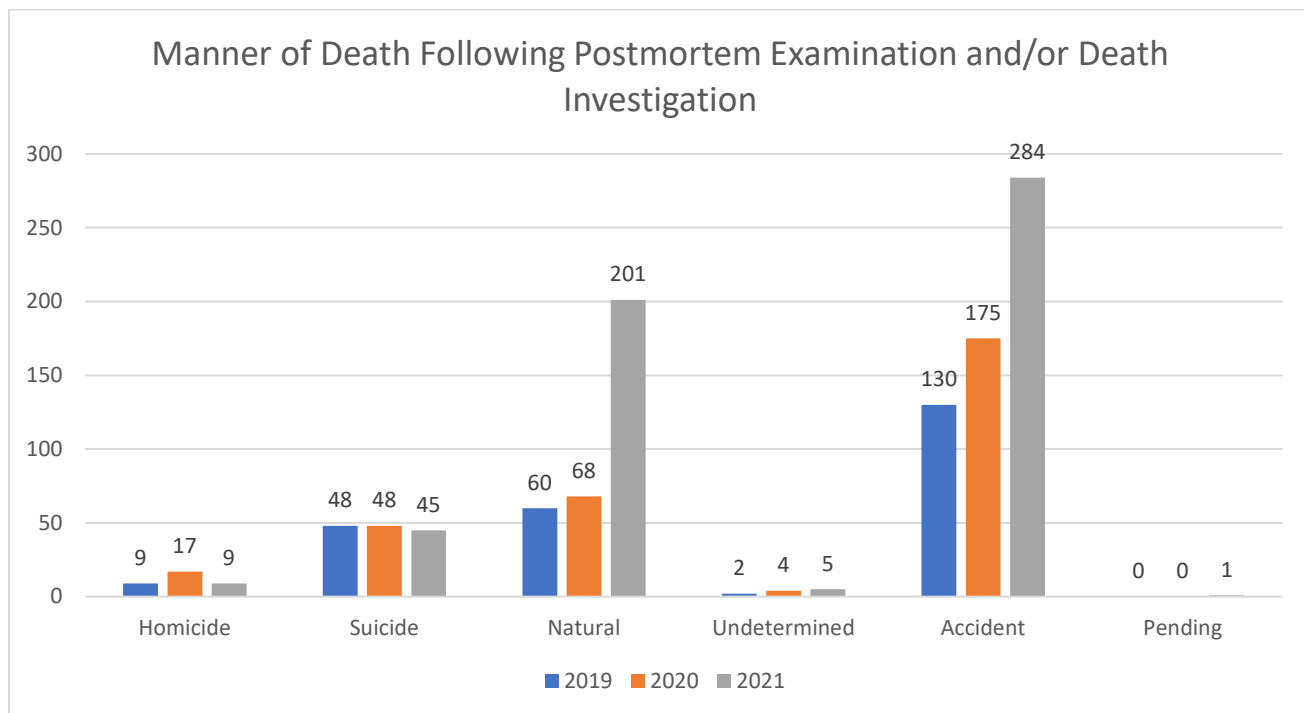
As per Louisiana R.S. 13:5713 (B, C), there are two circumstances in Louisiana when an autopsy must be performed: 1) In the case of any death where there is a reasonable probability that the violation of a criminal statute has contributed to the death, 2) Any infant under the age of one year dies unexpectedly, without explanation, with no underlying disease process.



Full Autopsy: A complete external and internal examination of a decedent with toxicological analysis and potentially other specialized testing. A postmortem forensic examination is a very precise and regimented surgical procedure performed by a highly skilled physician. A Forensic Pathologist is trained in anatomic and clinical pathology and has completed fellowship training in forensic pathology. The purpose of this procedure is to aid in establishing the cause and manner of death. This data can be used for acute crisis management (such as the pandemic) for life safety measures such as seatbelts and warnings on tobacco, or for law enforcement and

External Examination: An examination of the exterior of a decedent with toxicological analysis.

Limited Autopsy: some partner parishes ask for a “bullet recovery” or examination of 1 body cavity



*Does not include deaths not requiring postmortem examinations.

The **Manner of Death** is a classification of the way in which the cause of death came about, whether by force of natural events, accidental means, self-inflicted wounds, or other external forces. Manner of Death is determined largely by means of the investigation. There are five (5) manners of death, listed below. Any death by manner other than natural must be classified and certified by the Coroner. Natural deaths may be certified by the decedent's physician, if investigation is not required.

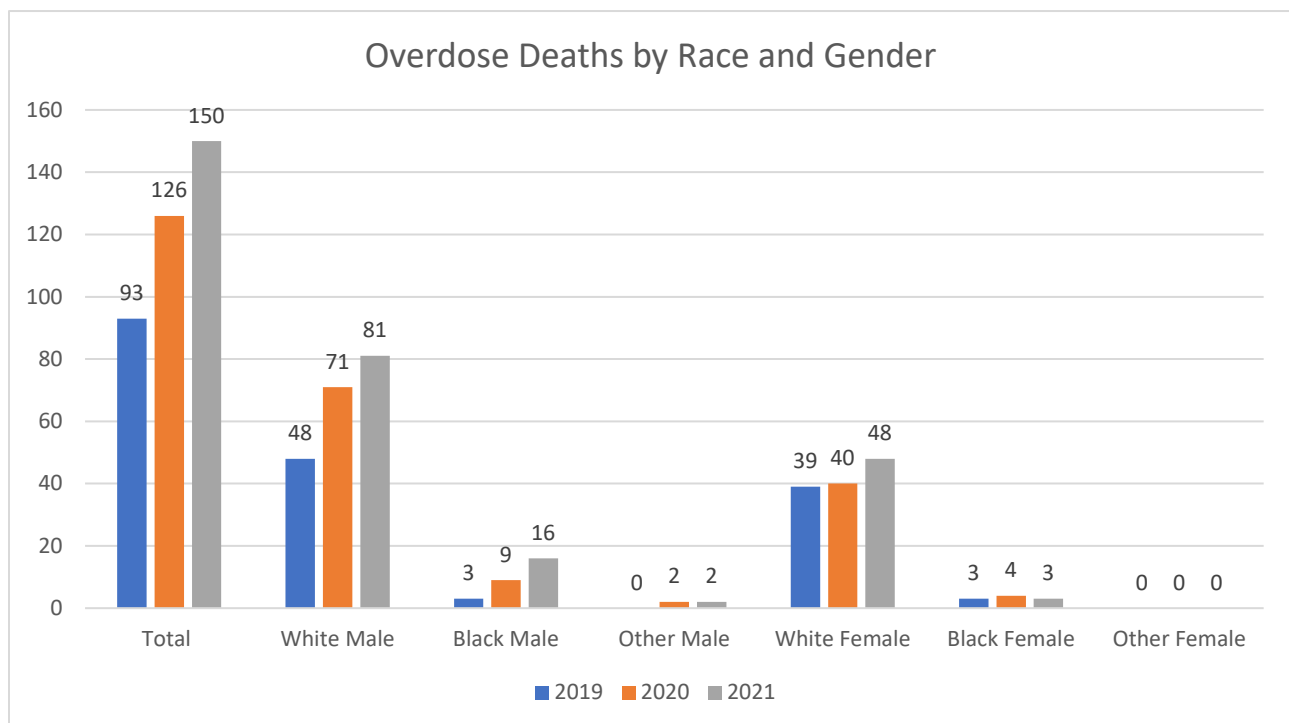
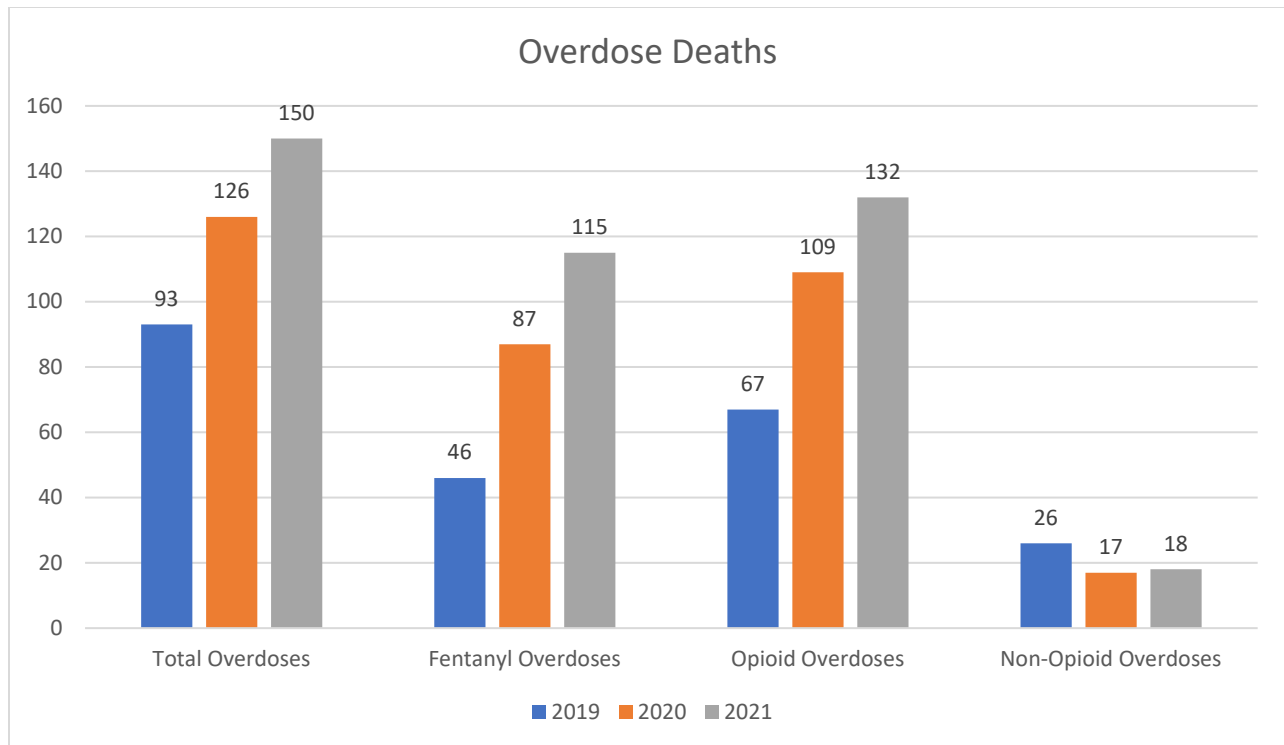
Natural: Death caused solely by disease or natural processes. If a natural death is hastened by injury or any other non-natural event (e.g., fall), the manner of death will not be considered natural. If the terminal process is caused by a non-natural event (e.g., pneumonia due to long-term bed confinement because of a motor vehicle crash), the manner of death will not be considered natural.

Suicide: Death due to injury that occurred with the intent to cause one's own death.

Accident: Death other than natural where there is no evidence of intent: i.e., an unintentional event or chain of events. This category includes motor vehicle crashes, falls, drowning, accidental drug overdoses, etc.

Homicide: Death resulting from injuries caused by the actions of another person. Homicide in the context of manner of death does not necessarily indicate a criminal homicide, which is determined by the legal judicial process and not the certifier of the death.

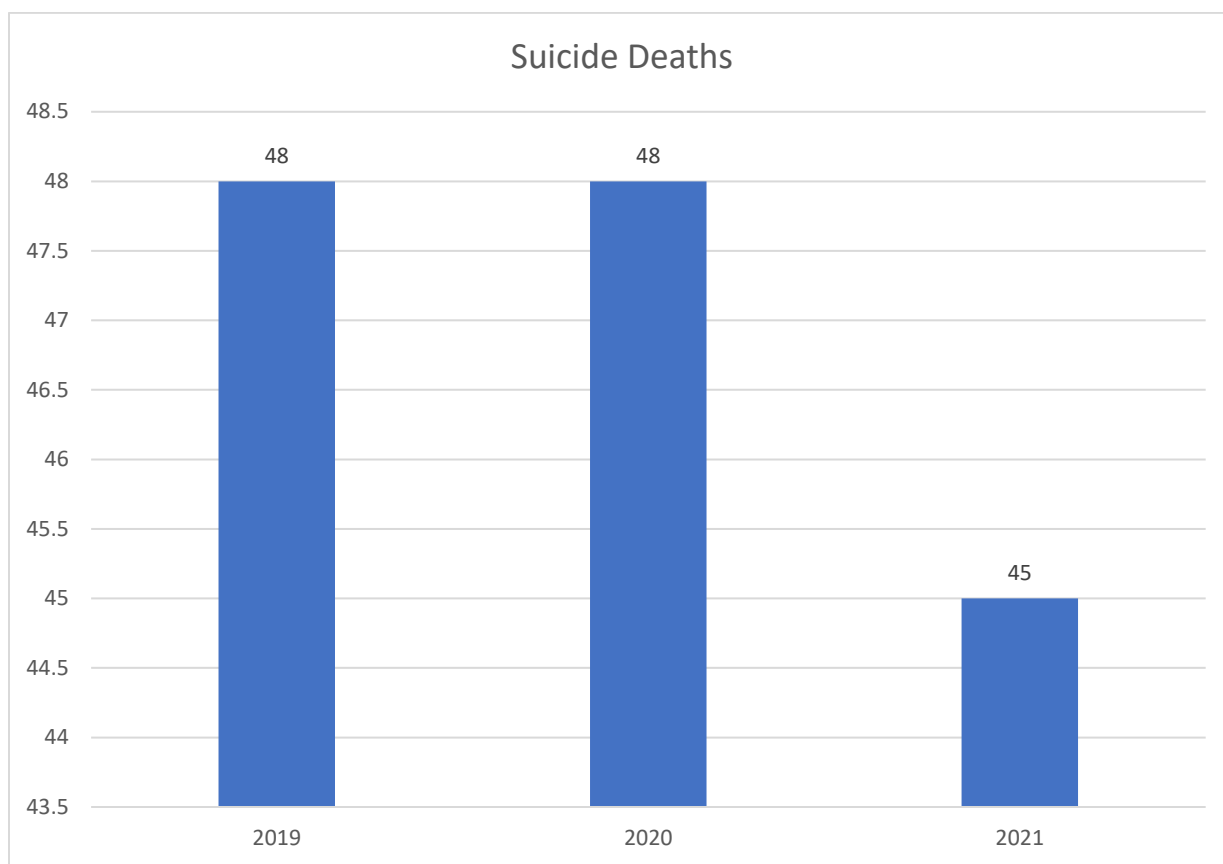
Undetermined: Manner assigned when there is insufficient evidence, or conflicting information, to assign a specific singular cause of death.



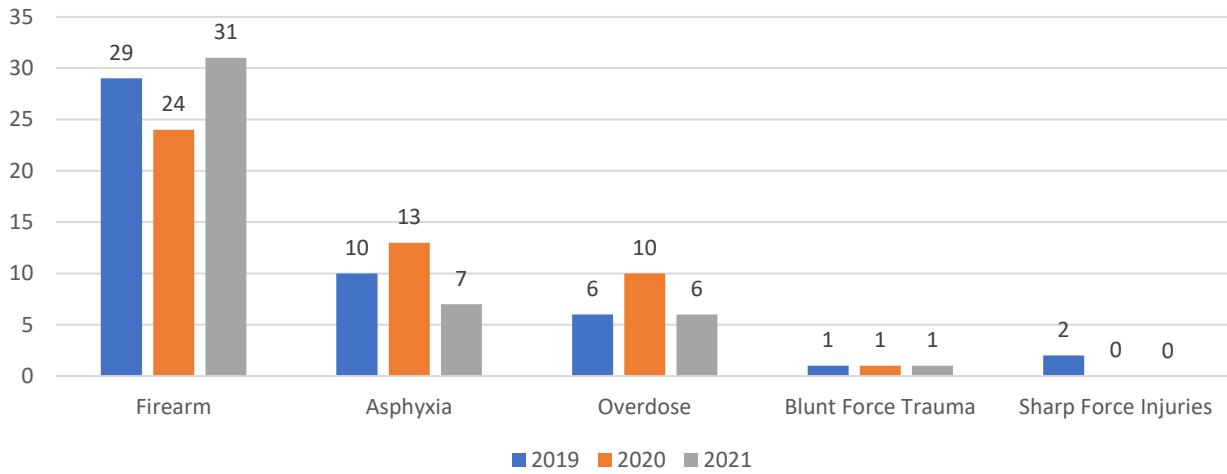
Suicide rates are on the rise in Louisiana as is the case in the United States as a whole; however, the number of suicide deaths in St. Tammany Parish declined in the most recent year.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, in Louisiana, suicide is the third-leading cause of death for ages 10-14, the third-leading cause of death for ages 15-34, the sixth-leading cause of death for ages 35-44, the sixth-leading cause of death for ages 45-54, the twelfth-leading cause of death for ages 55-64, and the eighteenth-leading cause of death for age 65 and older. In total, suicide was responsible for 642 deaths in Louisiana as of February 4, 2022. The suicide rate in Louisiana is 13.78 per 100,000 people, which is above the national average of 13.48.

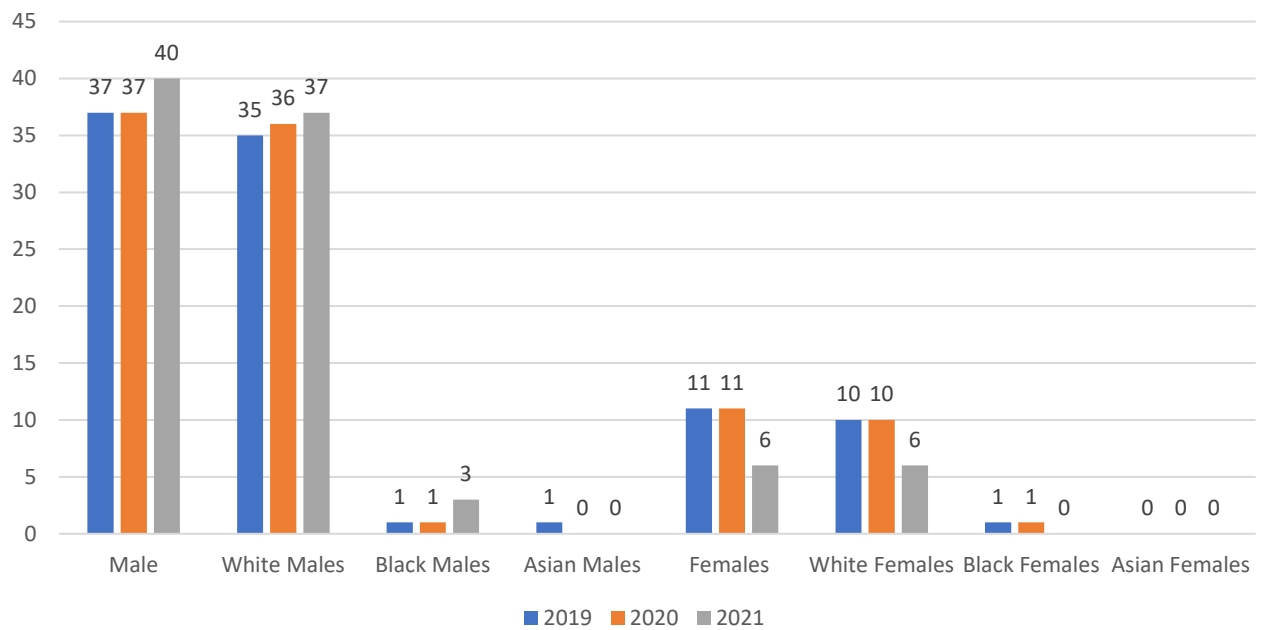
To put this data into perspective, this means that, on average, one person dies every 12 hours from suicide in the State of Louisiana.

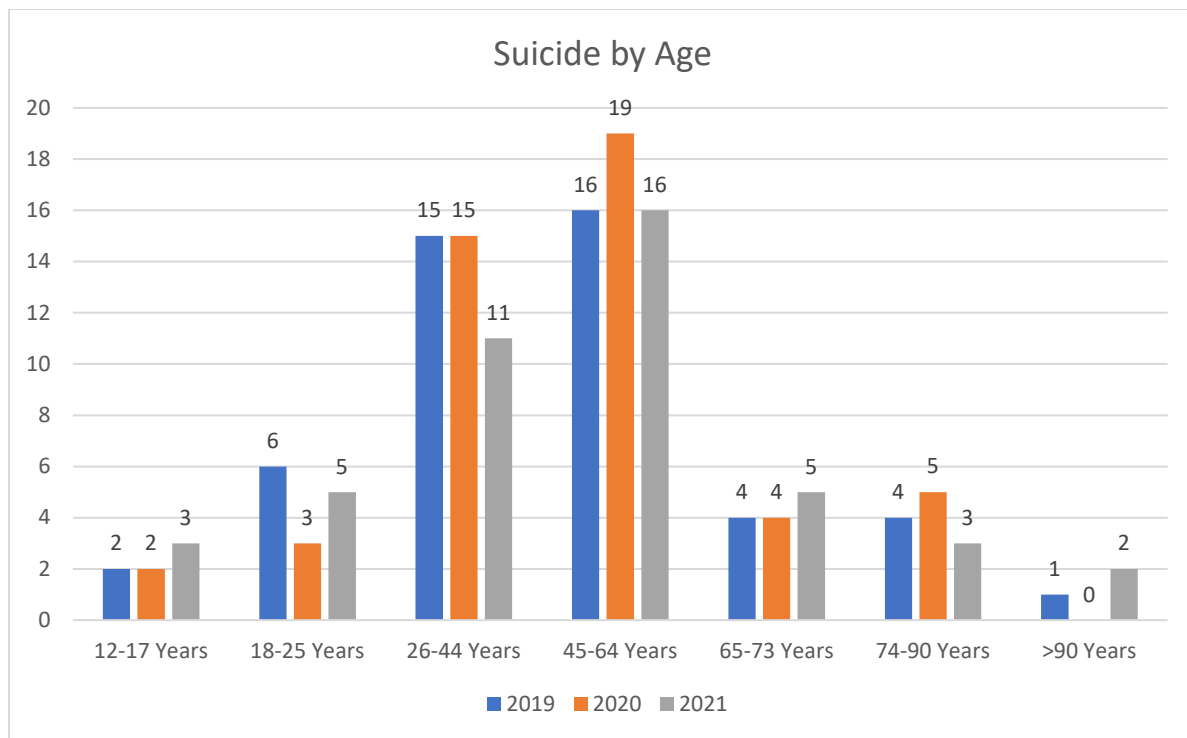


Suicide by Means



Suicide By Race and Gender





The High Cost of Tragedy

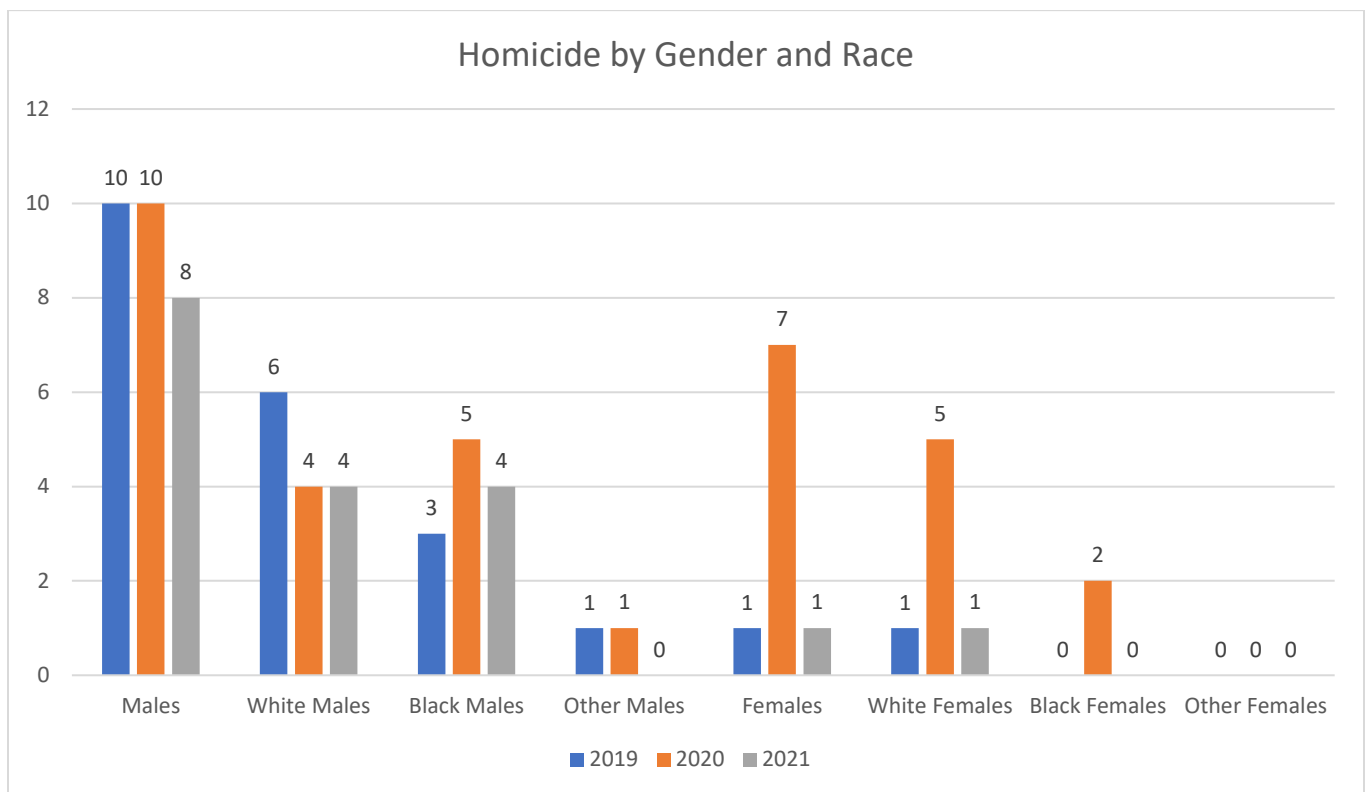
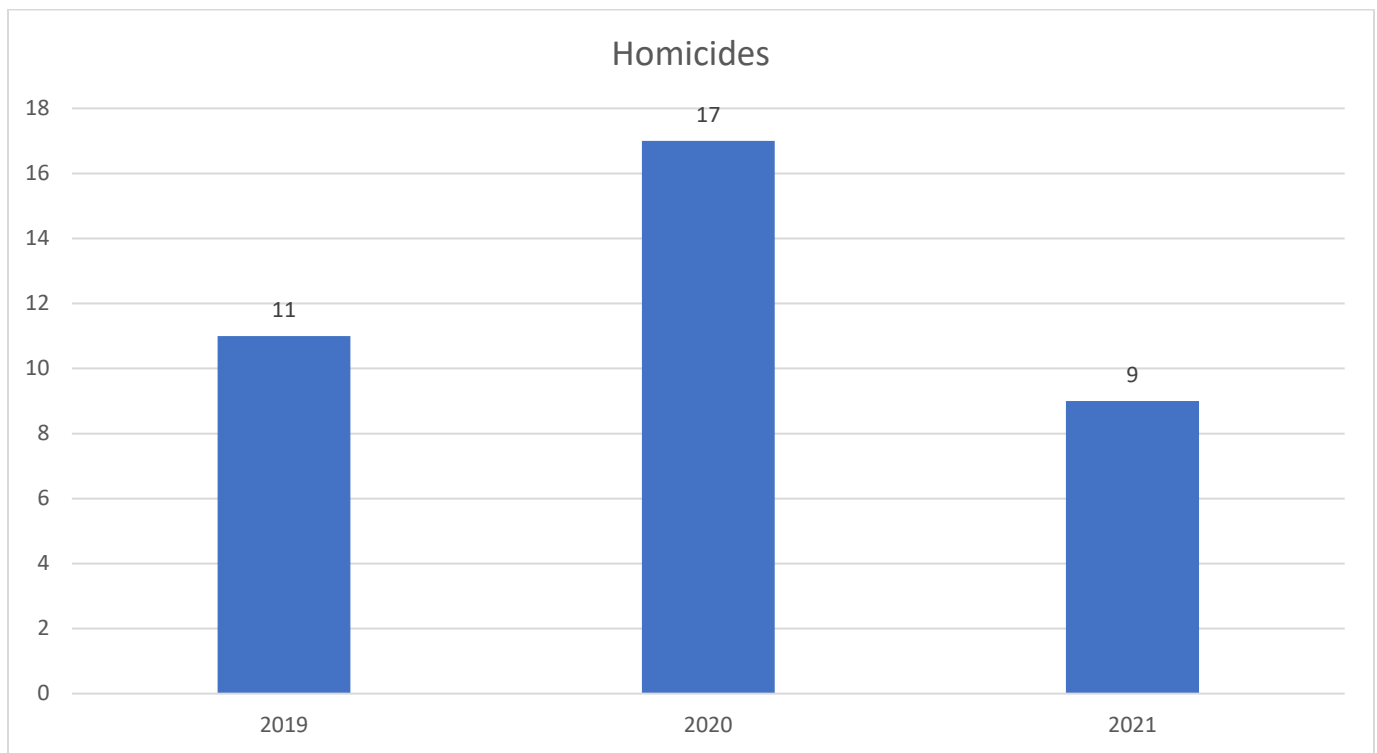
According to Longleaf Hospital, the lack of state funding for suicide prevention in Louisiana has been cited as a key factor in the state's growing suicide rates. And as funding cuts continue, [programs designed to prevent youth suicide](#) and provide crisis response services and counseling are no longer in operation.

Suicide prevention efforts are becoming increasingly rare in the workplace, as Louisiana's Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) will now only provide postvention services to state workforce organizations when an employee has already died from suicide. The trainings are free, but organizations must purchase their own training materials.

Critics of Louisiana's decisions to defund behavioral health and preventative education programs reference the high cost of suicide in the state, making an economic argument for reinstating funds to protect these initiatives. (Suicide Death Rate in Louisiana is greater than National Average).

Sources

Longleaf Hospital, Suicide Death Rate in Louisiana is Greater than National Average, 2021, The Jason Foundation, 11/23/2021 <https://www.longleafhospital.com>

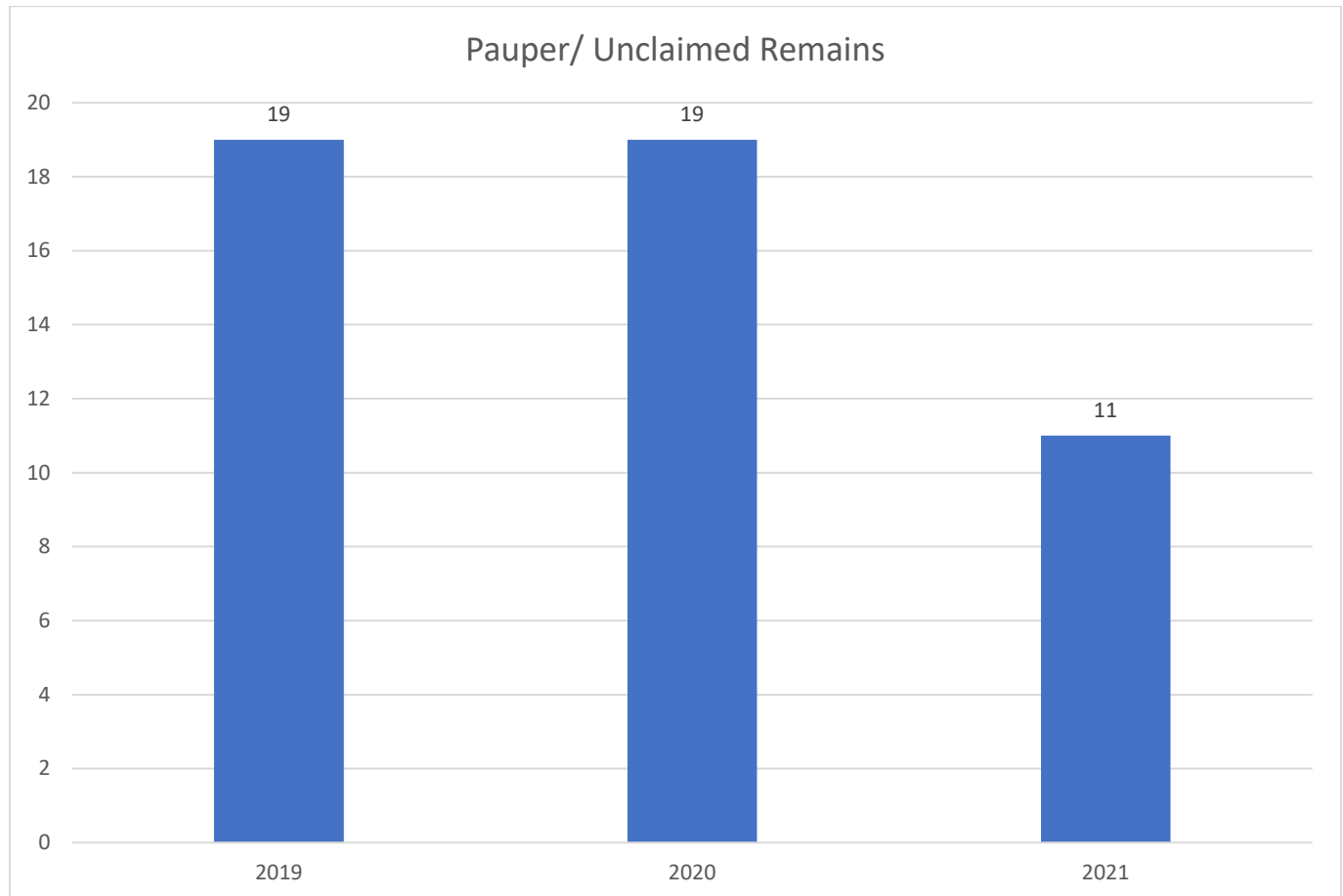


Pauper / Unclaimed Remains

The St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office is required by law to provide final disposition of all unclaimed human remains in St. Tammany Parish. In accordance with the law, St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office facilitates the necessary arrangements of the remains. When a body is unclaimed or abandoned, it becomes the responsibility of the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office to initiate a search for a family member or a concerned party willing to claim the body for final disposition. If after 30 days of death and the body is still unclaimed, the STPCO may dispose of the body in accordance with the law. In 2021, 11 bodies were cremated as unclaimed/ abandoned costing \$3,300. In 2020, 19 bodies were cremated as unclaimed /abandoned costing \$5,700.

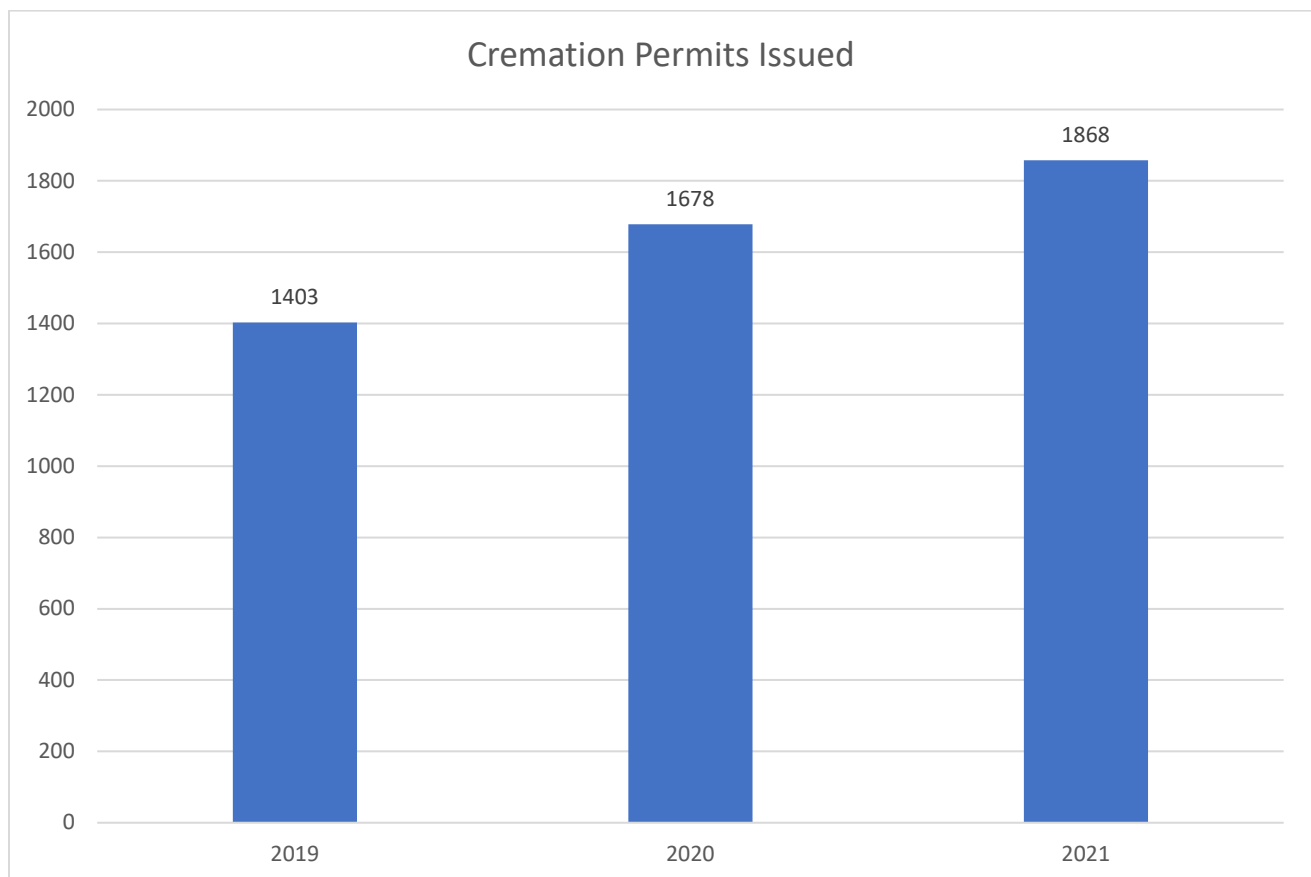
The Compassionate Burials for Indigent Babies organization provided final disposition for St. Tammany Parish infants.

The graph below depicts the unclaimed bodies cremated from 2019, 2020 and 2021.



Cremation Permits Issued

In the State of Louisiana, as per LA R.S. 13:5716, the coroner is charged with the investigation in all deaths if the body is to be cremated. If, after the necessary investigation, the coroner is satisfied that there are no suspicious circumstances surrounding the death, he shall issue a permit for cremation. The investigation involves the confirmation that the death certificate is appropriately executed, and no further circumstances exist which may have contributed to the death. If the investigation reveals suspicious circumstances or the reasonable probability of the commission of a crime, the coroner shall deny the permit. If the cause of death is unclear or falls under the jurisdiction of the coroner, a postmortem exam and issuance of a revised death certificate may be warranted.



Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency / Southern Eye Bank Statistics for Coroner Cases

Although STPCO does not approach families for donation of organs and tissue from decedents, we recognize the tremendous need for this life-saving activity and cooperate fully with the Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency (LOPA) and the Southern Eye Bank (SEB). It is Dr. Preston's philosophy that all requests for organ and/or tissue donation are given high priority for approval. In practice, the procurement agency contacts the STPCO with information regarding a potential donor and the specific organs or tissue requested. The Coroner and/or Forensic Pathologist evaluates the request to determine if the donation would significantly affect the postmortem forensic medical examination. In the great majority of cases, examinations can be conducted so that donations do not interfere with certification of death or collection of evidence. In this way, the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office works to maximize the donation of organs and tissue that go directly to save lives while maintaining the integrity of our investigation.

In 2019, the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office approved the release of thirteen organ donors. Organs transplanted included ten livers, seven hearts, eleven kidneys, one intestine and two lungs, which saved thirty-one lives. Thirty tissue Donors enhanced 2,100 lives. Tissues recovered included 510 and were comprised of bones, soft tissue, blood vessels, skin and heart valves.

In 2020, there were eleven organ donors, which saved thirty-two lives. Organs transplanted included eleven livers, seven hearts, ten kidneys, one intestine and three lungs. Thirty-eight tissue donors enhanced 2,660 lives. Tissues recovered totaled 674 and were comprised of bone, soft tissue, twenty-five blood vessels, skin and thirteen heart valves.

In 2021, fourteen organ donors saved twenty-five lives. Organs transplanted included eleven livers, two hearts, eleven kidneys, and one lung. Thirty-two tissue donors enhanced 2,424 lives. Tissues recovered totaled 599 and were comprised of bone, soft tissue, twenty-six blood vessels, twenty-one skin and seventeen heart valves.

Southern Eye Bank received twenty-eight and thirty-nine eye donors released by the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office in 2020 and 2021, respectively. One donor can provide the gift of sight to two people and enhance vision for an additional four people.

Other Coroner Responsibilities

Louisiana Coroners are mandated by Louisiana law to perform the following duties:

1) MENTAL HEALTH/INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS

THE OPC/PEC/CEC PROCESS

Any Parish Coroner or judge of a court of competent jurisdiction may order a person to be taken into protective custody and transported to a treatment facility or the office of the Coroner for immediate examination when a peace officer or other credible person executes a sworn statement under personal signature specifying that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, the person has a mental illness or is suffering from a substance-related or addictive disorder and is in need of immediate treatment to protect the person or others from physical harm. An Order for Protective Custody (OPC) gives law enforcement or EMS providers the authority to transport a person to a facility for evaluation.

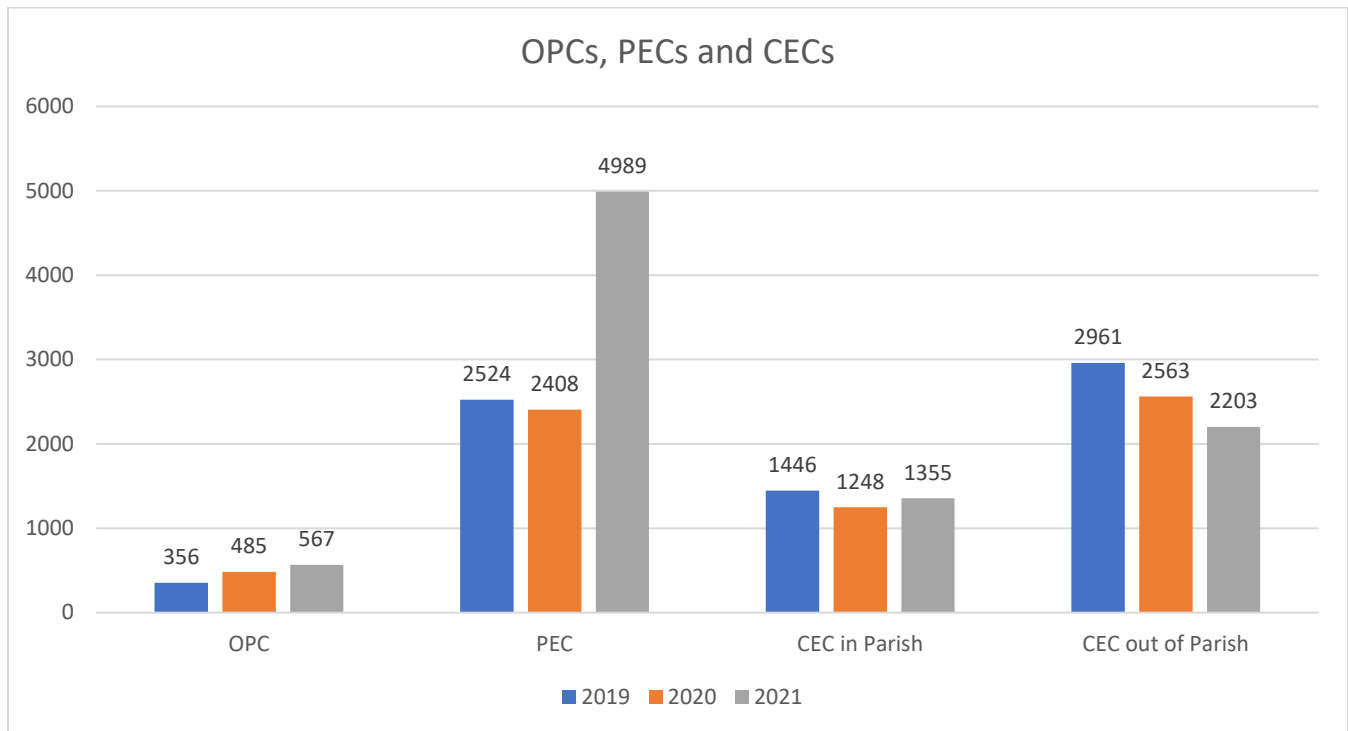
Traditionally, this has been a transport to an Emergency Room, but now in St. Tammany Parish these patients can be transported directly to the Safe Haven Campus to be evaluated in the Crisis Receiving Center (CRC) where the patient's mental health needs will be assessed and addressed immediately.

Once the patient has been evaluated by an appropriate physician or mental health professional, that provider can issue a Physicians Emergency Certificate (PEC). A patient being held on a PEC for evaluation and treatment of a mental illness can be kept involuntarily for 72 hours. During that 72-hour period, a Deputy Coroner from STPCO, who is a psychiatrist, will evaluate the patient. If they still meet the criteria of a danger to self, a danger to others or gravely disabled, that Deputy Coroner will issue a Coroner's Emergency Certificate that allows the facility to hold the patient for up to fifteen days for evaluation and treatment. Patients are usually held until they are no longer a danger to self, danger to others or gravely disabled. The addition of the Crisis Receiving Center functions to decrease the burden of mental health patients on Emergency Departments and the St. Tammany Parish Jail. The net effect is our EMS providers and law enforcement officers can make a prompt, warm handoff to the CRC staff and then to promptly return to service.

To be proactive, STPCO has been involved in reforming mental health care delivery in St. Tammany Parish through support and participation in the St. Tammany Behavioral Health Task Force which evolved to the Safe Haven project. Dr. Preston sits on the Safe Haven Advisory Board and is a co-chair of the Safe Haven Healthcare committee.

As a result of the concerted efforts by STPCO as a partner in a wide coalition of private, public, and governmental agencies, Safe Haven, a low barrier, easy access single point of entry into the physical and behavioral healthcare continuum is open and operating. This facility, with its twenty-three bed CRC provides an alternative for people who need behavioral health issues addressed 24/7. Not only will this elevate the level of care available for people with mental health issues, but it will also save money by more appropriate utilization of ambulance, hospital, and law enforcement resources.

Mental Health Statistics



*The numbers above DO NOT include phone logs and basic resource phone calls.

2) PETITION FOR CONTINUING OR PERMANENT TUTORSHIP

When a person above the age of fifteen and less than the age of 18 possesses less than two-thirds of the intellectual functioning of a person of the same age with average intellectual functioning, evidenced by standard testing procedures administered by competent persons or other relevant evidence acceptable to the court, the parents of such person, or the person entitled to custody or tutorship if one or both parents are dead, incapacitated, or an absent person, or if the parents are judicially separated or divorced, may, with the concurrence of the Coroner of the Parish of the intellectually disabled person's domicile, petition the court of that district to place such person under a continuing tutorship which shall not automatically end at any age but shall continue until revoked by the court of domicile. The petitioner shall not bear the coroner's costs or fees associated with securing the coroner's concurrence.

The purpose of the Continuing Tutorship is to place a trusted caretaker, most often a parent, in a role to watch over the intellectually disabled to protect their assets and provide care after they have reached the age of majority.

3) PETITION FOR COURT ORDERED ASSISTED OUTPATIENT TREATMENT

Under the leadership of the late Honorable Judge Peter Garcia, the 22nd JDC obtained grant funding and established Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Court for people with chronic mental illness that are non-compliant with treatment. Now presided over by the Honorable Judge Alan Zaunbrecher, the court overcame COVID-19 obstacles and began hearing cases in mid-2021. The STPCO Mental Health Outreach Specialist and the Coroner worked to streamline the process for all involved from gathering documents to appearing in court for the Concurrence of the Coroner.

Under LSA R.S. 28:66, A patient may be ordered to obtain civil involuntary outpatient treatment if the court finds that all the following conditions apply:

- (1) The patient is eighteen years of age or older.
- (2) The patient is suffering from a mental illness.
- (3) The patient is unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision, based on a clinical determination.
- (4) The patient has a history of lack of compliance with treatment for mental illness that has resulted in either of the following:
 - (a) At least twice within the last thirty-six months, the lack of compliance with treatment for mental illness has been a significant factor resulting in an emergency certificate for hospitalization, or receipt of services in a forensic or other mental health unit of a correctional facility or a local correctional facility, not including any period during which the person was hospitalized or incarcerated immediately preceding the filing of the petition.
 - (b) One or more acts of serious violent behavior toward self or others or threats of, or attempts of, serious physical harm to self or others within the last thirty-six months because of mental illness, not including any period in which the person was hospitalized or incarcerated immediately preceding the filing of the petition.
- (5) The patient is, because of his mental illness, unlikely to voluntarily participate in the recommended treatment pursuant to the treatment plan.
- (6) In view of the treatment history and current behavior of the patient, the patient needs involuntary outpatient treatment to prevent a relapse or deterioration which would be likely to result in the patient becoming dangerous to self or others or gravely disabled as defined in R.S. 28:2.
- (7) It is likely that the patient will benefit from involuntary outpatient treatment.

Under LA R.S. 28:67 (4), any interested party through counsel with written concurrence of the coroner in the jurisdiction in which the person is found, may file such a Petition for AOT.

SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

The coroner or his designee shall examine all alleged victims of a sexually oriented criminal offence. The coroner may select the hospital or healthcare provider named as the lead entity for sexual assault examinations in the regional plan required by R.S. 40:1216.1 as his designee to perform the forensic medical examination.

The St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office is in Region 9 of the Louisiana Department of Health System and has designated the following entities for Forensic Medical Examinations:

- Patients aged 13 years or older: the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program will respond to all hospitals within St. Tammany Parish and our partner hospitals in Washington, Tangipahoa, Livingston, Ascension, and St. Helena parish as the lead entity for Forensic Medical Evaluation of adults and adolescents 13 years old and above. Of note, when these exams are performed STPCO is paid directly by the hospital, who can then apply to the Crime Victims Reparation Fund for reimbursement. This is an example of when we bill hospitals for services provided. We are not exporting St. Tammany Parish assets to an outside parish; we are earning fees from outside parishes to the benefit of St. Tammany Parish.
- Patients 12 years or younger: Patients aged 12 years old or younger will be transferred to Children's Hospital New Orleans or the Audrey Hepburn Care Center for Forensic Medical Evaluation. Our SANE nurses have completed the didactic requirements to do exams down to birth. Because of COVID-19, clinical training has been delayed. Once completed, our SANE Division will begin providing service to this demographic group inside of our parish.
- STPCO SANE nurses are utilized to perform a standardized forensic medical examination on people who have died under suspicious circumstances.
- This is another example of our team's integration with the Pathology Department and DNA divisions.

Sexual Assault Statistics

Sexual Assault Statistics 2019

2019 Juveniles (Ages 17 & younger)	Sexual Assault Exams (In Parish)	Consults (In Parish)	Post-Mortem Evaluations	Sexual Assault Exams (Out of Parish)	Consults (Out of Parish)	Totals
Female	0	7	3	11	2	23
Male	0	0	2	1	0	3
TOTAL	0	7	5	12	2	26

STPCO Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program performed exams on patients aged 17 & older in St. Tammany Parish in 2019

2019 Adults (18 & Older)	Sexual Assault Exams (In Parish)	Consults (In Parish)	Post-Mortem Evaluations	Sexual Assault Exams (Out of Parish)	Consults (Out of Parish)	Totals
Females (Reported to Law Enforcement)	28	3	5	29	2	67
Females (Un-reported to Law Enforcement)	17	2	0	4	0	23
Females (Total)	45	5	5	33	2	90
Males (Reported to Law Enforcement)	1	3	1	1	0	6
Males (Un-reported to Law Enforcement)	0	1	0	0	0	1
Males (Total)	1	4	1	1	0	7
TOTAL	46	9	6	34	2	97

Sexual Assault Statistics 2020

2020 Juveniles (Ages 17 & younger)	Sexual Assault Exams (In Parish)	Consults (In Parish)	Post-Mortem Evaluations	Sexual Assault Exams (Out of Parish)	Consults (Out of Parish)	Totals
Female	3	6	1	8	2	20
Male	0	1	1	0	1	3
TOTAL	3	7	2	8	3	23

STPCO Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program performed exams on patients aged 17 & older in St. Tammany Parish in 2020 from January-May, ages 13 & older beginning June 2020

2020 Adults (18 & Older)	Sexual Assault Exams (In Parish)	Consults (In Parish)	Post-Mortem Evaluations	Sexual Assault Exams (Out of Parish)	Consults (Out of Parish)	Totals
Females (Reported to Law Enforcement)	30	8	13	19	1	71
Females (Un-reported to Law Enforcement)	6	4	0	4	1	15
Females (Total)	36	12	13	23	2	86
Males (Reported to Law Enforcement)	11	0	8	2	0	21
Males (Un-reported to Law Enforcement)	1	0	0	0	1	2
Males (Total)	12	0	8	2	1	23
TOTAL	48	12	21	25	3	109

Sexual Assault Statistics 2021

Juveniles (Ages 17 & younger)	Sexual Assault Exams (In Parish)	Consults (In Parish)	Post-Mortem Evaluation	Sexual Assault Exams (Out of Parish)	Consults (Out of Parish)
Female	9	5	1	9	4
Male	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	9	5	1	9	4

STPCO Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program performed exams on patients aged 13 years & older in St. Tammany Parish in 2021

Adults	Sexual Assault Exams (In Parish)	Consults (In Parish)	Post-Mortem Evaluation	Sexual Assault Exams (Out of Parish)	Consults (Out of Parish)	TOTALS
Females (Reported to Law Enforcement)	36	8	1	36	7	88
Females (Un-reported to Law Enforcement)	16	5	0	5	3	29
Females (Total)	52	13	1	41	10	117
Males (Reported to Law Enforcement)	1	0	2	3	0	6
Males (Un-reported to Law Enforcement)	2	1	0	0	0	3
Males (Total)	3	1	2	3	0	9
TOTAL	55	14	3	44	10	126

Community Partnerships Statistics

Cribs For Kids Safe Sleep Initiative 2021

Events	Classes	Cribs Distributed	Parents Trained	Face to Face Contacts
67	22	100	124	2827

*Cribs for Kids Established March 30, 2021

Outreach Events by the Coroner 2020/2021

Classes / Events	Citizens Reached
40	1390

Internal Continuing Education

<u>Classes</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Hours</u>
<u>21</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>174</u>

College Internships Summer 2021

<u>Class Rotations</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Hours</u>
<u>28</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>1440</u>

Budget /Audit

The St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office fiscal year is calendar year (January 1st – December 31st). At the end of each year, the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office presents the proposed budget for the following year to St. Tammany Parish Council (Parish Council). The presentation normally takes place during the month of November on the date assigned by the Parish Council.

The public is provided an opportunity to view the budget and/or obtain a copy of the budget, just as presented to the Parish Council. Before each year begins, a date is selected and published in the official newspaper of St. Tammany Parish, the Farmer, advising the public of the date, time, and location of the official budget adoption. This scheduled date is determined by the Coroner for the public to view and provide input before the budget is formally adopted.

By law, the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's office undergoes an extensive annual audit by an outside Certified Public Accounting Firm, independent of the Coroner's Office, Parish, and State. The auditing process begins in the later part of February and is filed with the state by the end of June.

During Dr. Charles Preston's tenure as Coroner, STPCO has received unmodified audit opinions in each year, stating that the financial statements are fairly stated in all material respects with United States generally accepted accounting principles. The audits were conducted in accordance with the following standards:

- Generally accepted auditing standards (GAAS) promulgated by the Auditing Standards Board of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA).
- The standards contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.
- The Louisiana Governmental Audit Guide, issued by the Society of Louisiana Certified Public Accountants and the Louisiana Legislative Auditor, including the Act 774 agreed-upon procedures, which requires certain enhanced procedures to be completed as defined annually by the Legislative Auditor

Below is a glimpse of the topics and extensiveness of contents reviewed.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION (PART I):

BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

GOVERNMENT-WIDE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (GWFS)

Statement of Net Position

Statement of Activities

FUND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (FFS)

Governmental Funds:

Contents reviewed continued:

Balance Sheet

Reconciliation of the Governmental Funds Balance Sheet to the Statement of Position

Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances

Reconciliation of the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances of Governmental Funds to Statement of Activities

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION (PART II): SCHEDULE

Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance – Budget and Actual - General Fund

Schedule of Proportionate Share Pension Liability

Schedule of Contributions Retirement Plan

NOTES TO REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

OTHER SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Schedule of Compensation, Benefits and Other Payments to Agency Head

REQUIRED BY *GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS*:

Independent Auditors' Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* Schedule of Findings and Responses Summary Schedule of Prior Year Findings

ST TAMMANY PARISH
CORONER

Consolidated Budgets and Actual Amounts

	2021 Budget	2021 Actual	2022 Budget	2021 vs 2022 Budget
OPERATING BUDGET				
REVENUE:				
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$ 5,609,611	\$ 5,609,611	\$ 5,950,436	6.08%
Charges for services	676,890	658,241	725,340	7.16%
Other Revenue Sources	32,000	27,274	32,000	0.00%
Grant Revenue	75,391	75,391	-	-100.00%
Interest Income	27,306	27,480	42,000	53.81%
Total Revenue	6,421,197	6,397,996	6,749,776	5.12%
EXPENDITURES:				
Salaries and related expenditures	3,957,372	3,683,453	4,256,164	7.55%
Purchased Professional and Tech services	1,039,819	1,041,935	897,739	-13.66%
Operating services	309,151	293,012	398,448	28.88%
Insurance Pre Act 151	87,072	85,760		-100.00%
Post Act 151			175,500	101.56%
Repairs and maintenance service	98,089	109,095	125,900	28.35%
Training and travel	25,210	23,351	80,000	217.34%
Operating supplies	669,340	641,405	731,025	9.22%
Repairs and maintenance supplies	51,698	48,838	40,000	-22.63%
Vehicle operations	47,402	47,450	45,000	-5.07%
Legal and other expenditures	-	-	-	0.00%
Total Expenditures	6,285,152	5,974,299	6,749,776	7.39%
Excess(deficient) Operations	136,045	423,697	-	
Capital funds transfer(out)	41,355	9,712,661	1,578,000	
Grant Revenue for Capital Outlay	63,127	63,127	350,000	
EXPENDITURES				
Capital Outlays	(240,528)	(240,528)	(1,928,000)	
Excess(deficient) after Capital Items	(0)	9,958,957	-	
Beginning Fund Balance	-	341,742	10,300,699	
Ending Fund Balance	\$ (0)	\$ 10,300,699	\$ 10,300,699	

Our Staff



Dr. Chuck Preston attended LSU medical school and graduated 1985. He began post-graduate training in the general surgery residency at Charity Hospital and then completed residency in 1988 in Emergency Medicine at LSU/ Charity Hospital. He is board-certified in Emergency Medicine by the American Board of Emergency Medicine. After completion of residency, Dr. Preston remained on faculty at LSU and Charity Hospital and obtained the rank of Clinical Associate Professor as well as worked in community emergency rooms. He has published in most major medical journals in Emergency Medicine and the New England Journal of Medicine and has been an invited speaker at Harvard Medical School.

In 2003, Dr. Preston opened Doctors Urgent Care Clinic in Slidell, Louisiana. He retired from clinical practice in November 2013. Dr. Preston was elected St. Tammany Parish Coroner and began to serve in May 2014. He was re-elected without opposition in 2016 and 2020. As Coroner, he has strived to

improve all aspects of the office with particular emphasis on mental health initiatives including staffing the office with psychiatrists to perform mental health evaluations and expanding the role of the Mental Health Outreach Specialist. Dr. Preston lives in Slidell, Louisiana with his wife, Dr. Lisa Leonard, and has two daughters.



Dr. Robert Sigillito attended University of Miami for undergraduate studies and Medical School training. He attended medical school under a US Navy Health Professions Scholarship and completed internship at the US Naval Hospital San Diego General Surgery Residency Program. He was a General Medical Officer in Okinawa, Japan and Pohang, Korea with the 1st Marine Air Wing, then at the US Naval Medical Clinic New Orleans. After completion of active-duty service, he trained at Charity Hospital and LSU Medical Center in the Emergency Medicine Residency Program and was selected as a Chief Resident his final year of training. He then engaged in 1 year of Fellowship Training in Critical Care with the LSU Section of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. He has held Board Certification with American Board of Emergency Medicine since 2000 and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Emergency Medicine. He was an Academic Faculty

member in the section of Emergency Medicine for 8 years at LSU / Charity Hospital, including the final years of Charity Hospital during Hurricane Katrina and the recovery period that followed. Subsequently, he was a staff Emergency Physician in the ED at North Oaks Medical Center for 10 years. He has been serving as the Chief Deputy Coroner in St. Tammany Parish since August 2021 and continues to work part time in Emergency Medicine.

Current Administration (2022)



Laura White
Chief Administrative Officer



Amy Kudel
Executive Director

Administration



Ana Welch

Case Coordinator



Kim Watson

Purchasing and Accounting

Administration



Doreen Mittelstaedt D-ABMDI
Forensic Death Investigator



Tammy Switzer
Administrative Assistant

Pathology Division



Dr. Michael DeFatta serves as the Chief Forensic Pathologist and Medical Director of Forensic Operations. This includes serving as the Laboratory Director for the DNA lab and Medical Director for the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners and the Department of Investigations. A graduate of Southern Methodist University, Dr. DeFatta received his M.D. from the LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans, where he remained and completed a five-year residency in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology. Dr. DeFatta received his training in Forensic Pathology by completing a Forensic Pathology Fellowship at Dade County Medical Examiner's Office in Miami, Florida. Dr. DeFatta has been with the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office for over 21 years.



Keith Laborde

Forensic Morgue Supervisor



Antoni Čutura
Forensic Morgue Technician



Morgan Bossier
Forensic Morgue Technician

Investigations Division



Pamela Little D-ABMDI
Director of Investigations



Mark Ford D-ABMDI
Deputy Director of Investigations



Clifford Osmer D-ABMDI
Forensic Death Investigator

Titus Tero
Forensic Death Investigator



Kelsey Saltrelli
Forensic Death Investigator



Lacy Cox
Forensic Death Investigator



Claudia Hover D-ABMDI
Forensic Death Investigator



Rebecca Howell
Forensic Death Investigator



Chris Knoblauch F-ABMDI

Forensic Death Investigator

**Education and Community Outreach
Coordinator**

Mental Health Division



Balminder Singh Mangat MBBS, MD, ABAM. Received his doctorate degree MBBS-"Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery" in 1975 from Institute of Medical Sciences, Benarus Hindu University, Varansi, India. In the beginning of his career, he enrolled in World Health Organization to successfully assist to eradicate small pox from the world. He immigrated to USA in 1976 and toured the country before starting his training in Psychiatry at LSU Medical Center, New Orleans at Charity Hospital in 1978. During his residency at LSU he was awarded Best Resident of 1981-1982. As a fourth year resident, he received an appointment as Assistant Professor of Psychiatry. He completed his training in Psychiatry a year ahead of his time. LSU students voted him Outstanding Teacher of the year. Dr Mangat entered into private practice in 1982. He has been serving the St. Tammany community since 1982 in

various capacities: Clinical Director at Northshore Psychiatric Unit, Medical Director at SMH Psychiatric Unit, Eastlake Hospital, St Bernard Hospital, Greenbrier Behavioral Health, and DePaul Hospital. He has received various awards including Best Physician award, America's Top Psychiatrist, National Association of Private Psychiatry Hospitals Finalist, President Award, and Excellence in Psychiatry. Dr Mangat was appointed Director of Mental Health Services and Deputy Coroner by Dr. Preston.



Hyron Kim M.D.

Deputy Coroner

Mental Health



Adele Bruce-Smith

Mental Health Outreach Specialist



Karen Gaddy RN

**Mental Health Clinical
Coordinator**

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Division



Ginesse Barrett BSN, RN, SANE-A SANE-P
Forensic Nurse Examiner
Program Director SANE



Cassandra R. Billiot R.N SANE-A, SANE -P
Forensic Nurse Examiner

DNA Laboratory

Natasha Poe, MS, Forensic DNA Technical Leader

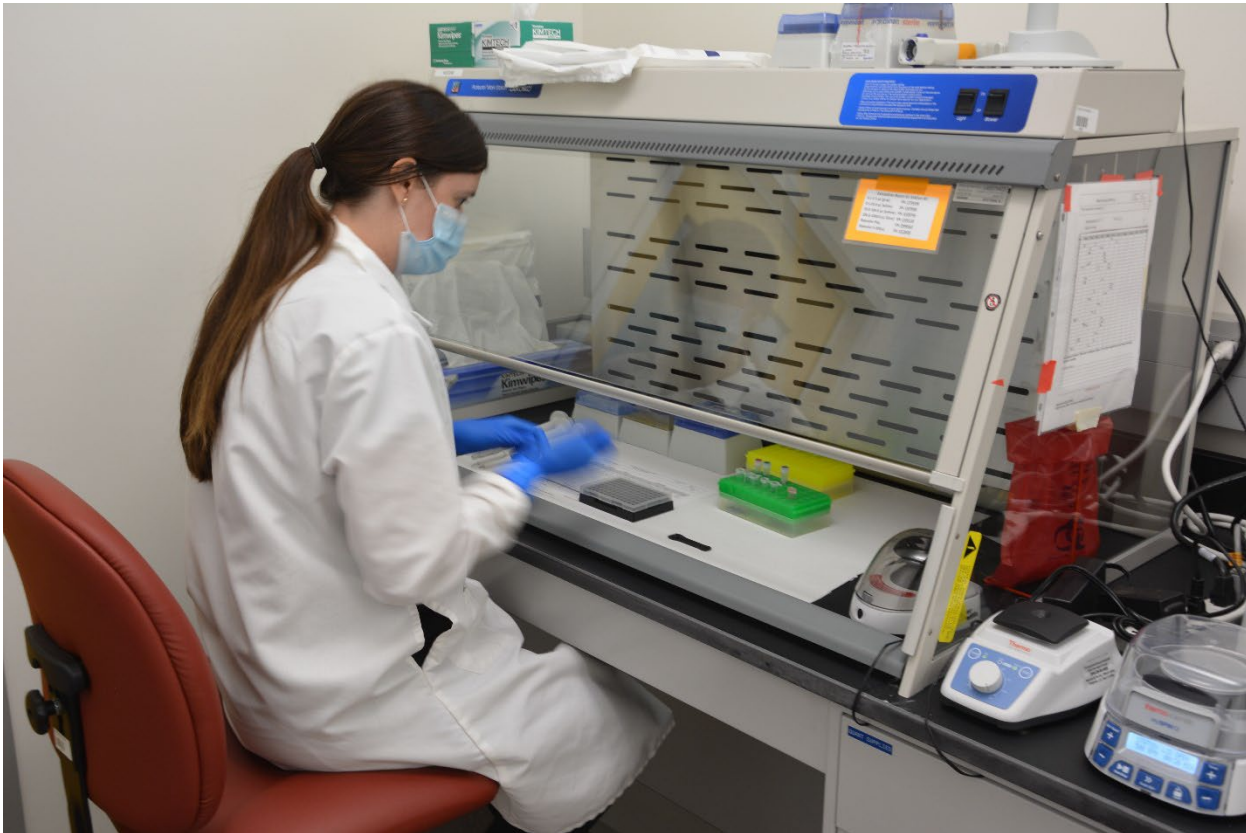
Doris Hoffpauir, BS, Forensic DNA Analyst

Tara Johnson, MS, Forensic DNA Analyst

Amanda Pennington BS, Forensic DNA Analyst

Erin Levy, MS, Forensic DNA

Sarah Binder BS, Forensic DNA Technician



Canine Support Division



Maggie

Human Remains Detection Dog



Big Lou

Emotional Support, Comfort Dog

Facility Dog (In Training)