



2018

ANNUAL REPORT

ROSS COUNTY CORONER ANNUAL REPORT MESSAGE

As 2018 comes to a close and we at the Ross County Coroner's Office look back on the year's impact on our office, last year was a year of transitions.

Our long-time deputy coroner, Dr. John Ziskowski, MD, died from lung cancer January 9, 2018. Dr. Z, as he was affectionately known, was a team member with us for over 30 years. He was there for our questions and concerns while investigating cases, and he pushed us to think broadly so we could investigate our cases more thoroughly. His impact on the coroner's office will be a legacy to his career.

Also in 2018, I announced my intention to retire as Ross County Coroner after serving for 26 years, from 1993 until January 31, 2019. I leave in good hands the office that I developed over those 26 years to Dr. Ben Trotter, DO, an emergency physician at Adena Regional Medical Center, who will assume acting coroner duties until the appointment process through the Ross County Democratic Party is completed. Dr. Trotter is committed to continuing the excellence, professionalism, and teamwork that we developed.

So, what have been the changes in the last 26 years? For starters, when I was a young coroner, we were still using film to document our investigation scenes. As digital photography developed, we adopted it as soon as we could for ease of storage and the ability to take as many photos as needed.

Another change was also related to technology. In the late 1990's, we began the transition to an all-digital office. Scanning documents began with Kevin Stanhope, RN, our first investigator, and as we added staff, Mike Ratliff, EMT-P, D-ABMDI, took this to the next, and the next, and the next level. Now we use our website for forms for EMS, nursing homes, and hospice agencies. We post statistics to the website that informs the public on our monthly efforts. Our voice mails are converted to a digital file and emailed to the investigator for addressing as soon as possible. Any faxes that come in to our office are converted to a PDF file and are emailed to Mike for filing in the case files. Digital photos are uploaded to the cloud for ready access as are our investigation worksheets.

Technology has been very helpful but without a great team, the technology doesn't help provide great service. I needed more "boots on the ground" to help with the rise in drug overdose deaths and the dramatic increase in the need to investigate these cases and adapt to this type of work. Dr. Amy Luckeydoo, a pediatrician and child abuse examiner, continues to bring her unique expertise to our office. Dave Russell, a retired City of Chillicothe firefighter and medic as well as a trained fire investigator, brings his decades of experience to the office. Scotty Lagard, EMT-P, and Bryon Cox, EMT-P, both also working with the City of Chillicothe fire service, bring their skills, professionalism and compassion to their job investigating deaths. Andrea Gray, coroner's investigator, is our newest member of the team who is dedicated to the same level of service as all in our office. Linda Goebel, also with the coroner's office for 26 years, keeps all the purchase orders and the budget information in line and current.

The one member of our team who is the most impactful to you, the citizens of Ross County, is Mike Ratliff. Without Mike's attention to detail, forethought, professionalism, teamwork, accountability, intelligence, thrift, and desire to do the absolute best job for all of us, we would be just the local

coroner's office and not an accredited, professional, comprehensive coroner's office, one of the best trained, organized, and efficient in the entire state. Mike is the reason for our progress. Thank you, Mike from the bottom of my heart for your support, friendship, and expertise over the past 20 years. I couldn't have done it without you.

As I sign off this part of my professional career, I also want to thank the Ross County Sheriff's office and the three sheriffs I worked with. The Chillicothe Police Department, the Chillicothe Post of the Ohio State Highway Patrol, the Ross County Prosecutor's office, and finally, and most thankfully, the Ross County Commissioners who have supported our efforts to leap into the future and provide an uncommonly high level of service to the citizens we all serve.

It has been my pleasure and honor to serve as the Ross County Coroner. I know I have made a difference in our community and I thank you all for the opportunity to leave a legacy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul H. H. H. H." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Office of the Coroner Ross County, Ohio

Jurisdiction Served and ORC Statues

We provide twenty-four hour/ seven days a week death investigation for Ross County with a total staff of 6; 1 coroner, 1 deputy coroners, 5 investigators and 1 administrative assistant. We serve an increasing population of 78, 064 according to the 2010 census and responsible for coverage of 693.02 square miles. Ross County is the second largest county in Ohio, after Ashtabula County.

The coroner and all appointed staff have authority through the Ohio Revised Code, Section/Chapter 313:

Chapter 313: CORONER

****The Ross County Coroner's Office is accredited with the International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners.***



Ross County Coroner's Office Mission Statement

The mission of the Ross County Coroner's Office is to serve and protect the health and safety of the community by maintaining the highest standard of professionalism and integrity in determining the cause and manner of death. We are dedicated as a team to conduct independent investigations with the intent to ensure that the circumstances surrounding the death are understood and explained. We seek to enhance the health, safety and well-being of the citizens and guests of Ross County.

“We speak for those who can no longer speak for themselves”



2018 Ross County Coroner Stats

As of 01/22/2019

Total Requests for Investigation – 634

Cases Deferred to PCP/Attending- 171

Hospice Deaths - 150

Nursing Home Deaths – 157

Other- 4

Coroner Cases / Manner of Death

Cases- 154

Natural- 64

Drug Related- 5

Accidental- 67

Drug OD- 31 Drug Related-4

Suicide- 16

Drug OD- Drug Related-2

Homicide-1

Drug Related-1

Active/Pending-2

Undetermined- 2

Drug OD-1

Drug Related-1

Total Autopsies- (24) Montgomery County (24)

Total Tox w/o Autopsy (61)

Total Tox (83) AXIS Lab (53) MCCO Lab (22) OSP Lab (8)

Scene Responses/External Exams- (108) Removals by Haller's- (60)

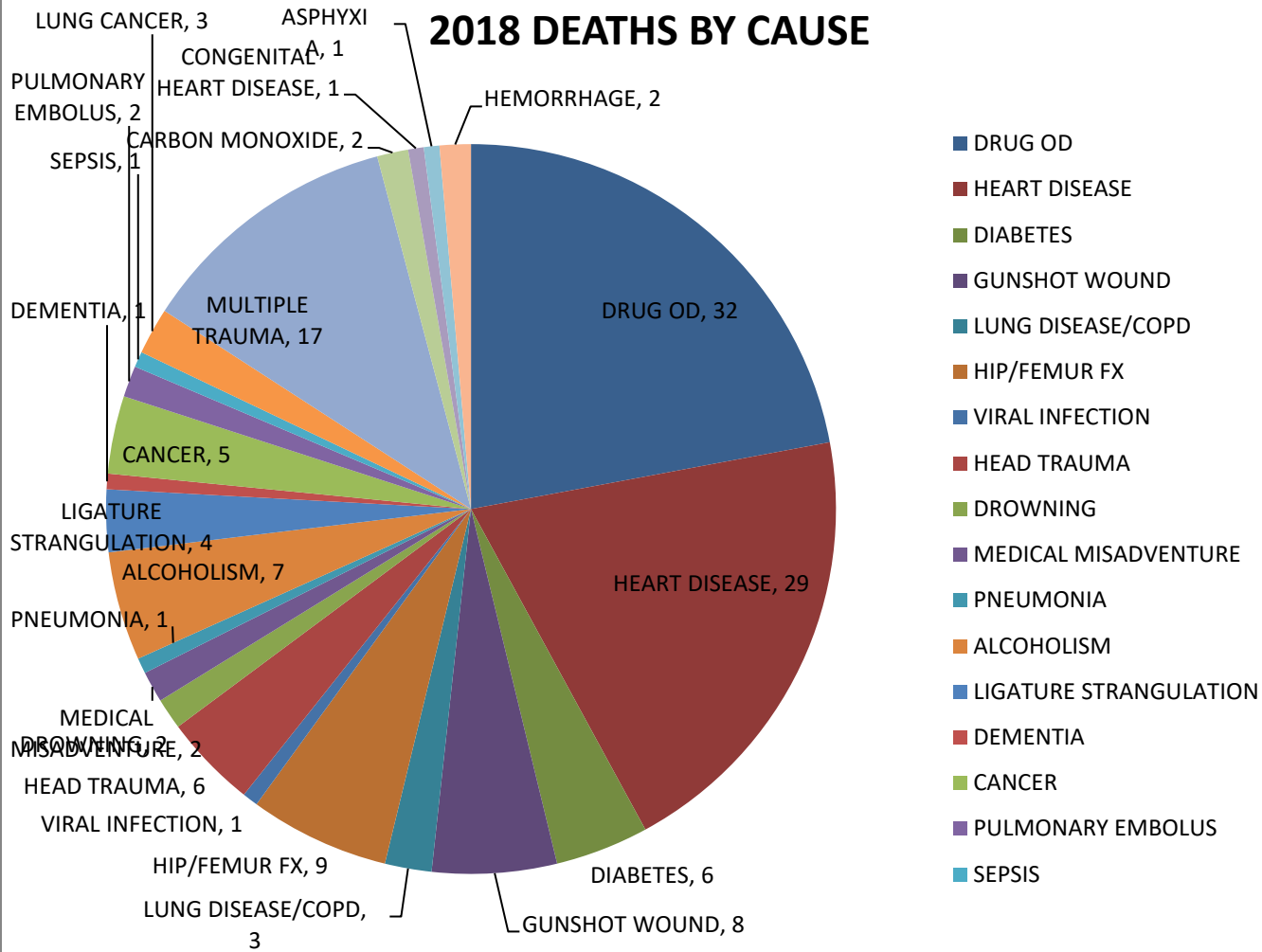
Unclaimed/Indigent- (5)

Unidentified Bodies-(0) Exhumations-(0)

Organ/Tissue Donation- (6)

Eye Donations- (3)

2018 DEATHS BY CAUSE

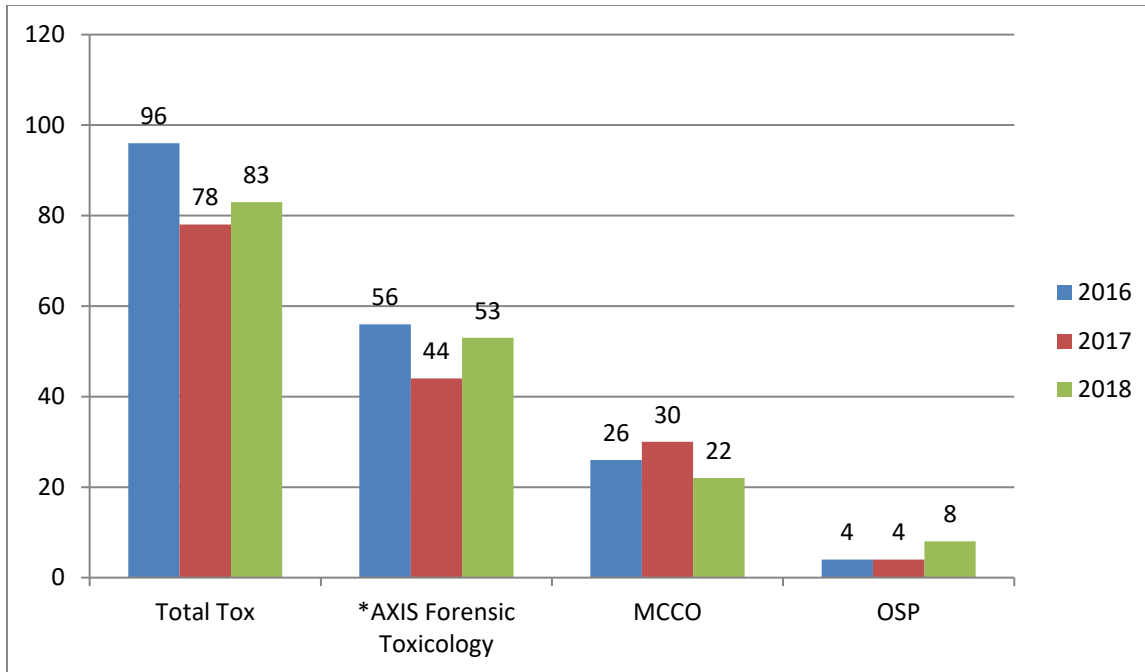




2016-2018 CASE STATS COMPARISON

	2016	2017	2018(01/22/19)
TOTAL CASES	601	605	634
DEFERRED	155	174	171
HOSPICE	145	145	150
NURSING HOME	145	152	157
OTHER	3	4	4
CORONER CASES	153	130	154
NATURAL	64	55	64
ACCIDENTAL	73	53	67
DRUG OVERDOSES/Related	43/6	34/11	31/13
SUICIDES	12	15	16
HOMICIDES	2	2	0
UNDETERMINED	3	2	2
PENDING	0	0	2
AUTOPSIES	28	30	24
TOXICOLOGY CASES	96	78	83
SCENE RESPONSES	102	101	108
REMOVALS	73	64	60

2016-2018 Toxicology Comparison

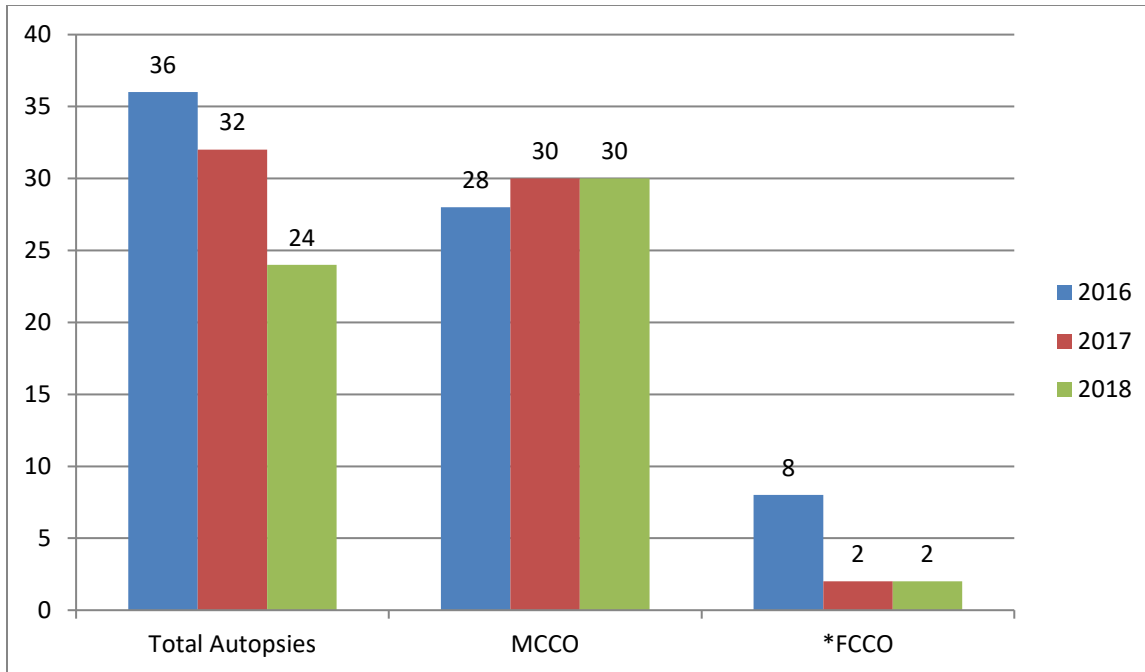


Notes:

OSP Crime Lab-No cost to county, but limited to MVC Fatalis

In 2016 AIT Labs became AXIS Forensic Toxicology

2016 TO 2018 AUTOPSY COMPARISON



Notes:

Forensic Autopsies cost on average: \$1500.00 plus \$200.00 transport one way

*FCCO autopsies are from Ross County incidents that die in Franklin County. These autopsies are not ordered by our office but payment of \$1300 per autopsy comes out of our budget.



AUTOPSY AND TOXICOLOGY YEARLY COMPARISON

YEAR	#CONTRACT	#ORC	MEDICAL	TOX ONLY
2009	16	2	43	27
2010	12	8	35	20
2011	17	10	31	23
2012	12	8	37	29
2013	15	7	28	11
2014	24	5	0	36
2015	36	8	0	47
2016	28	8	0	69
2017	30	2	*1	44
2018	24	2	0	61

Contract= autopsies on cases we have jurisdiction and request.

ORC= autopsies our county is responsible for on individuals that die in neighboring counties but the incident occurred in Ross County

Medical= autopsies that were done at Adena per our request

***Performed at OSU and paid for by Adena**

Tox only= cases that toxicology was done but no autopsy



DRUG OVERDOSE DEATH COMPARISON CHART

YEAR	OD DEATHS	DRUG RELATED	HEROIN (Included)	FENTANYL (Included)	OTHER OPIATES (Included)	Carfentanil and Other Fentanyl Analogs	METH
2009	19	n/a	0	N/A	14		
2010	19	n/a	2	N/A	11		
2011	19	7	1	N/A	16		
2012	13	7	n/a	N/A	8		
2013	11	11	n/a	N/A	n/a		
2014	31	6	19	N/A	n/a		
2015	40	11	20	11	16		
2016	44	6	19	20	12	1	4
2017	34	12	11	14	15	9	6
2018 As of 01/22	32	13	16	26	4	2	12



GOALS FOR 2019

2019 will be another busy year for the Ross County Coroner's Office with the changing of the guard (Dr. Ben Trotter replacing Dr. John Gabis as Coroner), re-accreditation and possible office location change. Through all these changes and processes, our main goal will be to continue to provide the best possible death investigation for the citizens and visitors to our county. We will strive to continue to provide medicolegal death investigation that meets or exceeds the national and international standards for death investigation. Our goal is to be able to answer the tough questions families and friends, as well as the general public, may have when a death occurs under our jurisdiction.

We will continue to work with law enforcement, local emergency medical services, and the health community, to do our part in keeping Ross County safe. We will continue to provide any needed and/or requested education while striving to better educate ourselves in the ever so fast changing field of medicolegal death investigation.

Our goal is to be better than 2018.

STAFF



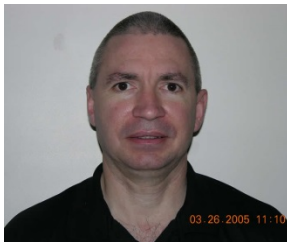
John A. Gabis, M.D.
Coroner



Amy Luckeydoo, M.D.
Deputy Coroner



Benjamin Trotter, DO
Deputy Coroner



Mike Ratliff, D-ABMDI
Chief Investigator



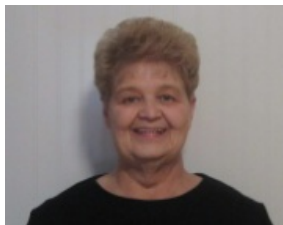
Dave Russell
Investigator



Andrew S. LaGard
Investigator



Bryon D. Cox III
Investigator



Linda Goebel
Office Manager



Andrea Gray
Investigator

