



DeKalb County Medical Examiner's 2018 Annual Report

Gerald T. Gowitt, M.D.
Chief Medical Examiner

Patrick L. Bailey
Director



Department Location

Administrative and Operational
Facility & Morgue

3550 Kensington Road
Decatur, Georgia 30032



Medical Examiner's Office

Mission Statement

DeKalb County Medical Examiners Office will provide comprehensive professional forensic death investigations and conduct exhaustive post mortem examinations within our jurisdiction, for it is not justice that we seek, but the truth in death so that justice may be served.

Department Description

The DeKalb County Medical Examiners Office performs investigations, post mortem examination, and forensic scientific testing into deaths that are required by law to be reported under the provisions of the Georgia Death Investigation Act.

Department promotes the following DeKalb County Strategic Priorities:

- Enhanced Public Safety
- Ensure Efficient Operations
- Invest in Employees
- Improve Internal Communication, Collaboration, and Implementation
- Promote Fiscal Integrity

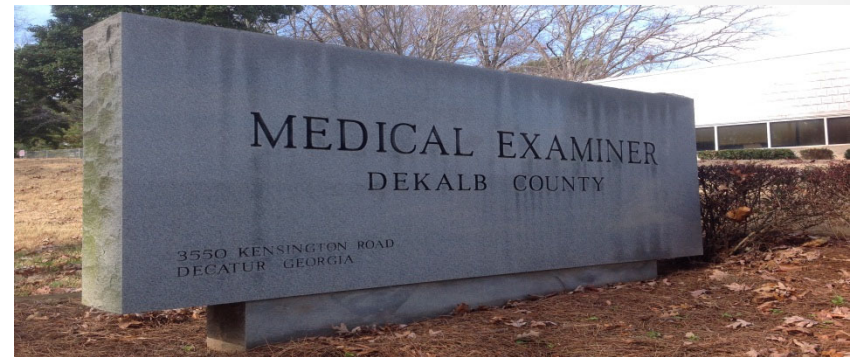
Geographic Information

- DeKalb County covers 267.58 square miles
- DeKalb County has an estimated population of about 756,558(2018).



Jurisdiction

- The DeKalb County Medical Examiner (DKME) serves all incorporated and unincorporated areas within DeKalb County. In 2018, these areas included the cities of Atlanta, Avondale, Brookhaven, Chamblee, Clarkston, Decatur, Doraville, Dunwoody, Lithonia, Pine Lake, Stone Mountain, Stone Crest, Tucker, unincorporated DeKalb County and other areas served by special law enforcement agencies such as Georgia State Patrol, MARTA and post secondary educational institutions campus police/ law enforcement agencies.
- As per State Law, deaths occurring on State owned and/or State leased property are investigated by the State Medical Examiners Office.
- Under the provisions of the Georgia Death Investigation Act, DKME investigates deaths that are suspected or known to have resulted from external causes such as injury or poisoning, and deaths that are sudden, unexpected, and not explained with a reasonable degree of medical probability. Other selected types of death are also investigated such as those occurring while a person is in custody of law enforcement agencies.



Georgia Death Investigation Act

Georgia Code § 45-16-24

The Georgia Statute detailing the duties of Medical Examiner in Georgia are specified within in Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Title 45, Chapter 16, titled the “Georgia Death Investigations Act.” The types of death(s) required to be reported to the Medical Examiner include:

- Violence (injury)
- Casualty (accident)
- Suicide
- Suddenly when in apparent good health
- When unattended by physician (a PCP has not been located or refuses to sign the death certificate)
- Suspicious or unusual
- Children under 7 if death is unexpected or unexplained
- Executions pursuant to death penalty
- Inmate of state hospital or state, county, or city penal institution
- Admitted to hospital unconscious and dying within 24 hours without regaining consciousness

Georgia Death Investigation Act

(cont.)

Decisions about autopsies are not mandated and are left to the discretion of the Medical Examiner.

When a death is reported to DKME, the case is either accepted (AJ) or declined (DJ). If a case is accepted, it means that the Medical Examiner will be certifying the death and will sign the death certificate. A case is declined for one of two reasons:

- The agonal events that caused or contributed to death did not occur in DeKalb County
- The deceased was in the direct care of a physician and/or hospice care who will certify the death.

A case is accepted if:

- It meets the criteria specified in the Georgia Death Investigation Act (§ 45-16-25), and
 - The agonal events that caused and/or contributed to death occurred in DeKalb County, or
 - If the place of incident or onset of fatal events is unknown, the death occurred or the dead body was found in DeKalb County

Medical and Social History

- The medical and social history of a person can be directly linked to a cause of death. If there is no medical history, meaning the person was in apparent good health, without injury, then an autopsy will most likely be conducted.
- When a person indulges in risky behavior such as illegal and legal drug abuse then an autopsy will be conducted. Alcoholics will be considered for autopsy as well.

Some Common Medical Histories that Do Not Require Autopsy

- Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease.
- Congestive Heart Failure
- Hypertension/High Blood Pressure.
- 100+ LBS Overweight
- HIV/Aids, Cancers, Renal Disease
- ASCVD
- CHF
- Pacemaker
- HCVD/HBP
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Terminal Disease

No Medical History That Require Autopsy

- Infants with no known illness or disease.
- Children with no known illness or disease.
- Adults with no known or known illness or disease.
- Homicide
- Suicide
- Accidental
- Natural
- SIDS/SUIDS
- No cold, fever, or flu like symptoms.
- Adult with controlled diabetes, asthma, HCVD/HBP.
- Murder
- Car accidents, work accidents, accidents at the home.
- Sometimes when requested by family.

The Medical Examiner (a forensic pathologist) generally uses one of four approaches to certify a death (to obtain information to complete the death certificate):

- Sign-out. The death certified after reviewing medical records and interview statements. This generally occurs after a physician certifies a death noting some injury, trauma, and/or toxicity was exhibited.
- View. A cursory examination is performed to further evaluate the case and rule out trauma or the need for further in-depth examination. A few simple case notes may be prepared.
- External examination. Formal external examination with a dictated report of the examination, usually including toxicology or chemistry tests as well.
- Autopsy. Complete postmortem examination with a dictated report.
- A limited dissection (partial autopsy) is sometimes performed if:
 - there is expressed objection to autopsy or significant health or safety risks exist for staff, and,
 - a complete autopsy need not be performed.

There are basic general "rules" for classifying manner of death:

- Natural deaths are due to a natural disease process, infection, virus, and/or the aging process.
- Accidental death occurs when an injury or poisoning causes death and there is little or no evidence that the injury or poisoning occurred with intent to harm or cause death. In essence, the fatal outcome was unintentional.
- Suicide results from an injury or poisoning as a result of an intentional self-inflicted act committed to do self harm or cause the death of one's self.
- Homicide occurs when death results from a volitional act committed by another person to cause fear, harm, or death. Intent to cause death is a common element but is not required for classification as homicide (more below). It is to be emphasized that the classification of homicide for the purposes of death certification is a "neutral" term and neither indicates nor implies *criminal* intent, which remains a determination within the province of legal processes.
- Undetermined or "could not be determined" is a classification used when the information pointing to one manner of death is no more compelling than one or more other competing manners of death, based on all available information.

In general, when death involves a combination of natural processes and external factors, such as injury or poisoning, preference is given to the non-natural manner of death.



General Response

When a death is reported to DKME, the case is assigned a sequential case number.

Basic information is obtained on all cases reported. Medical Examiners Investigators, in consultation with the Medical Examiner as needed, make decisions about whether the case should be accepted or declined, if death scene investigation is required, and whether or not the body needs to be transported to the DeKalb County Medical Examiner's Forensic Science Center.

The Medical Examiner then makes decisions about the type of examination to be conducted and the extent of additional testing to be performed.



For further information about Medical Examiners and death investigation, please see the website of the National Association of Medical Examiners at www.TheNAME.org



National Association of Medical Examiners

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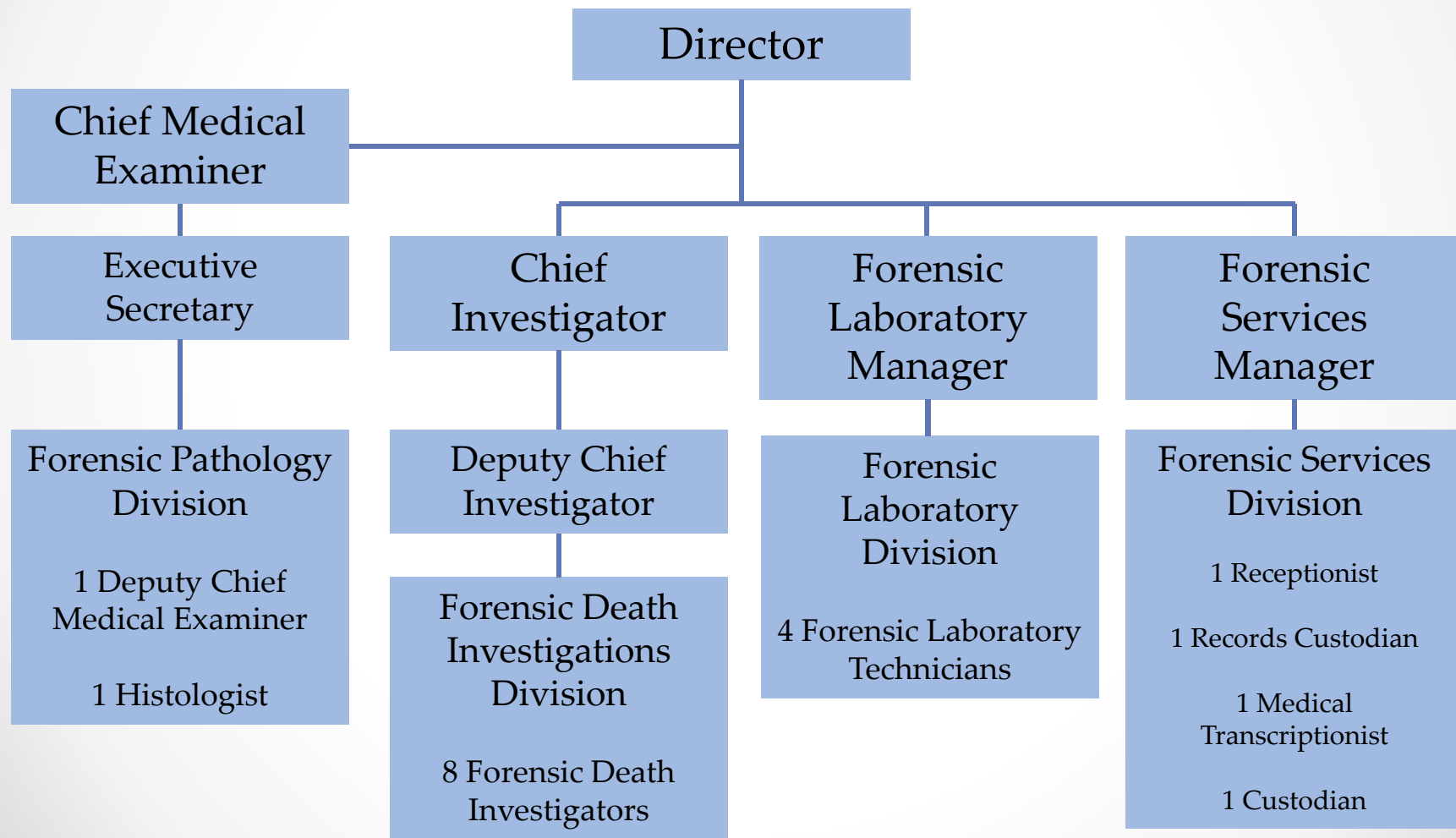
DCMEO Budget & Staff

The 2018 operating budget was \$3.012 million.

The DKME staff consists of 28 employees:

- 1 Director
- 3 Full Time Medical Examiners
- 2 Investigative Supervisors (Chief and Deputy Chief)
- 8 Medical Examiner Investigators
- 1 Administrative Supervisor (Forensic Services Manager)
- 8 Administrative Support Staff
- 1 Forensic Laboratory Manager
- 4 Forensic Technicians and Morgue Support Staff
- 1 Facility support staff

Organizational Chart

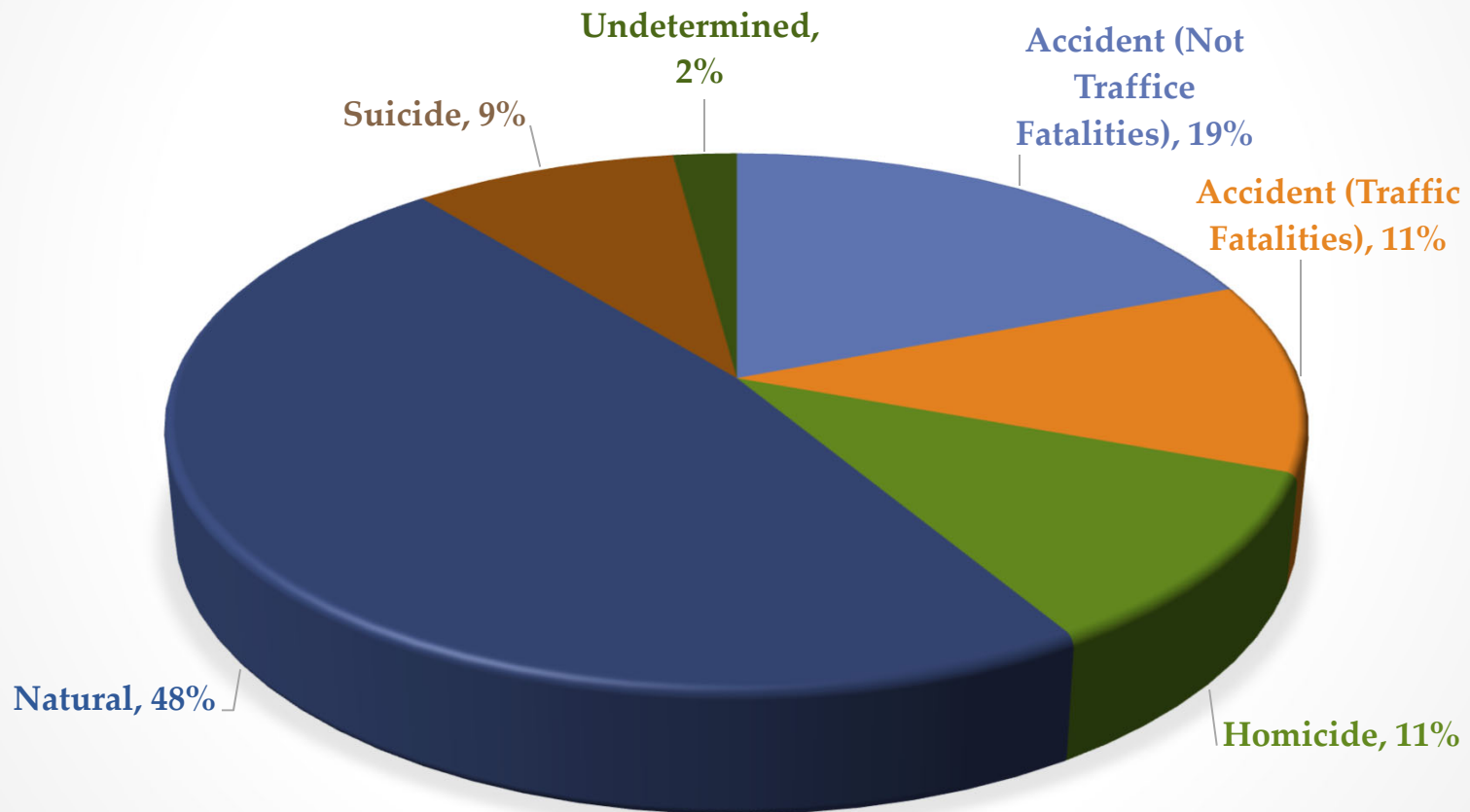


All Reported Cases in 2018

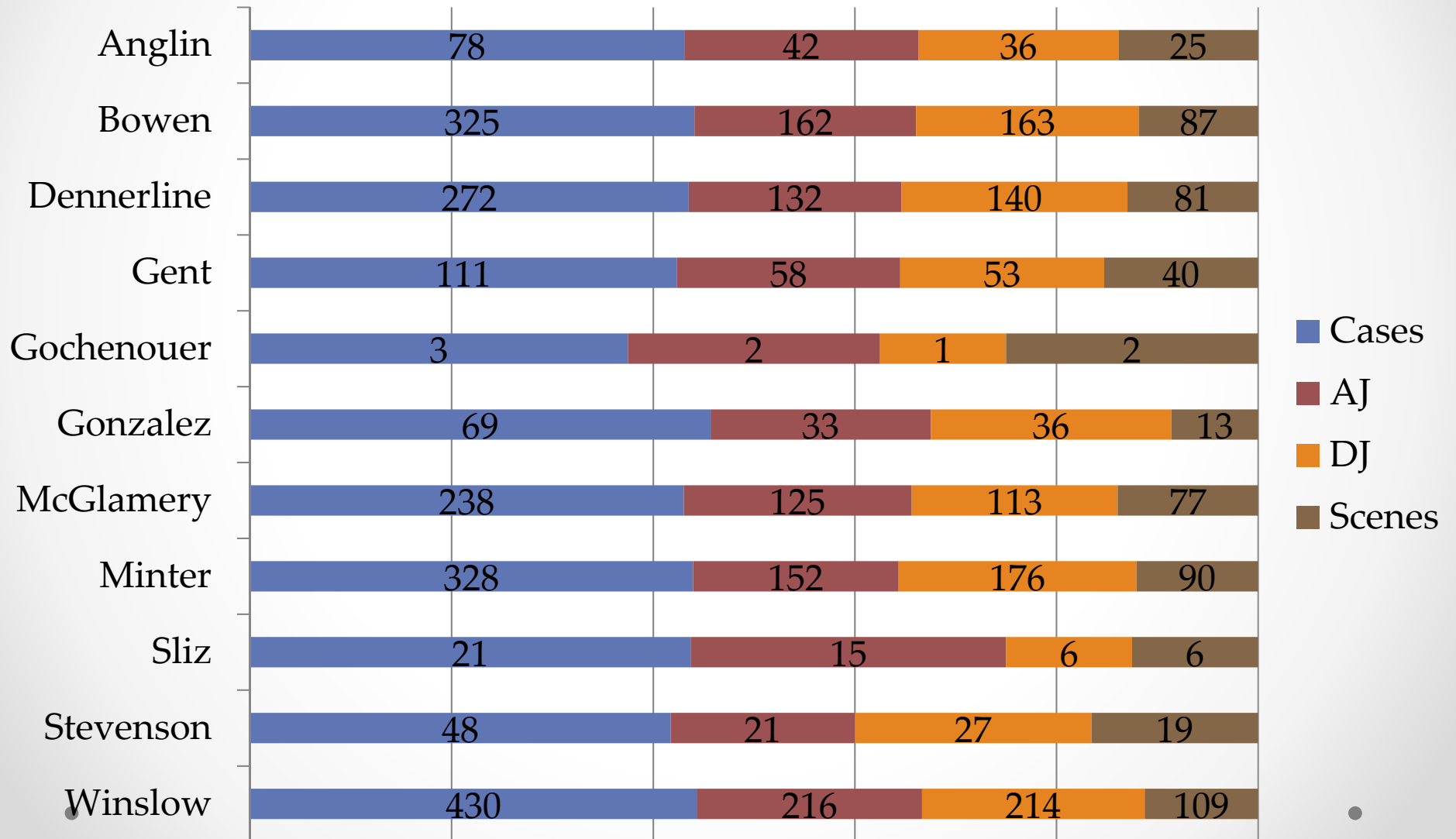
Out of the 4,905 total deaths to occur in DeKalb County, 1864 unique deaths reported to the office.

Jurisdiction	Manner of Death	Frequency
Accepted Jurisdiction	Accident (Not Traffic Fatalities)	181
	Accident (Traffic Fatalities)	109
	Homicide	102
	Natural	453
	Suicide	83
	Undetermined	20
	Cases Still Open from 2018	10
Declined Jurisdiction		906
Accepted Jurisdiction		958
Total		1864

Manners of Death in 2018



Investigator/Supervisor Case Load in 2018



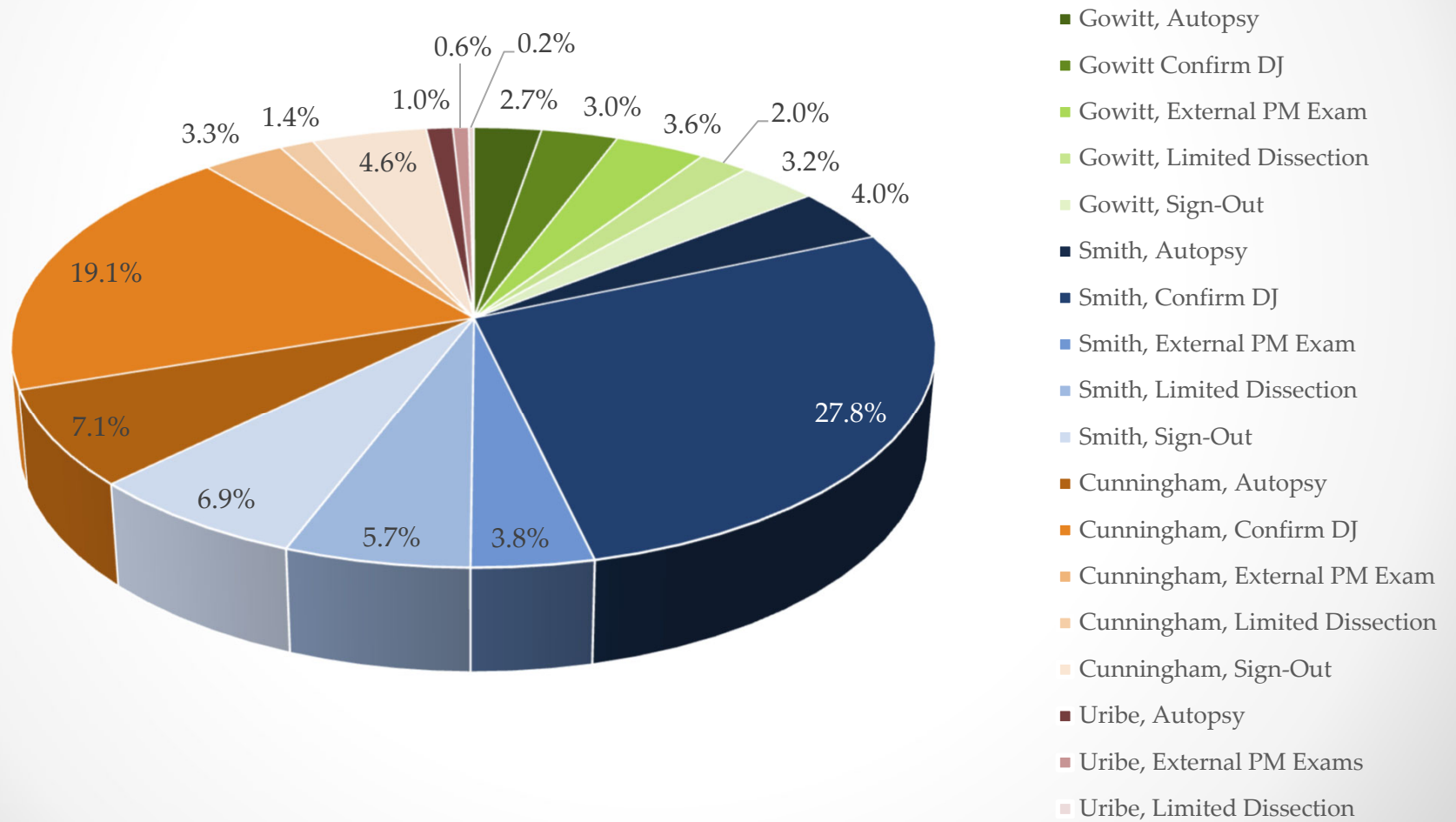
Procedures on Accepted Cases

Manner	Procedure				Total
	Autopsy	External PM Exam/ View	Limited Dissection	Sign-Out	
Accident	61	25	40	55	181
Accident (Traffic)	18	47	24	21	110
Homicide	101	0	1	0	102
Natural	75	97	87	200	459
Suicide	11	45	23	4	83
Undetermined	16	2	2	2	22
Pending Cases	1	0	1	2	4
Total	283	216	178	284	961

Procedure Totals for Each Medical Examiner

Medical Examiner	Procedure	Number of Cases	NAME Totals
Gerald T. Gowitt, M.D.	Autopsy	51	103
	Confirm DJ	58	
	External PM Exam	70	
	Limited Dissection	38	
	Sign-Out	61	
Geoffrey P. Smith, M.D.	Autopsy	76	200
	Confirm DJ	530	
	External PM Exam	73	
	Limited Dissection	109	
	Sign-Out	131	
Christy Cunningham, D.O.	Autopsy	136	174
	Confirm DJ	364	
	External PM Exam	62	
	Limited Dissection	26	
	Sign-Out	87	
Paul S. Uribe, M.D.	Autopsy	20	26
	Confirm DJ	0	
	External PM Exams	12	
	Limited Dissection	4	
	Sign-Out	0	

Pathologist Procedures

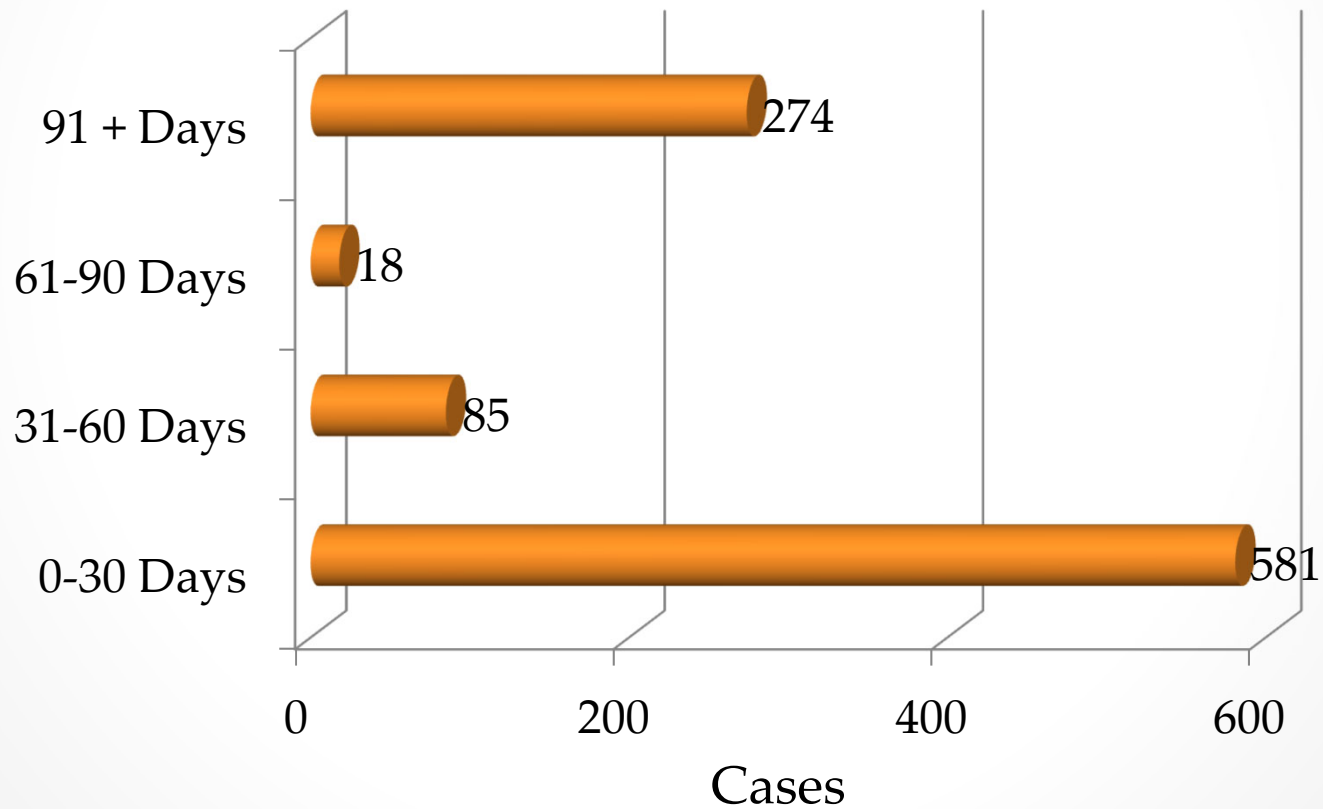


Turnaround Times

Case Completion Times		
Case Completion Times	Number of Cases	Percent
0-30 days	581	83%
31-60 days	85	12%
61-90 days	18	3%
91 days and over	274	2%
TOTAL	958	

Includes cases declined, which a Medical Examiner reviews to confirm jurisdiction.

Turnaround Times (cont.)



Police Jurisdiction for Reports of Death

Police Jurisdiction	Accident	Accident (Traffic)	Homicide	Suicide	Undetermined	Natural Deaths
Atlanta PD	7	2	0	3	0	19
Avondale PD	1	1	0	0	0	2
Brookhaven PD	8		2	4	1	16
Chamblee PD	7	2	2	4	2	6
Clarkston PD	2	0	1	0	0	4
Decatur PD	2	4	3	3	0	5
DeKalb County Fire	4	0	0	0	0	0
DeKalb County PD	96	92	91	56	18	279
DeKalb County SO	0	0	0	3	0	1
Doraville PD	2	0	0	2	0	3
Dunwoody PD	5	1	1	5	0	11
Lithonia PD	0	1	0	0	0	3
Stone Mountain PD	0	0	0	1	0	1
*Other Reporting Agencies	47	7	2	2	1	122

*Includes other police jurisdictions such as GSP, MARTA, School Campus Police, other states, or nearby counties.

Homicides

	≤10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71+	Age Unknown	Total
AF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BF	0	4	5	1	2	1	0	0	0	13
BM	4	15	24	13	11	4	3	0	0	74
HF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HM	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
WF	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	4
WM	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	5
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	4	20	35	19	15	6	3	0	0	102

Homicides (cont.)

Cause	Number of Deaths
Blunt Force	1
Drug Death-Poisoning	1
Gun	17
Gun-Assault	2
Gun-Handgun	4
Gun-Pistol	53
Gun-Revolver	1
Gun-Rifle	6
Gun-Shotgun	2
Sharp Instrument-Knife	14

Suicides

	≤10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71+	Age Unknown	Total
AF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AM	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BF	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
BM	0	4	10	6	2	3	1	3	0	29
HF	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
HM	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
WF	0	1	1	1	3	4	2	1	0	13
WM	0	0	5	4	3	12	5	3	0	32
Other	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	0	7	20	11	8	20	9	8	0	83

Suicides (cont.)

Cause	Number of Deaths
Asphyxia-Hanging	16
Asphyxia-Suffocation	4
Blunt Force	3
Drug Death-Poisoning	5
Gun	21
Gun-Handgun	14
Gun-Pistol	2
Gun-Revolver	5
Gun-Rifle	1
Gun-Shotgun	4
Poisoning- Not Drug or CO	1
Sharp Instrument-Knife	5

Motor Vehicle Accidents

	≤10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71+	Age Unknown	Total
AF	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
AM	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
BFO	0	2	8	1	2	1	1	2	0	17
BM	1	5	16	11	6	11	6	2	0	58
HF	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
HM	0	1	2	3	1	1	1	0	0	9
WF	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	7
WM	0	1	1	2	3	4	1	0	0	12
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	10	32	18	12	19	9	8	0	110

Motor Vehicle Accidents (cont.)

Cause	Number of Deaths
Blunt Force	2
MVA-Bicyclist	1
MVA-Driver	49
MVA- Motorcyclist Driver	6
MVA- Occupant	12
MVA- Pedestrian	36
Pulmonary Thromboemboli	1

Accidents (Non-Traffic Related)

	≤10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71+	Age Unknown	Total
AF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BF	0	0	1	1	4	9	4	8	0	27
BM	3	3	7	8	8	17	10	5	0	61
HF	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
HM	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	5
WF	0	1	2	4	2	2	1	11	0	23
WM	0	1	6	14	8	8	6	20	0	63
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3	6	18	29	23	37	21	44	0	181

Accidents (Non-Traffic Related) (cont.)

Cause	Number of Deaths	Cause	Number of Deaths
Asphyxia-Café Coronary	3	Fall-Down Steps	5
Asphyxia-Positional	1	Fall-From Heights	11
Blunt Force	1	Fall-Standing Height	27
Burns	1	Fire Death	6
Cardiac-ASCVD-IHD	3	Hepatic Failure	1
Crush Injuries	1	Hyperthermia-Exogenous	
Drowning	3	Hypothermia- Exogenous	4
Drug Death-Poisoning	97	MVA-Driver	1
Electrocution	3	MVA-Rider	1
Exsanguination	3		
Fall	11		

2018 Drug Deaths by Jurisdiction



DeKalb County Medical Examiner
Office

Atlanta Police Department

Total Deaths	6				
Gender	Totals	Illicit Drugs	Percentage	Opioids	Percentage
Male	3	Cocaine	50.00%	Tramadol	16.60%
Female	3	Heroin	66.67%	Fentanyl	33.33%
Unknown	0	Methamphetamine	16.60%	Hydrocodone	0.00%
Race	Totals	Marijuana	0%	Methadone	0.00%
White	3	PCP	0%	Oxycodone	0.00%
African American	3			U-47700	16.66%
Hispanic	0			Carfentanil	0.00%
Asian	0			Other Prescription Drugs	33%
Unknown	0			Other	0.00%
Median Age	39			Combined with Alcohol	17%

Avondale Police Department

Total Deaths	1				
Gender	Totals	Illicit Drugs	Percentage	Opioids	Percentage
Male	1	Cocaine	50.00%	Tramadol	0.00%
Female	0	Heroin	66.67%	Fentanyl	100.00%
Unknown	0	Methamphetamine	16.60%	Hydrocodone	0.00%
Race	Totals	Marijuana	0%	Methadone	0.00%
White	1	PCP	0%	Oxycodone	0.00%
African American	0			U-47700	0.00%
Hispanic	0				
Asian	0			Other Prescription Drugs	200%
Unknown	0			Other	0.00%
Median Age	29			Combined with Alcohol	100%

Brookhaven Police Department

Total Deaths	8				
Gender	Totals	Illicit Drugs	Percentage	Opioids	Percentage
Male	6	Cocaine	37.50%	Tramadol	0.00%
Female	2	Heroin	50.00%	Fentanyl	12.50%
Unknown	0	Methamphetamine	37.50%	Hydrocodone	0.00%
Race	Totals	Marijuana	0%	Methadone	0.00%
White	8	PCP	0%	Oxycodone	12.50%
African American	0			U-47700	0.00%
Hispanic	0				
Asian	0			Other Prescription Drugs	13%
Unknown	0			Other	0.00%
Median Age	50			Combined with Alcohol	25%

Chamblee Police Department

Total Deaths	7				
Gender	Totals	Illicit Drugs	Percentage	Opioids	Percentage
Male	6	Cocaine	28.57%	Morphine	0.00%
Female	1	Heroin	57.14%	Fentanyl	42.85%
Unknown	0	Methamphetamine	14.28%	Hydrocodone	14.28%
Race	Totals	Marijuana	0%	Methadone	0.00%
White	7	PCP	0%	Oxycodone	14.28%
African American	0			U-47700	0.00%
Hispanic	0			Tramadol	14.28%
Asian	0			Other Prescription Drugs	14%
Unknown	0			Other	0.00%
Median Age	38			Combined with Alcohol	14%

Decatur Police Department

Total Deaths	2				
Gender	Totals	Illicit Drugs	Percentage	Opioids	Percentage
Male	2	Cocaine	50.00%	Morphine	0.00%
Female	0	Heroin	100.00%	Fentanyl	100.00%
Unknown	0	Methamphetamine	0.00%	Hydrocodone	0.00%
Race	Totals	Marijuana	0%	Methadone	0.00%
White	2	PCP	0%	Oxycodone	0.00%
African American	0				
Hispanic	0				
Asian	0			Other Prescription Drugs	0%
Unknown	0			Other	0.00%
Median Age	39			Combined with Alcohol	50%

DeKalb County Police Department

Total Deaths	77				
Gender	Totals	Illicit Drugs	Percentage	Opioids	Percentage
Male	56	Cocaine	53.24%	Tramadol	1.29%
Female	21	Heroin	24.67%	Fentanyl	14.28%
Unknown	0	Methamphetamine	18.18%	Hydrocodone	2.59%
Race	Totals	Marijuana	0%	Morphine	5.19%
White	21	PCP	0%	Oxycodone	7.79%
African American	53			U-47700	0.00%
Hispanic	3			Methadone	5.19%
Asian	0			Carfentanil	0.00%
Unknown	0			Other Prescription Drugs	38%
Median Age	47			Combined with Alcohol	19%

Doraville Police Department

Total Deaths	0				
Gender	Totals	Illicit Drugs	Percentage	Opioids	Percentage
Male	0	Cocaine	0%	Morphine	0%
Female	0	Heroin	0%	Fentanyl	0%
Unknown	0	Methamphetamine	0%	Hydrocodone	0%
Race	Totals	Marijuana	0%	Methadone	0%
White	0	PCP	0%	Oxycodone	0%
African American	0			U-47700	0%
Hispanic	0				
Asian	0			Other Prescription Drugs	0%
Unknown	0			Other	0%
Median Age	0			Combined with Alcohol	0%

Dunwoody Police Department

Total Deaths	5				
Gender	Totals	Illicit Drugs	Percentage	Opioids	Percentage
Male	2	Cocaine	60.00%	Morphine	20.00%
Female	3	Heroin	40.00%	Fentanyl	40.00%
Unknown	0	Methamphetamine	20.00%	Hydrocodone	0.00%
Race	Totals	Marijuana	0%	Methadone	20.00%
White	5	PCP	0%	Oxycodone	0.00%
African American	0			U-47700	0.00%
Hispanic	0				
Asian	0			Other Prescription Drugs	
Unknown	0			Other	0.00%
Median Age	41			Combined with Alcohol	
					20%

Marta Police Department

Marta Police Department					
Total Deaths	1				
Gender	Totals	Illicit Drugs	Percentage	Opioids	Percentage
Male	1	Cocaine	0.00%	Morphine	0.00%
Female	0	Heroin	100.00%	Fentanyl	0.00%
Unknown	0	Methamphetamine	0.00%	Hydrocodone	0.00%
Race	Totals	Marijuana	0%	Methadone	0.00%
White	1	PCP	0%	Oxycodone	0.00%
African American	0			U-47700	0.00%
Hispanic	0				
Asian	0			Other Prescription Drugs	
Unknown	0			Other	0.00%
Median Age	34		Combined with Alcohol		100%

Stone Mountain Police Department

Total Deaths	1				
Gender	Totals	Illicit Drugs	Percentage	Opioids	Percentage
Male	0	Cocaine	0.00%	Morphine	0.00%
Female	1	Heroin	0.00%	Fentanyl	100.00%
Unknown	0	Methamphetamine	100.00%	Hydrocodone	0.00%
Race	Totals	Marijuana	0%	Methadone	0.00%
White	1	PCP	0%	Oxycodone	0.00%
African American	0			U-47700	0.00%
Hispanic	0				
Asian	0			Other Prescription Drugs	100%
Unknown	0			Other	0.00%
Median Age	18			Combined with Alcohol	0%

DeKalb County Medical Examiner

DeKalb County Medical Examiner					
Total Deaths	108				
Gender	Totals	Illicit Drugs	Percentage	Opioids	Percentage
Male	77	Cocaine	49.07%	Morphine	4.62%
Female	31	Heroin	34.25%	Fentanyl	20.37%
Unknown	0	Methamphetamine	19.44%	Hydrocodone	2.77%
Race	Totals	Marijuana	0%	Carfentanil	0.00%
White	49	PCP	0%	Oxycodone	7.40%
African American	56	U-47700	0.92%	Tramadol	1.85%
Hispanic	3			Methadone	4.62%
Asian	0			Other Prescription Drugs	36.11%
Unknown	0			Other	0.00%
Median Age	45			Combined with Alcohol	19.44%

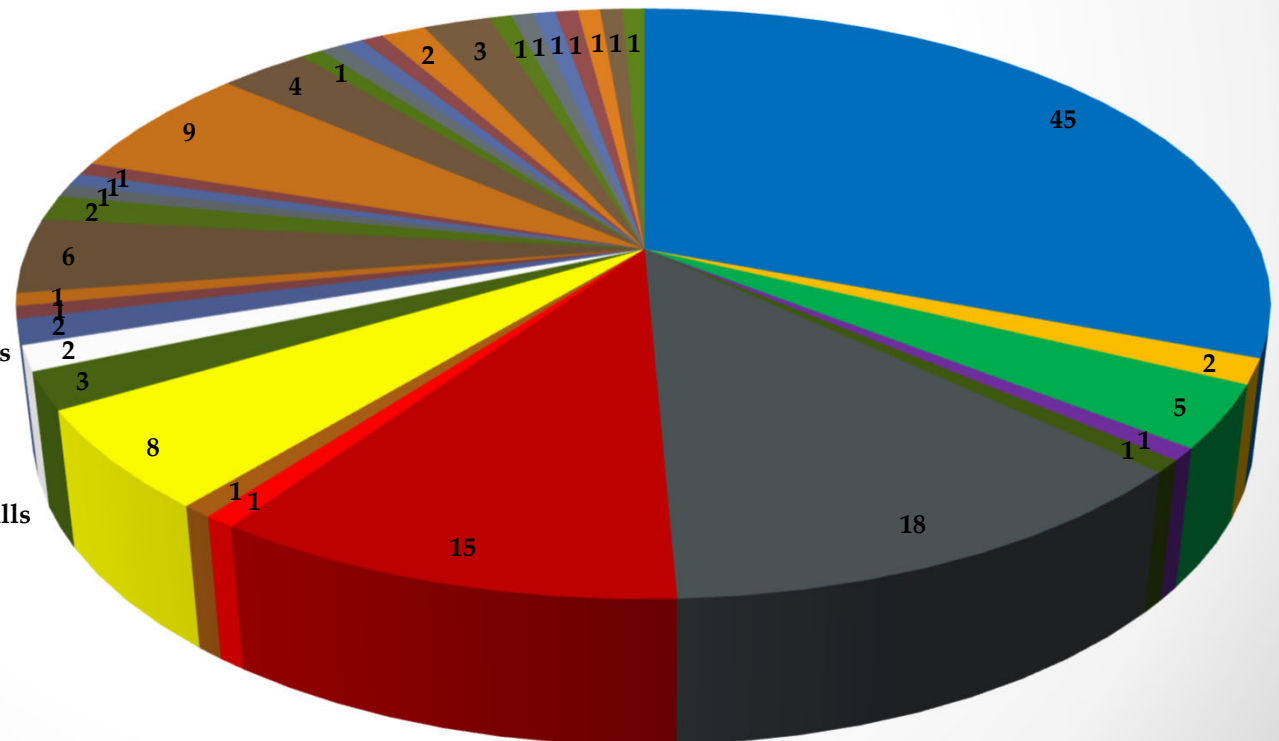
DeKalb County Total: 108



2018 Drug Related Deaths



- Alcohol:
- Alcohol & Prescription Pills:
- Alcohol & Cocaine:
- Alcohol & Fentanyl:
- Alcohol & Cocaine & Pills
- Prescription Pills:
- Cocaine
- Cocaine & Fentanyl
- Cocaine & Fentanyl & Pills
- Cocaine & Heroin
- Cocaine & Prescription Pills:
- Cocaine & Heroin & Methamphetamine
- Cocaine & Methamphetamine & Pills :
- Cocaine & Heroin & Fentanyl & Alcohol
- Cocaine & Alcohol & Heroin & Fentanyl & Pills
- Methamphetamine:
- Methamphetamine & Prescription Pills
- Methamphetamine & Alcohol:
- Methamphetamine & Fentanyl & Cocaine:
- Methamphetamine & Fentanyl & Alcohol & Pills
- Heroin:
- Heroin & Alcohol
- Heroin & Methamphetamine
- Heroin & Prescription Pills:
- Heroin & Fentanyl
- Heroin & Pills & Alcohol
- Heroin & Fentanyl & Methamphetamine
- Heroin & Fentanyl & Cocaine
- Heroin & Cocaine & Fentanyl & U-47700:
- Fentanyl & Methamphetamine:
- Fentanyl & Herion & Alcohol



Totals for 2018

Total Number of Toxicology Ordered for 2018

NMS Labs	GBI
198	919

- Total Number of bodies transported to DeKalb County Medical Examiner's Office: 740
- The DeKalb County Medical Examiners Office did 0 (zero) exhumations in 2018.
- The Dekalb County Medical Examiner's Office in conjuncture with LifeLink of Georgia had 10 organ donors and 22 tissue donors in 2018.
- Out of the fifteen (15) unclaimed/unidentified cases reported to our office in 2018, only one (1) remains unclaimed/unidentified.



Please contact our office at

404-508-3500

If you have any questions

THANK YOU!