



Jennifer Banek, MS, CRNA

Lake County Coroner

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TO: THE LAW AND JUDICIAL COMMITTEE

FROM: CORONER JENNIFER BANEK

RE: CORONER'S INVESTIGATION REPORT FOR APRIL 2021

Coroner's Monthly Report of Investigations conducted for the month of April 2021 ⁽¹⁾:

Non-Coroner's Cases ⁽²⁾	374
Coroner's Case: ⁽³⁾	44
Total Death Investigations:	418

Total death investigations for April 2020: 620

- Of the total Coroner's Cases for April 2021 (44), the Manner of Death (or suspected Manner of Death) is outlined in the following pages. Due to pending finalization of autopsy reports, toxicology reports, and investigative agency reports, a total of 2 cases are still pending final disposition.
- Of the 44 Coroner's Cases a total of 35 had further forensic examination (autopsy) conducted by the Lake County Coroner's Forensic Pathologist, Eimad Zakariya, M.D., in conjunction with the Lake County Coroner's Autopsy Technician and Deputy Coroner Investigators. One case was examined by Forensic Anthropologist, Dr. Erin Waxenbaum.
- The Lake County Coroner's Office Toxicology Laboratory conducted 24 toxicology tests and as a result, 21 samples were sent to an outside laboratory for further quantitative/qualitative testing.
 - In addition, the Lake County Coroner's Office Toxicology Laboratory conducted 137 toxicology tests for various outside agencies including the Lake County Jail and Probation Services.
- The Lake County Coroner's Office Issued 251 Permits for Cremation to area funeral homes in April 2021.

(1) As forensic reports such as Autopsy Reports, Toxicology Reports and other investigative agency reports may take 4 – 8 weeks for completion, Coroner Banek is presenting statistical data that is more complete than more recent months data.

(2) Non-Coroner's Cases:
Cases reported to the Office of Coroner where Minimal Investigation is needed; primarily consisting of review of medical history, medical records, and discussion with health care providers involved in the case.

(3) Coroner's Cases
Thorough investigation as to the cause of death, with subsequent Case Conference to determine the manner of death (i.e., homicide, suicide, accidental, or undetermined). Where required and mandated by Illinois Statute by type of death, select cases may be sent to an Inquest by Jury.



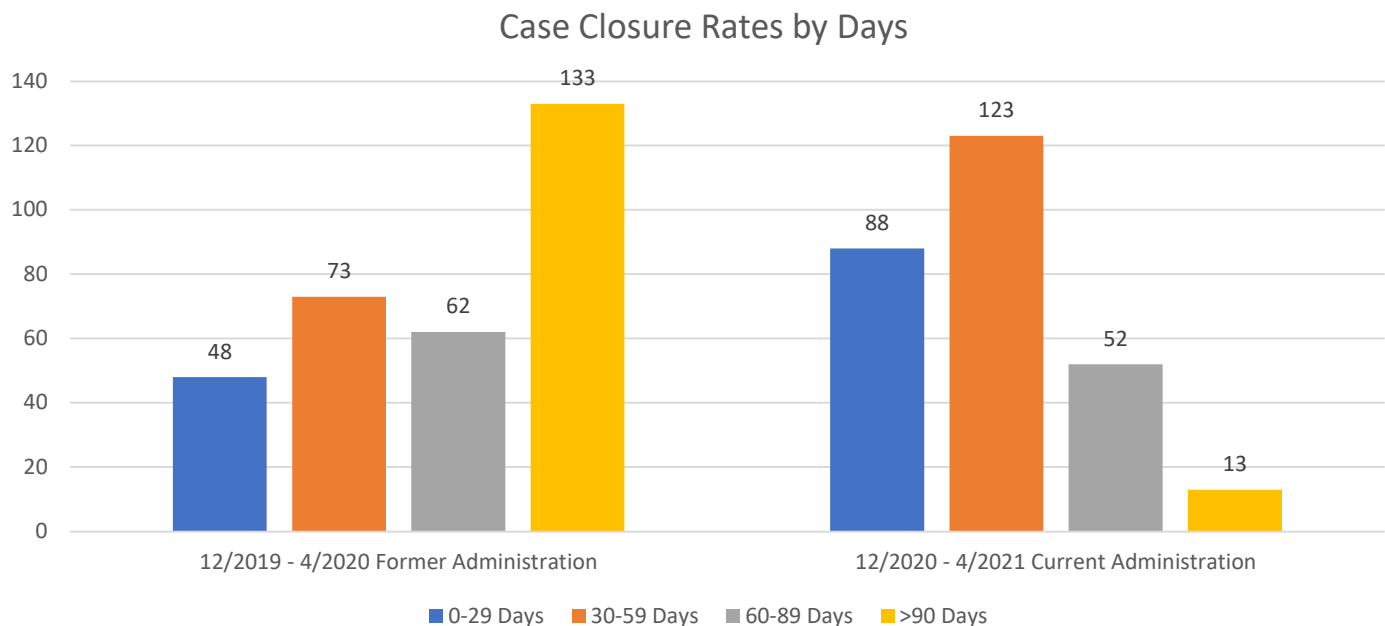
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Coroner's Case Closure Rate December 1 – May 31:

- The chart below demonstrates the case closure rates as compared from December 1, 2019, through May 31, 2020 (past administration) and December 1, 2020, through May 31, 2021 (current administration).
 - December 2019 – May 2020
 - Of the total cases only 38% were completed within 60 days, leaving 62% open for more than 60 days. Of the cases open longer than 60 days, 42% were open over 90 Days.
 - December 2020 – May 2021 (Current Administration)
 - Of the total cases 76% have been completed within 60 days, leaving 24% open more than 60 days. Of the cases open longer than 60 days, 4% were open over 90 days.





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April 2021

- Coroner Banek conducted 2 Coroner's Inquests.
 - The purpose of the Inquest is to present pertinent information concerning the victim's death in order for the jury to arrive at a cause and manner of death. The cause of death may have already been determined from available medical evidence, including toxicology and autopsy results. Upon completion of the testimony, the Coroner's Jury will deliberate in private. They may request additional testimony, evidence, or conference, as they deem necessary. When the jury has concluded their deliberation, they will issue a verdict through the Foreman as to the cause and manner of death. The real responsibility of the jury is to establish the manner of death (Natural, Homicide, Suicide, Accident, or Undetermined).
- Suicide Survivor Care Boxes.
 - Working with community partners, a second round of an additional 10 boxes were assembled including various comfort items and bi-lingual support services brochures. These boxes and the contents are at no cost to Lake County and provide families of Suicide Victims basic care items and valuable resources.
- Removal service contact review.
 - Working directly with Lake County Budget and Purchasing Offices, a review of the contract and services provided by Superior Ambulance Company was started. This contract review is taking place based on observations, made by current administration, of potential issues with response times, availability, and billing.
- Vacancy of Deployed Autopsy Technician filled through temporary part time employee.
 - Working directly with Human Resources and the State's Attorney Office, the Coroner's Office was able to secure a temporary Autopsy Technician to cover the absence of Autopsy Technician, Caroline Davis, while she is deployed with the United States Navy Reserves. We wish Caroline the very best on her deployment and await her safe return to the Coroner's Office.

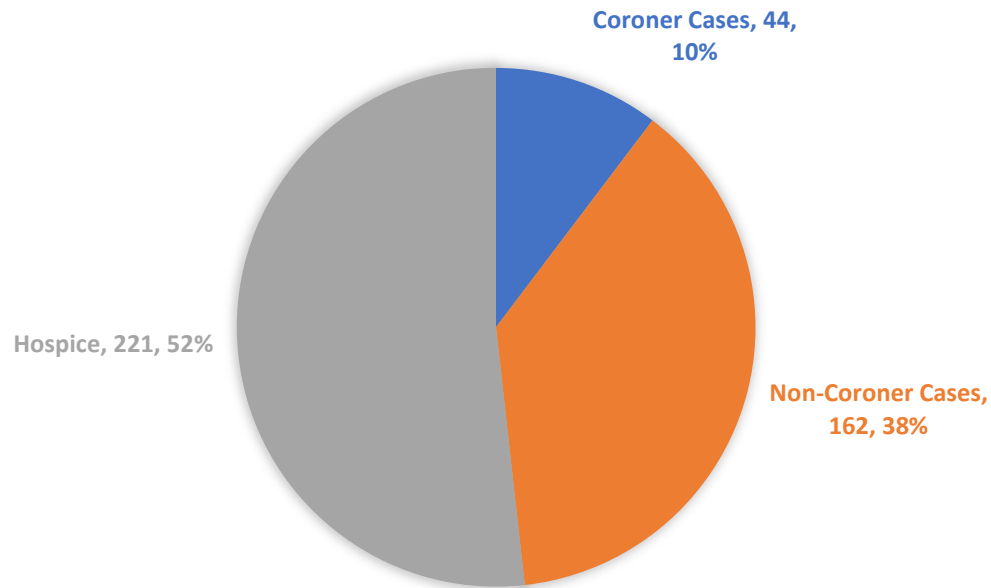


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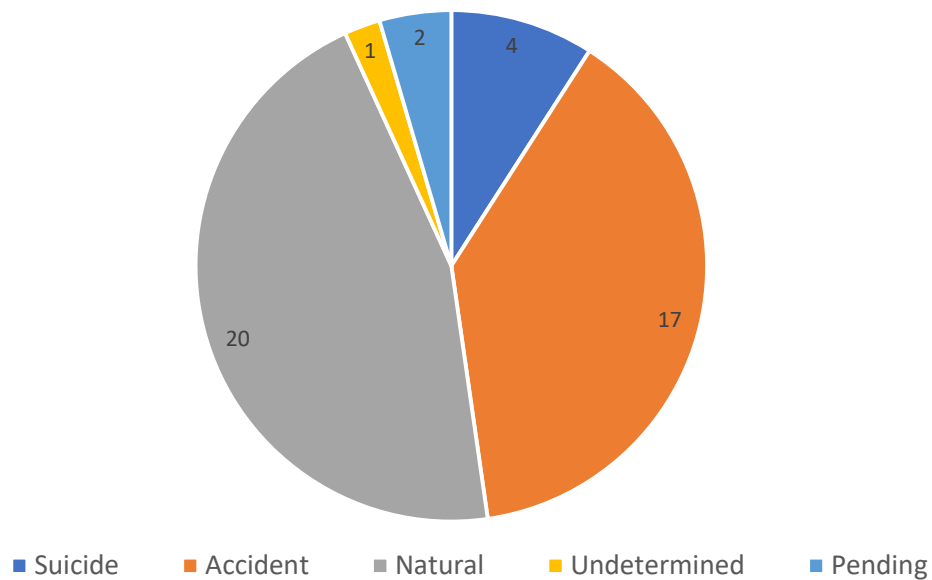
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APRIL 2021 OVERALL CASES



APRIL 2021 CORONER CASES

This data includes Suspected Manner of Death in Cases still pending finalization.



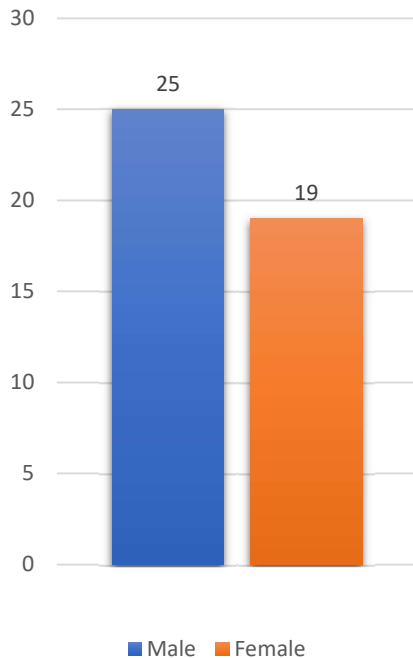


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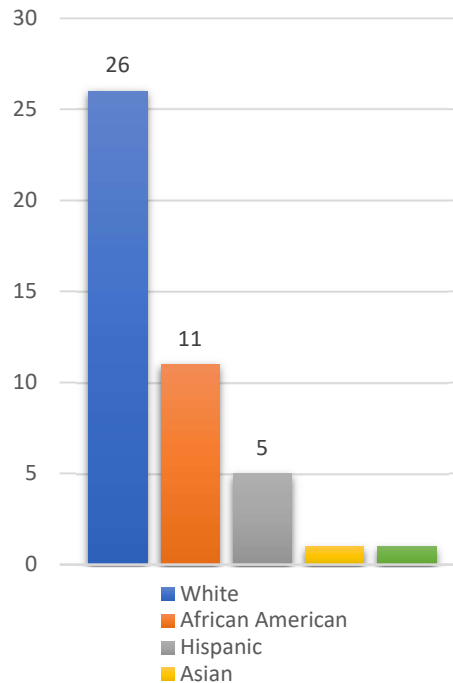
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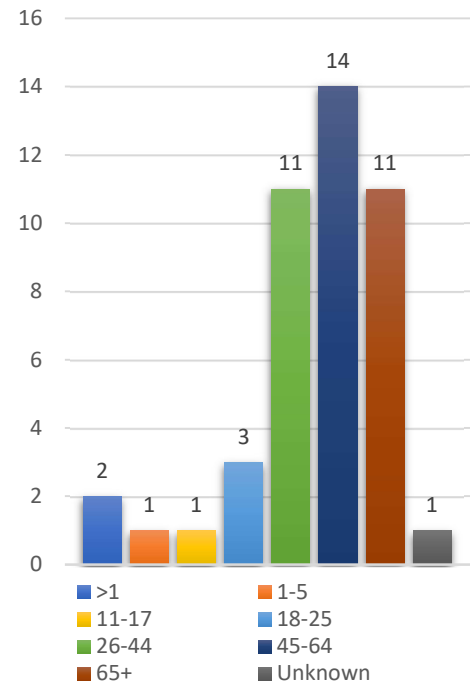
Coroner Cases/Gender



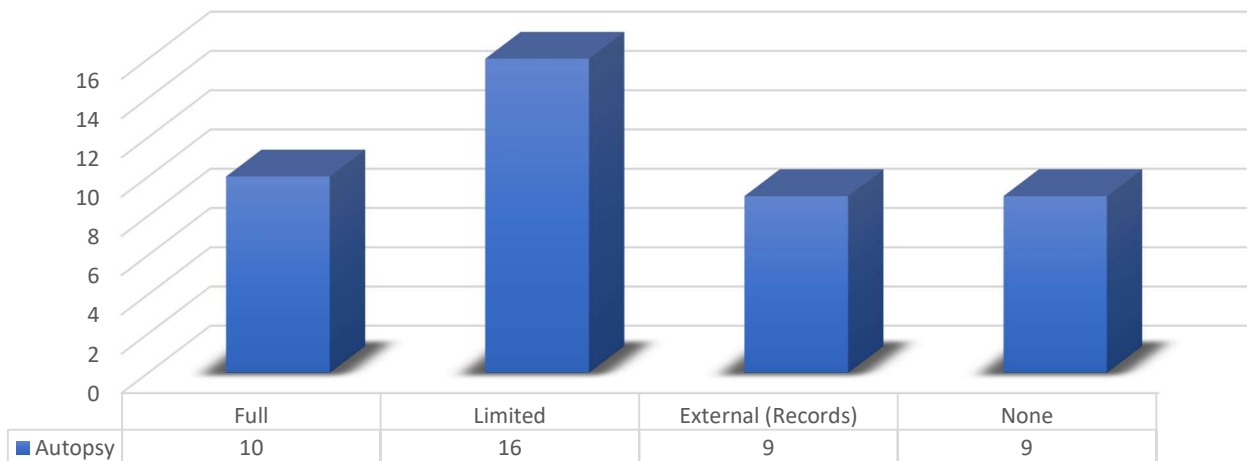
Coroner Cases/Race



Coroner Cases/Age



Autopsies April 2021



Autopsy Types: **Full** – A complete external and internal examination is completed by the Forensic Pathologist with a written report.
Limited – A Complete external, and in some cases limited internal examination, is completed by the Forensic Pathologist with a written report.
External – No Physical examination is completed however medical records from an external agency (hospital, nursing facility or physician) are reviewed by the Forensic Pathologist with a written report.
None – No physical examination or medical record review is necessary. Most of these cases are signed by the deceased's physician however family or physician information is not available at the time of death warranting a response from the Coroner's Office.