



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

David J Leffin
County Medical Examiner

February 19, 2016

To County Administrator Adam Payne, County Board Chairman &
County Board Supervisors.

Enclosed please find the annual report for the office of the Medical
Examiner for the year 2015.

The year 2015 was the transition year from the Coroner System to the
Medical examiner System. There were no great changes or surprises in
how an investigation takes place. What did change was the opportunity to
be fully involved in the responsibilities and duties of the office.

The medical examiner's office investigated 265 in 2015 compared to 262
deaths in 2014. There were 577 cremations in 2015 compared to 540
cremations in 2014. The increased numbers translates to increased
revenue. The medical examiner's office ended the year 2015 with a
positive variance of \$13,726.75

As I reflect on the 29 years of service Sheboygan County Coroner and as
the Medical Examiner, I am thankful for the support of the Law Committee,
County Board and County Administrator Payne. I appreciate the
cooperative efforts received from law enforcement, medical professionals
and funeral directors in Sheboygan County and the surrounding area make
the working process of the job easier and provide for a more complete
investigation.

Respectfully,



David J. Leffin



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MISSION STATEMENT AND SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the mission of the Sheboygan County Medical Examiner's office to provide professional death investigation into the deaths reportable to the Sheboygan County Medical Examiner's Office as required by the Wisconsin State Statutes and make a determination into the cause and manner of death.

The Medical Examiner investigates deaths in Sheboygan County reportable under Wisconsin Statutes 30.67, 346.71, 350, 155, 979.01 & 979.025. A Medical Examiner investigation is required for many reasons, including all homicides, suicides, deaths following an accident or injury, deaths due to poisoning, deaths following abortion, deaths involving airplanes, motor vehicle, snowmobile, all-terrain vehicle, jet skis or a boat, deaths with no physician in attendance in the past thirty days, deaths of a correctional inmate, deaths when after a reasonable time a physician cannot or will not sign the death certificate or in an emergency situation, deaths with unexplained, unusual or suspicious circumstances (including sudden unexplained death at any age), and deaths reportable under individual County Coroner policies.

The investigation process includes but is not limited to visual & physical examination of the deceased and the surroundings, the pronouncement or confirmation of the death of an individual, establishing the date and time of death, review of medication present and usage, review of medical history, identifying any recent changes in health or physical conditions, and obtaining information by speaking with family members, nursing staff and physicians, as well as neighbors, witnesses or law enforcement.

In deaths where law enforcement is involved, it is a collaborative effort of sharing investigation findings and knowledge. In some death investigations, more information is needed before a cause and manner of death can be made. An autopsy may be done and toxicology studies may be required to determine what kind and how much of a certain medication is present in a person's system. X-rays may be taken to determine if there are broken bones or if any foreign objects are present and the location. There are other tests available for specific inquires.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED IN 2015

One of the goals for 2015 was to re-establish connections with individuals and groups that the Medical Examiner's Office comes in contact with. The purpose was to make sure that lines of communications are kept open and to determine what the Medical Examiner's Office could do to facilitate the required paperwork in completing death certificate and cremation permits. I met with the funeral home owners, managers and directors to see if

they had any concerns, issues or recommendations for a better service. I have always had a good working relationship with these groups and any concerns that have come up have been resolved.

Another goal was to switch from a pager system to a phone/pager system like the Sherriff's Office uses. This was completed and has greatly improved communication between the city/county dispatch center and the Medical Examiner's staff. The phone/pager text-capable system is an efficient and less expensive mode of communication.

BUDGET

Estimating the number of deaths that will occur during the upcoming year which are reportable to the Medical Examiner is difficult, as is estimating the number of autopsies that will be required. Therefore, the Medical Examiner's budget contains many line item categories for which I have no control over. They are simply estimates based on averaged actual totals from prior years.

The budget for 2015 was \$154,288. Revenues of \$168,015 exceeded expenses for the year resulting in an overall positive variance for 2015 of \$13,727. This positive variance was due to revenues for death certificate and cremation signing fees that exceeded budgeted estimates.

For 2016, budgeted expenses are \$159,994 and the property tax levy is \$49,244.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

A concern that continues to challenge the budgets of the Medical Examiner, law enforcement and the District Attorney is the use of drugs which result in death in Sheboygan County. Sheboygan County is one of the higher drug death counties in Wisconsin. Over 10% of the death investigations in 2015 were drug related and over 80% of the autopsies were drug related. Budgeting can be difficult when all expenses involved in drug related deaths are considered.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2016

During 2016 I will examine possible sources for additional revenue; look for training and educational opportunities for my staff such as pertinent software training or webinar opportunities online; and create qualification guidelines for the position of Medical Examiner. There is currently a bill working its way through the State Legislature to establish a law requiring certain training requirements for the position of Medical Examiner and Deputy Medical Examiner.