



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

David J. Leffin
Medical Examiner

February 1, 2019

Honorable Members of the Sheboygan County Board and County Administrator Adam Payne,

I am pleased to submit the 2018 Annual Report for the Sheboygan County Medical Examiner's (ME) Department.

The ME's department consist of one full time employee and two on-call employees. In 2018, the department investigated and signed 266 death investigations, viewed and signed 628 cremations and ordered and conducted 22 autopsies. The department receives phone calls daily on varied subject matter and we routinely supply information to various organizations.

I am very proud of my team, they have been a big part of my 32 years of service in the Medical Examiner's department. Without a dedicated staff, this department would not be as efficient as it is.

I am very appreciative for the continued support of the Law Committee, County Administrator Adam Payne and the County Board.

Respectfully submitted,

David J. Leffin,
Medical Examiner

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 inquiries.

Goals and Objectives Achieved in 2018

The Medical Examiner's department is looking into increasing revenue to help lower the tax levy. This is difficult to accomplish because the State froze the fees that Medical Examiners can charge for signing Death Certificates & Cremations. However, we are able to generate revenue with tissue donations which can be difficult because the clients are not always acceptable candidates or have other limiting factors. With that being said, 2018 was the most successful year since we have had with six tissue donations resulting in \$4,800 in revenue.

Another objective was to ensure all staff had the opportunity to get additional training. Staff attended the Wisconsin Coroner and Medical Examiner Association meetings as well as another symposium on death investigation. In addition, a number of department meetings offered educational opportunities including an interactive training involving firearms, ballistics, ammunition, and powder burns at a local gun club.

Budget

	2018 Budget	2018 Results	Variance
Revenues	\$202,773	\$207,231	\$4,458
Expenditures	\$202,773	\$199,943	\$2,829
Result		\$7,288	\$7,288

The Medical Examiners budget ended with a \$7,288 positive variance at the end of the year.

There were 22 autopsies ordered and performed in 2018 which is six less than 2017. That makes a significant difference in our budget.

Client service expenses were higher in 2018 because of the increase in families refusing to take any financial responsibility. In these cases, when payment is highly improbable, our goal is to have the family sign cremation authorization papers which indicate they are family but assume no financial liability.

Issues and Challenges Ahead

Staffing changes and succession planning will need to be addressed in the near future. There have been some discussions for a plan of action for uninterrupted operation of certain functions of the Medical Examiner's department. The Fond du Lac County chief pathologist has been contacted and is available and is willing to do our autopsies if needed. Further discussions will take place this year as it relates to succession planning.

Goals and Objectives for 2019

For 2019, our department will focus on training because it serves as learning tool and allows for networking with colleagues to discuss cases and techniques which help to further our skills. Another goal will be increasing staff recognition, acknowledging individuals for a job well done, and reminding them that the work they do is meaningful and appreciated. Finally, our department will focus on our succession planning schedule to plan for future needs of the department.