



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Park County Coroners Office

David E Kintz Jr, BS, NRP, F-ABMDI

Coroner

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Park County Coroners Office is to provide thorough death investigations of all of those who die within Park County or suffer a fatal event within the county that results in their death outside the county. The Coroners Office is on call and responds 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The Coroners Office conducts an independent investigation to determine the cause and manner of death. We embrace our role as an advocate for the deceased, who can no longer speak for themselves, solemnly and respectfully. Families, we consider an equal priority to the death investigation. We strive to notify families quickly and keep them informed throughout the process. Our staff is available 24 hours a day, to answer any questions or concerns family may have.

Forensic sciences are ever evolving and education is an absolute necessity. The Park County Coroners Office seeks out educational opportunities each year to enhance our team with the latest information in the forensic community. In addition to education, a standard of the Park County Coroners Office is to have each staff member certified by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigation as soon as they are eligible under the experience requirements. To further our pursuit of the truth in each investigation, we became Fully Accredited by the International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners in 2015 and reaccredited in 2020. The Park County Coroners Office works with law enforcement, Human Services, and Public Health to ensure that each death gets a thorough and respectful investigation.

CORONER STAFF

DAVID E KINTZ JR, BS, NRP, F-ABMDI
CORONER

DON COMSTOCK, D-ABMDI
CHIEF DEPUTY CORONER

BONNIE GUZMAN, RN, D-ABMDI
DEPUTY CORONER

BILL LANDON
DEPUTY CORONER

LEA HAMNER
DEPUTY CORONER

17 CARE TEAM VOLUNTEERS

DUTIES OF THE CORONER

The Coroner is charged with determining the cause and manner of death. The Coroners office is a statutory office under title 30-10-601 through 30-10-622 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. The coroner must investigate the following types of deaths under statute:

- I.** Deaths from external violence, unexplained cause, or other unexplained suspicious circumstances
- II.** Deaths where no physician is in attendance or physician is unable to certify cause of death
- III.** Deaths from Thermal, chemical, or radiation injury
- IV.** Death from criminal abortion, including self induced
- V.** Deaths from hazardous or contagious conditions that may pose a threat to the general public
- VI.** Deaths while in custody of law enforcement or incarcerated
- VII.** Death was sudden and happened to a person in good health
- VIII.** Death from industrial accident

In Park County we do not have a hospital or inpatient hospice which means that all deaths fall under the jurisdiction of the coroner.

The Park County Coroners Office covers Park County, Colorado with a population of 17,390 in 2020 per the US census bureau. We cover the incorporated towns of Fairplay and Alma. The county is home to two state parks, many wildlife areas and hundreds of thousands of acres of state land and national forest. Park County is tourist destination for camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, sight seeing, and much more. Vacation rentals have dramatically increased the amount of visitors to our county.

Coroner Accomplishments 2023

In February, Coroner Kintz attended the American Academy of Forensic Science and spoke on the topic of genetic genealogy and its use in identifying decedents. In this talk he highlighted the success we have had in Park County using the latest techniques.

In March, we were awarded a Federal NNPHI Grant that funded four new cameras and an upgrade of our 3D scene scanner. This funding provided \$9,000 worth of equipment to improve death scene documentation.

In early May, we partnered with the South Central All Hazards Region and hosted a mass fatality planning and response class for rural communities with 28 attendees from around the region.

In June, we conducted a full-scale mass fatality exercise at the Fairplay Beach. This exercise was set as a wildfire burning in a residential area. Partners from 3 neighboring counties, 4 forensic specialists, as well as our CARE Team, law enforcement, fire, emergency management, and EMS joined in the exercise. This was a tremendous success in exercising our abilities to respond to a large scale fatality event. In addition to field operations, we practiced how to scientifically and quickly identify decedents as well as running a family assistance center to support families.

This summer, we hired two new deputy coroners and have been in the training process through the year.

2023 Continued

In June, we partnered with Colorado Mesa University to host its first seminar at the forensic research facility based here in Park County. The seminar included two days of lecture in Fairplay as well as field work at the facility. This was an overwhelming success and 11 counties in the state attended. This is another step in the dream that has been years in the making. This first seminar is the beginning of dissemination of the extremely valuable information being obtained at the facility.

In July, our CARE Team participated in The International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners first ever family support training. This brought teams from around the country to collaborate and advance this vital function in the Coroners office.

Also in July, Coroner Kintz was awarded “Coroner of the Year” by the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners. This award reflects the recognition by professionals throughout the death investigation community world wide of the accomplishments of Coroner Kintz and this office. Coroner Kintz believes in the team approach and fully believes this is a team award.

In September, Coroner Kintz and Dr. Conner of CMU presented a poster at the Rocky Mountain Biological Anthropology Association In Estes Park. A goal of this presentation was to encourage and develop more relationships around the forensic research facility here in Park County.

2024 Goals

Our main goal this year will be working with our new hires to complete their national American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigation (ABMDI) certifications within our office standard of 18 months. This certification requires the applicant to show proficiency in 52 categories of skills related to investigation, family support, pathology, toxicology, ethics, and law.

Once again we will be attending trainings and seminars through the year to keep the latest information coming back to serve our county. This will begin in February at the American Academy of Forensic Science meetings that will be in Denver this year.

We will be working with Colorado Mesa University to once again host a seminar for agencies around the region and state at the Forensic research facility. Last year's seminar has increased the interest and we are hoping for another successful year.

We are looking to expand our presence on social media. We have a goal to post more items of interest through the year. (This was a goal last year that didn't develop as hoped.)

2024 Goals continued

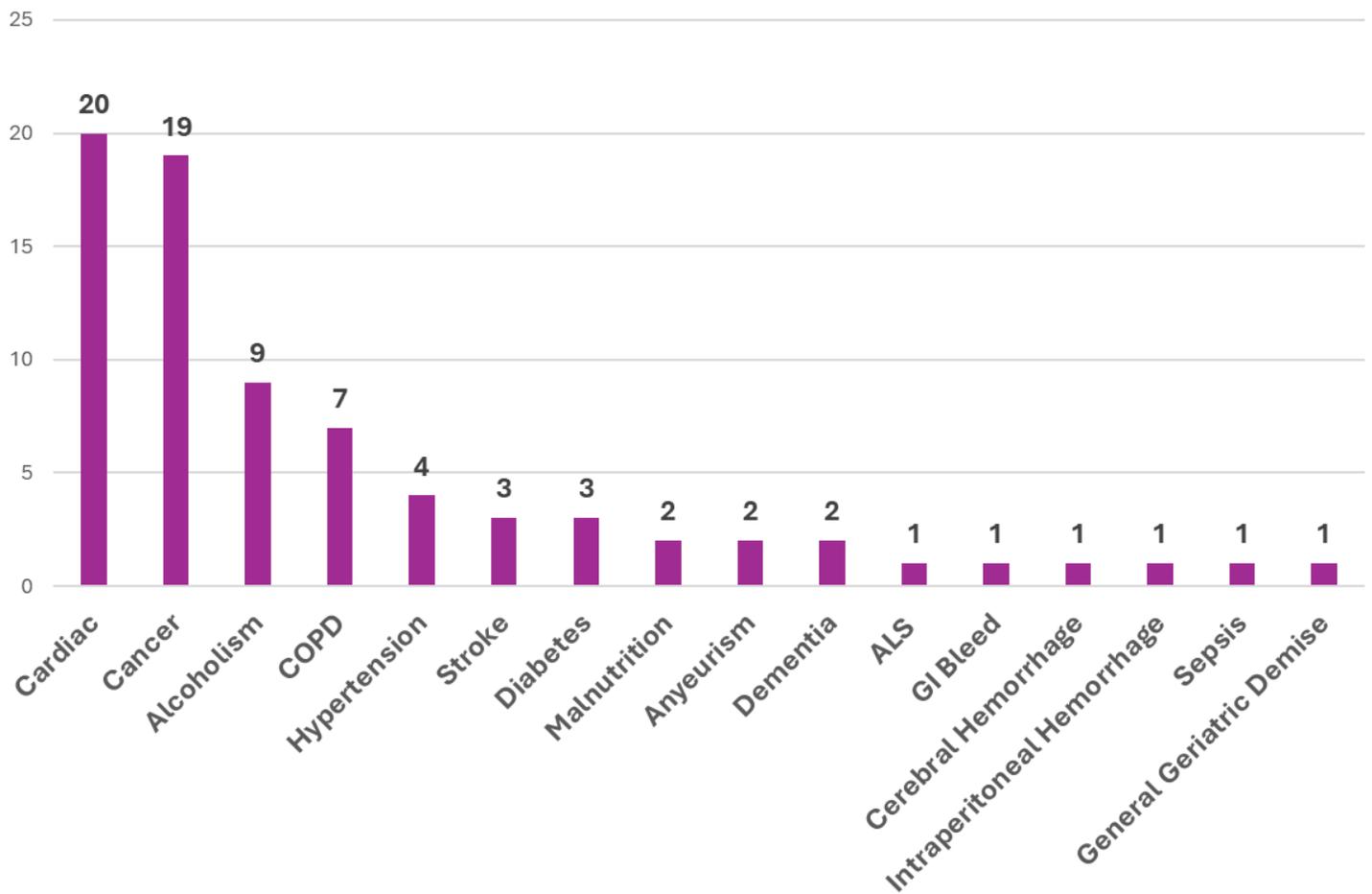
This year we will be working with our county commissioners on a plan to get more space for our office. When we moved into our current facility 12 years ago it was a stop gap measure, and we have outgrown the accommodations. From 2011 to 2022 we saw a 98% increase in our case load. Most years have seen a steady increase as you can see in the other annual reports. With an almost doubling case load it is easy to see how our current office is not large enough for the work. Our goal is to maintain the level of service we provide to the public and maintain our accreditation. Expanded work space will be necessary to do this. We have already engaged in good conversations and action in this endeavor. We look forward to finding a solution.

2023 CASES

TOTAL CASES:	106
ALCOHOL ASSOCIATED:	22
WITH COVID:	1
SCENE RESPONSES:	80
HOSPICE:	24
AUTOPSIED CASES:	38
TOXICOLOGY CASES:	43
DECEASED TRANSPORTS:	80
MORGUE USED:	82
EXTERNAL EXAMS:	80
MARIJUANA USE	14
DONOR REFERRALS:	1
ORGAN DONORS:	1
TISSUE DONORS:	7
WHOLE BODY DONORS:	3
EXHUMATIONS:	0
UNIDENTIFIED:	0
UNCLAIMED:	0
DEATH NOTIFICATION:	6
MANNERS OF DEATH:	
NATURAL:	77
ACCIDENTAL:	16
HOMICIDE:	0
SUICIDE:	13
UNDETERMINED:	0

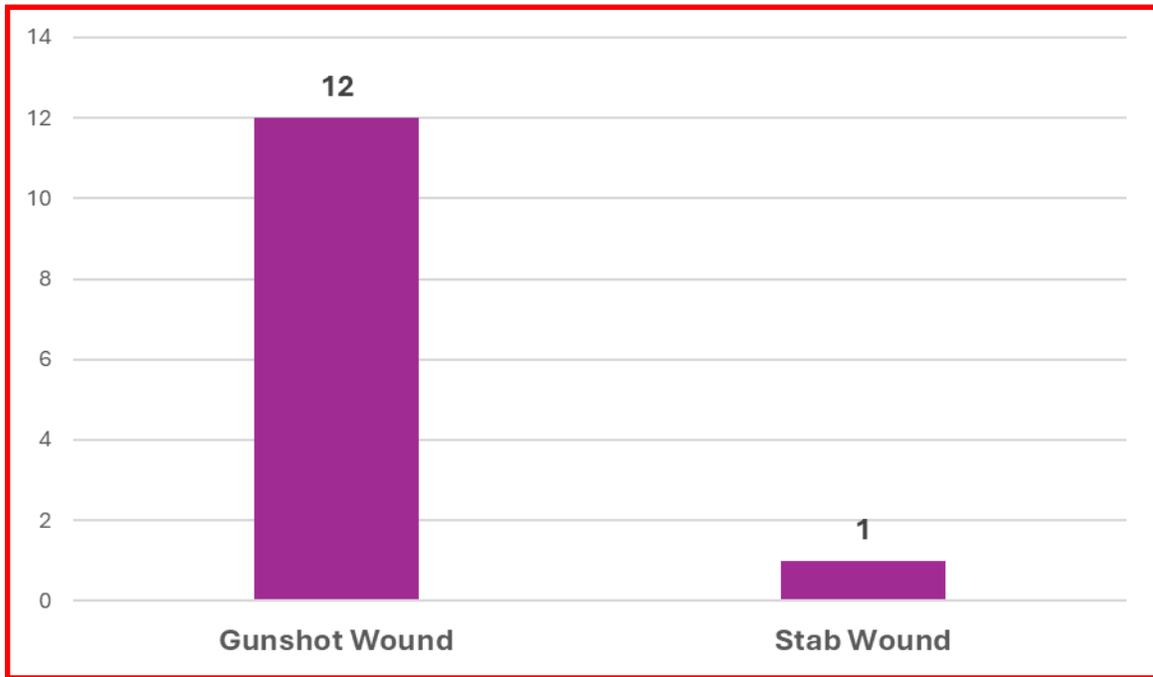
CAUSE OF DEATH BY MANNER NATURAL

TOTAL : 77



SUICIDE

TOTAL: 13

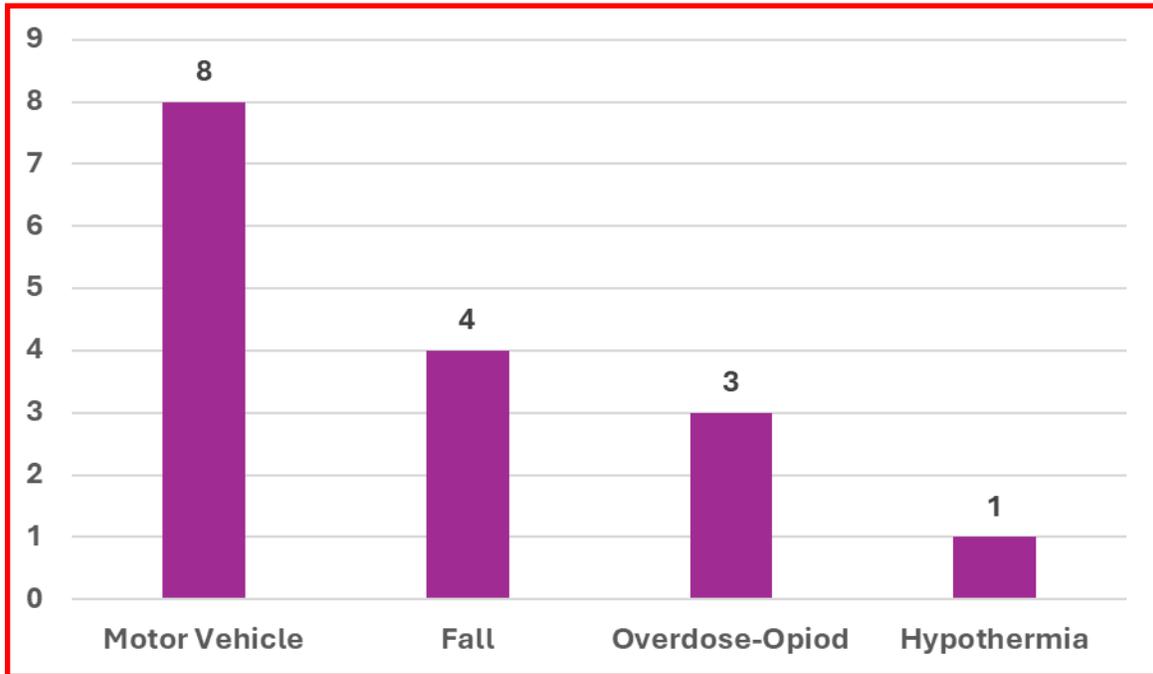


UN-DETERMINED

TOTAL: 0

ACCIDENTAL

TOTAL: 16



HOMICIDE

TOTAL: 0