

Annual Report for FY 2021-2022



Dr. Brian Pierce, DC, D-ABMDI

Coroner Baldwin County, Alabama



Baldwin County Coroner's Office Annual Report FY 2021-2022

Background:

The Baldwin County Coroner's Office (BCCO) covers over 2000 square miles within Baldwin County and serves some 241,667 residents as well as 6 Million Tourists annually. Coroner, Dr. Brian Pierce appointed 4 Deputy Coroners to assist him with his duties and the County Commission provided 2 administrative assistants. Phones are answered 24 hours/day, 365 days a year. 1300 deaths were reported to the Coroner's Office in FY 2021-22.

As the height of the Covid Pandemic eased, the Coroner's office continued to maintain a high call volume, averaging ~ 50 calls per month. Lessons learned during the pandemic, set new policies on post-mortem testing as well preparations for supply chain disruptions.

Baldwin County continues to endure its portion of the Fentanyl Crisis, with drug overdoses being the primary cause of unnatural death in Baldwin County.

Finally, Baldwin County continues its unprecedented growth which is suspected to continue at a 2.5% rate annually through 2030.

The following report includes statistical analysis of unattended and unexpected deaths that occurred in Baldwin County from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022.

The primary purpose of the Coroner's Office is to investigate unattended, unexplained, violent, and accidental deaths as set forth in the Constitution of Alabama Title 11, Chapter 5.

Mission Statement

To accurately determine the cause and manner of death, of individuals that die within Baldwin County; through a fair, ethical, and competent investigation of death; performed by qualified and trained individuals, in accordance with the accepted medicolegal death investigation professional standards; ensuring the integrity of the investigation.

To establish and maintain cooperative, professional relationships with law enforcement, funeral homes, and other community members.

To assist the bereaved in the loss of a loved one.

To earn and hold the trust and respect of the citizens that we are privileged and honored to serve.

FY 2021-22 the Office of the Coroner had the following Staffing:

Dr. Brian Pierce DC, D-ABMDI: Coroner

Investigations

Troy Dyess, D-ABMDI: Chief Deputy Coroner

Deputy Coroners

Daren Montgomery, D-ABMDI

Nick Miller, D-ABMDI

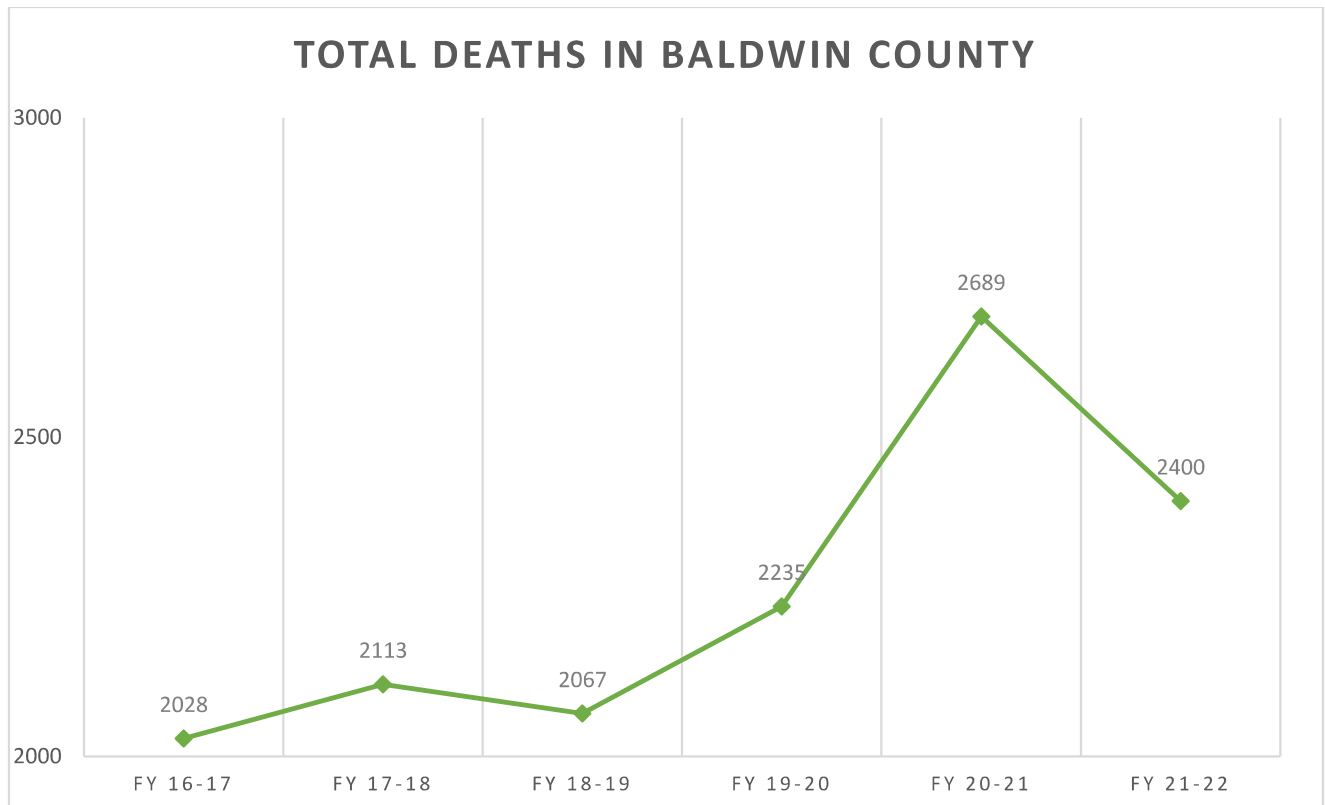
Tim Cooper

Administration

Brandy Byrd: Administrative Support Specialist III

Shanna Bonner: Administrative Support Specialist I

Deputy Coroners currently serve as temporary employees through SARPC. SARPC provides temporary employees Workers Compensation Benefits and some Mental Health Benefits as well.



October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022

***635 Cases accepted for Investigation**

	# of Cases / Total Deaths	% of Deaths
FY 18-19	479/2067	= 24% of all deaths
FY 19-20	562/2235	= 26% of all deaths
FY 20-21	663/2689	= 25% of all deaths
FY 21-22	635/2400	=27% of all deaths

Breakdown of Coroner Cases

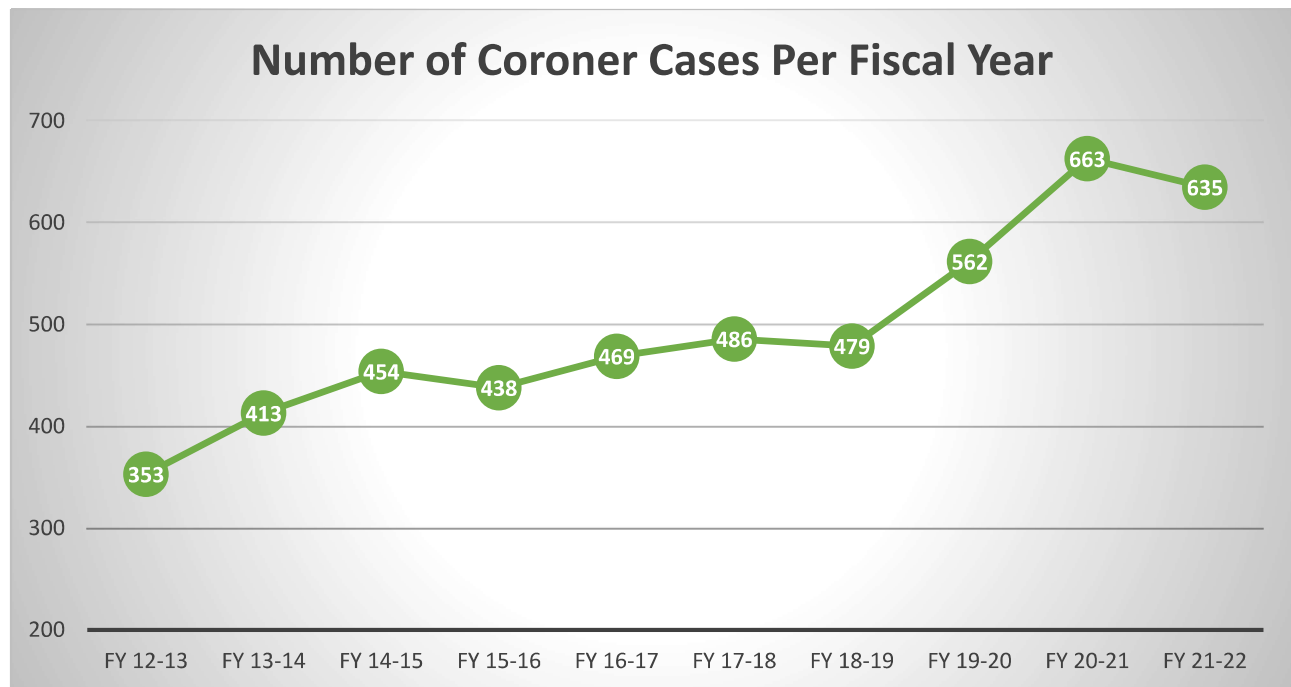
Natural	481		73%
Drug Deaths	65		11%
Suicides	39	*5 Overdosed	7%
Blunt Force	32	*MVA/ Fall from Height	5%
Drownings	6		1%
Homicides	7		1%
Fire Deaths	5		1%
Undetermined	5		1%
TOTAL	<u>635</u>		

Cases Reported to the Baldwin County Coroner's Office

***2400 Deaths, 1300 were reported to our office**

1300 Cases

Non-Coroner Cases	48	*Under a Doctor's care
Coroner Cases w/ Investigation	635	
●198 sent for Autopsy		
●437 Medical Record Review		
Hospice Deaths	617	



Cases Sent for Autopsy: 198 (31% of Coroner Cases)

Medical Record Review Only: 437 (69% of Coroner Cases)

Gender: Males – 406 (64% of Coroner Cases)

Females – 229 (36% of Coroner Cases)

		% of Baldwin County Residents
Race:	Caucasian – 579 (87.33% of Coroner Cases)	83%
	Black – 71 (10.71% of Coroner Cases)	9%
	Hispanic – 11 (1.66% of Coroner Cases)	5%
	Other – 2 (0.30% of Coroner Cases)	3%

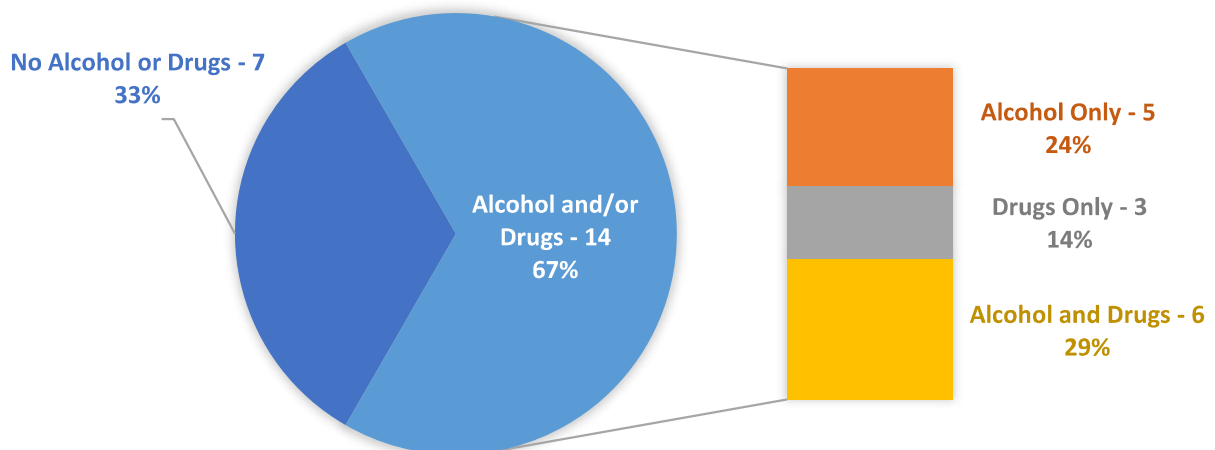
Transportation Fatalities

Transportation Fatalities FY 2021 – 2022

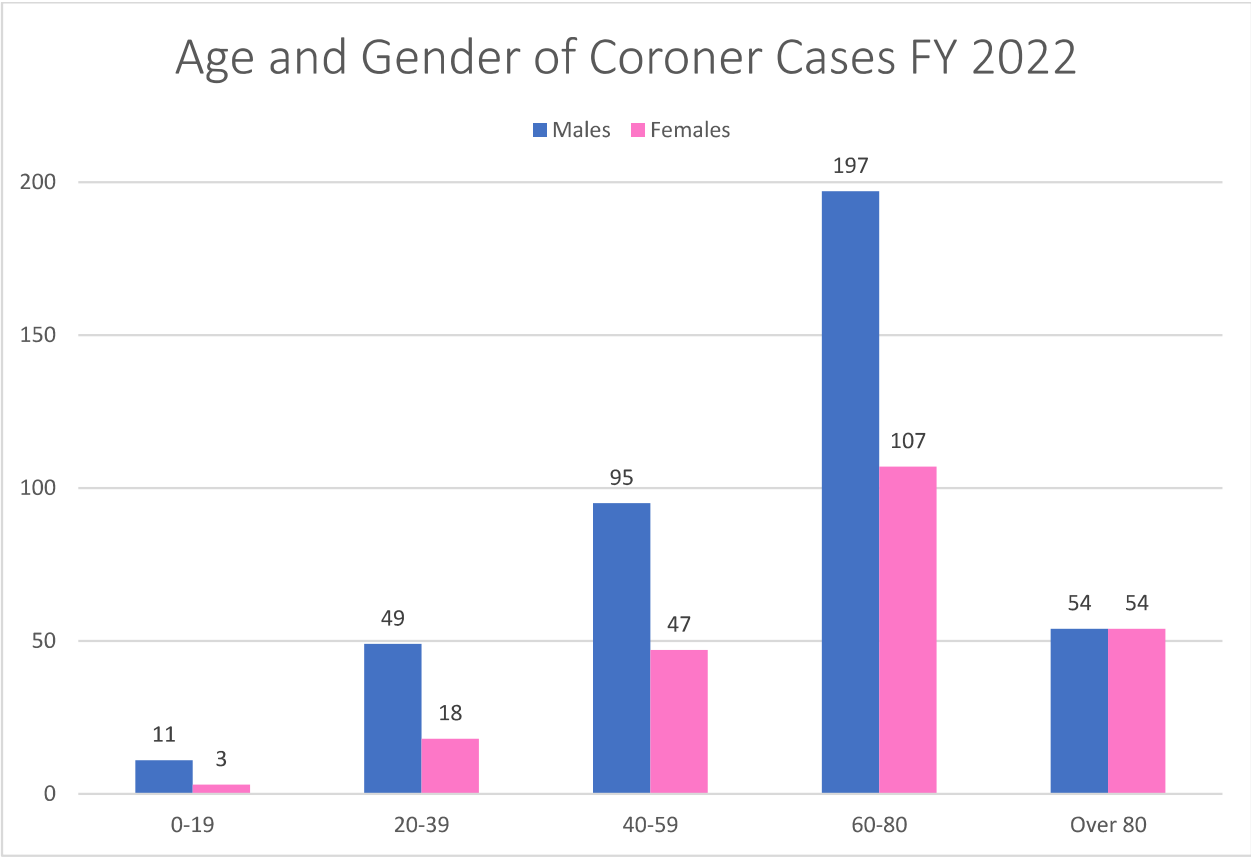
Automobile	15
Other Motorized Vehicle	3
Pedestrian	3
Total	21

Seatbelt Usage in Automobile Fatalities	
Seatbelt Used	4
Seatbelt Not Used	7
Unknown if Seatbelt Used	4

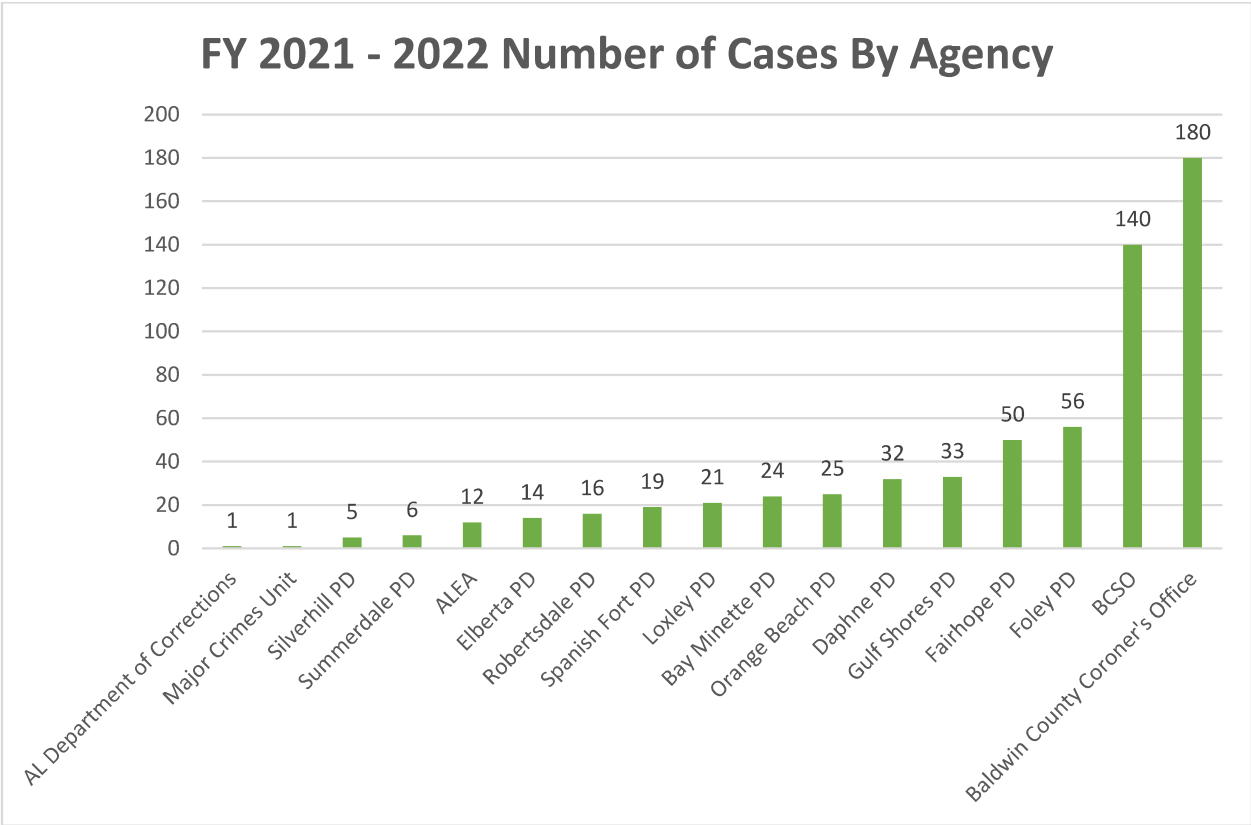
TOXICOLOGY IN TRANSPORTATION FATALITY CASES



Death Investigation by Age



Death Investigation by Agency



The Baldwin County Coroner's Office assisted 16 agencies with investigations of death that occurred in Baldwin County. The Office also handled 180 death investigations that had no Law Enforcement involvement.

The office continued to maintain a 1-hour response time as well as a timely progression of Death Investigation, resolving most cases in less than 90 days

Continued assistance with Law Enforcement, the District Attorney, and the Alabama Department of Forensic Science (ADFS) office is essential for these cases to be adjudicated timely, accurately and without bias.

The BCCO was responsible for taking custody of 392 bodies, of which 198 were sent to ADFS, in Mobile, AL, for autopsy then released/returned to a funeral home of the family's choice.

The BCCO transported and housed 194 bodies for families from out of state or for cases needing a medical record review.

Transportation costs for the 2021-22 FY was \$117,475.00, down from \$118,925.00 the previous year. The County was reimbursed 67% or \$80,675.00 from Cities and Towns that had deaths requiring transportation to the Morgue or to ADFS

The Coroner's office responded to 205 death scenes for investigative purposes. Typically, when Coroners respond to a scene, an autopsy is warranted. Each case is different but often scene investigation will result in at least an external exam and toxicology.

This past year the Coroner's Office could identify 100 % of the cases, leaving no case unidentified. The Coroner's office assisted the Council on Aging with 12 County Cremations.

The BCCO along with the Baldwin County Commission, signed a Facility Use Agreement with the Legacy of Hope. This has allowed the County to receive revenues from the Coroner's assistance with tissue donations. The BCCO assisted with 190 Tissue harvests in FY2021-2022. The BCCO assists the organ recovery teams whenever it is feasible to honor the subject's or family wishes. We do, however, guard the public trust and should further investigation be warranted for pending charges, the request to harvest may be denied by the Coroner's Office.

As we move into 2023, the office will continue to maintain its response time of 1-hour county wide. Continue to advance the educational status of its investigators as well as the public as to the scope of work performed by the Office of the Coroner. Maintain our Accreditation by IACME and work closely with our community partners to assist families who are dealing with unexpected deaths and work to prevent common accidental deaths.

We will continue to assist the Baldwin County Narcotic Homicide unit by providing rapid drug testing for Drug related cases.

We will work diligently toward achieving the Strategic Goal put forth by the County Commission: **“For Baldwin County to experience a Coroner’s Office that is prepared to serve its functional population and is prepared for a Mass Casualty Incident”**. As Baldwin County grows, so should our ability to serve it.

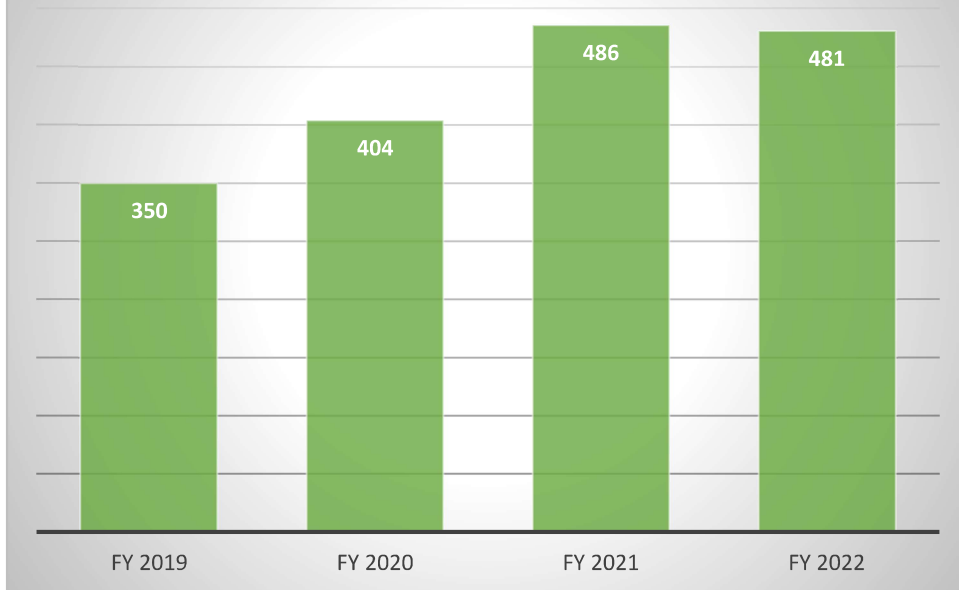
I would respectfully submit this FY 2022 report to the Commission, along with the attached spreadsheet.

In your Service,

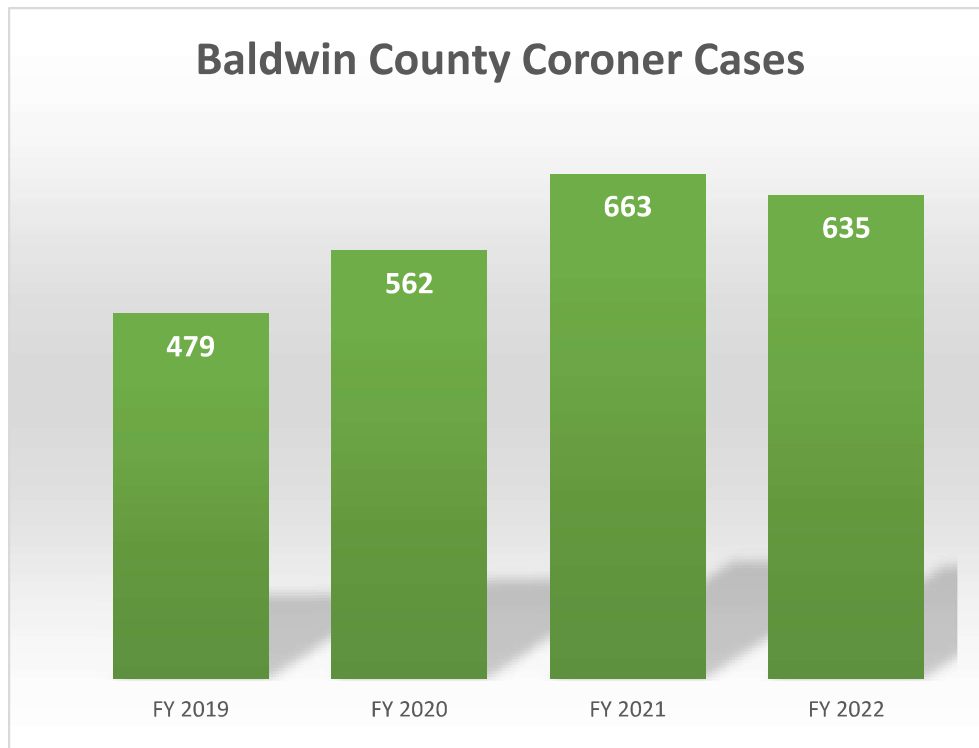
Dr. Brian Pierce, DC, D-ABMDI
Coroner of Baldwin County

1-31-2023

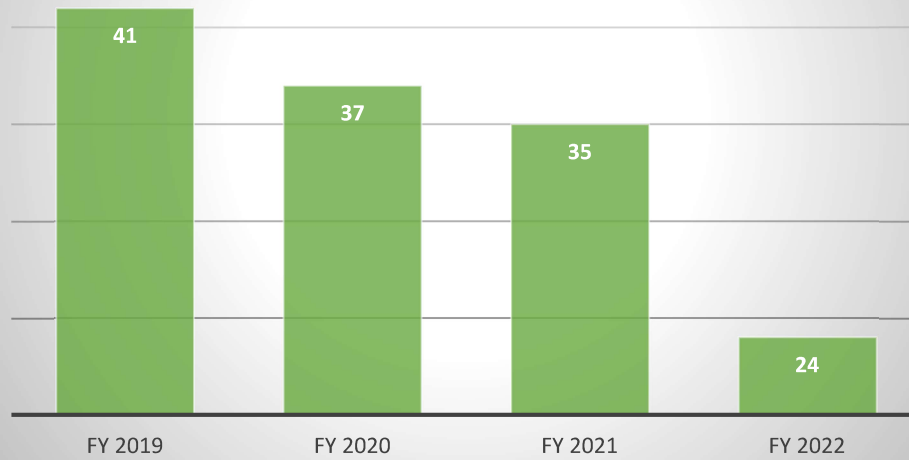
Number of Natural Deaths



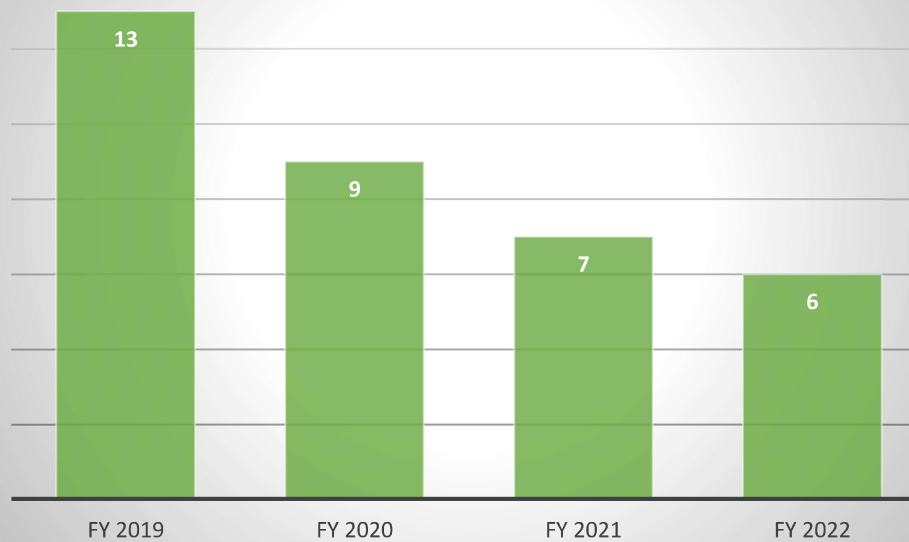
Baldwin County Coroner Cases

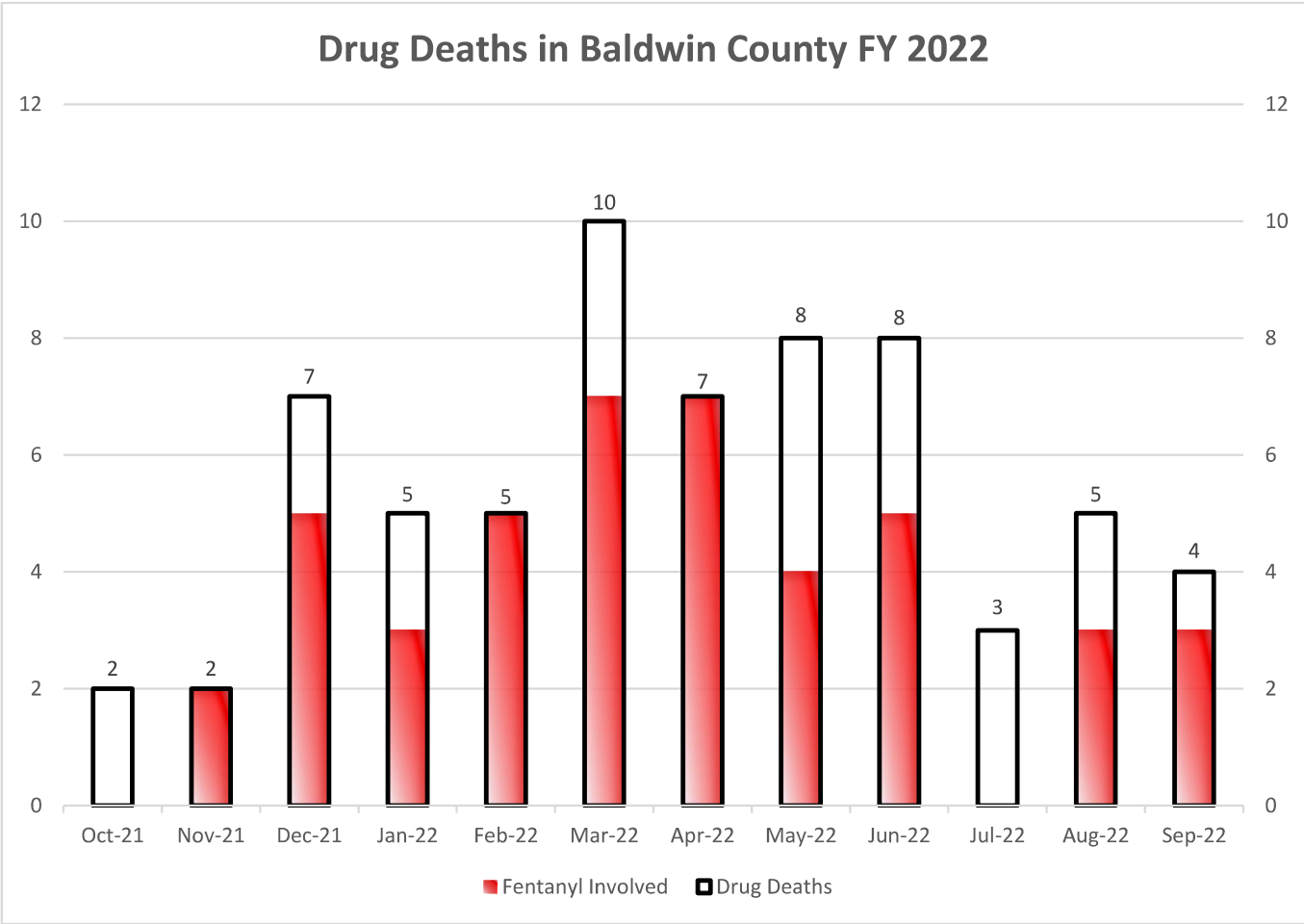
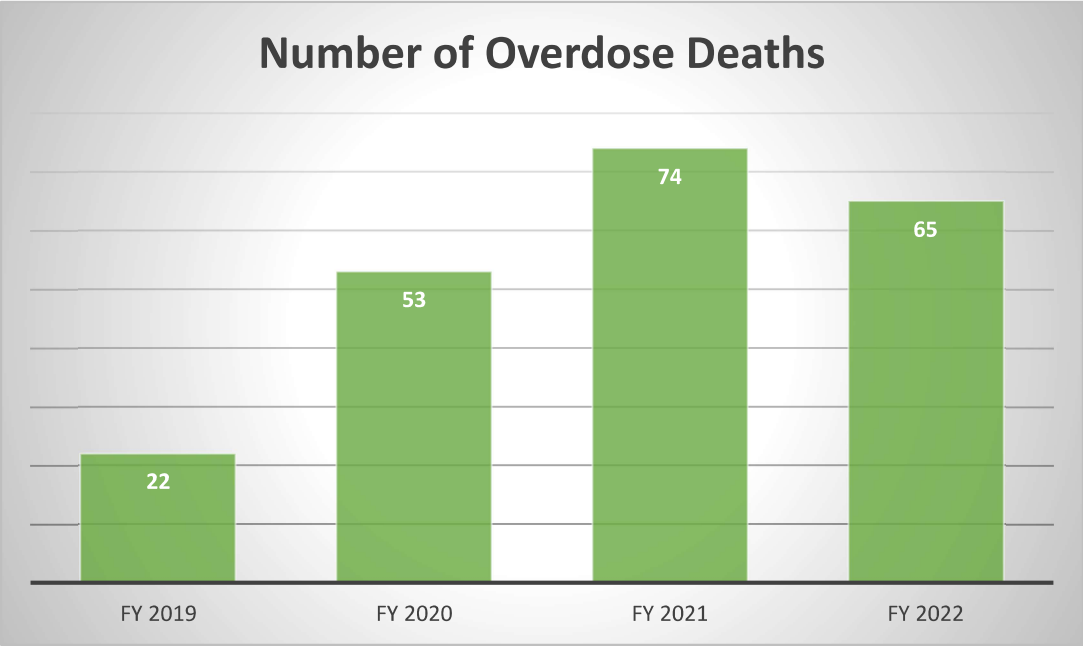


Number of Blunt Force Trauma Deaths



Number of Drowning Deaths





Fentanyl Deaths by Age Group

