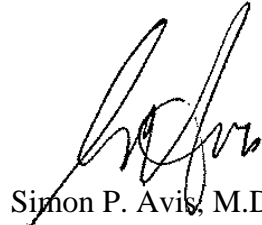


Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
Annual Activity Report 2016-17

Message from the Chief Medical Examiner

I hereby present the 2016-17 Annual Report of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. This report was prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. My signature below is indicative of my accountability for the results reported.

As a Category 3 Government Entity, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is required to report at an activity level. The information presented in this report outlines the activities of the Office from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017. Specific data reported are for the calendar year of 2015, the most recent year for which complete records are available.



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Chief Medical Examiner
Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

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Overview

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is located in the Health Sciences Centre, Prince Philip Drive, St. John's. Independence of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is heightened and enhanced through the employment of the Chief Medical Examiner as a Full Professor in Memorial University of Newfoundland's Faculty of Medicine.

Administrative support is provided by an Administrative Officer with additional clerical support provided by a medical dictatypist. Files related to the investigations conducted by the Office are presently stored at the central office in St. John's for the previous five years. Older files are stored off site.

During the calendar year 2015, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner investigated 574 deaths that were reportable under the *Fatalities Investigations Act*, Chapter F-6.1, SNL 1995. According to the Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund Year Ended 31 March 2017, actual expenditures of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner were \$1,026,635.

Facts of Interest

During the calendar year 2015, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner investigated 574 deaths that met the criteria for reporting under sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the *Fatalities Investigations Act*. The geographic locations of reportable deaths were as follows:

1. Avalon Peninsula	309	(includes 254 from metro St. John's)
2. Central Newfoundland	136	
3. Western Newfoundland	91	
4. Labrador	38	
	Total	574

And included:

1. Natural deaths	370	
2. Accidental deaths	128	
3. Suicides	61	
4. Homicides	4	
5. Undetermined	11	
	Total	574

Of the 128 accidental deaths, 84 included:

Motor vehicle deaths	49
Drowning	15
Drug overdose	20
Total	84

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner also performs a number of other duties. The information provided is from the 2015 calendar year (excluding cremation permits), which was the most recent year for which the information was available at the time this report was prepared.

The Office receives many requests during the year to analyze bones found by citizens or police throughout the province. These bones are analyzed to determine whether or not they are human remains. During 2015, the Chief Medical Examiner received 15 requests from police jurisdictions for examination. In all 15 cases the bones were determined to be non-human in origin.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner also reviews all requests for cremations in the province. During the calendar year 2016, the Office reviewed 2,442 requests for cremations and issued the appropriate permits.

The Chief Medical Examiner also reviews certain non-fatal trauma cases. This occurs at the request of the police or crown attorneys for an analysis of trauma. During the calendar year 2015, the Chief Medical Examiner reviewed 7 non-fatal trauma cases.

The Office also provides statistics to various organizations regarding specific causes or manner of death. In 2015, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner provided detailed information on the following:

Type of Death	#
Drowning	15
Motor Vehicle Accident	49
Suicide	61
Total	125

Report on Activities

Issue 1: Compliance with Fatalities Investigations Act

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner responds to reportable deaths as defined by the *Fatalities Investigations Act*. The response to a particular death is dependent upon the circumstances of the deceased's health, level of health care at the time of death and the suspected cause of death. Some cases may involve a review of information submitted by a medical examiner, a post-mortem examination or the assistance of a Forensic Anthropologist.

The following information reports on the activities of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner during fiscal year 2016-17.

Objective 1: During the timeframe 2014-17, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will have responded to deaths that are reported in accordance with the *Fatalities Investigations Act*.

Measure: Responded to reported deaths

Indicators	Results
Conducted file reviews of medical examiner's reports	574
Ordered and/or conducted post-mortem examinations, as appropriate	166
Ordered and/or conducted autopsies, as appropriate	210
Recorded and reported on cause of death	574

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

A review of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner was recently conducted by Dr. Matthew Bowes, Chief Medical Examiner for the Province of Nova Scotia. A final report has been released. The purpose of the review was to identify operational deficiencies and make appropriate recommendations to correct them. The review highlighted a number of areas where resources are needed, including staffing, physical structure and office management systems. The recommendations are presently under review by the Department of Justice and Public Safety. The implementation of the recommendations will require a significant financial commitment and require a coordinated approach between the various stakeholders.

Toxicological analysis on deaths investigated by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in 2015 included 76 full toxicological analysis and 48 urine screens, compared to 65 full toxicological screens and 60 urine screens in 2014. Monitoring of drug and drug-related deaths in Newfoundland and Labrador continues to be an important element of death investigation. It also continues to present potential challenges given the emergence and evolution of potent opiates and designer drugs.

Financial Statements

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are unaudited and based on public information provided in the Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the Year Ended 31 March 2017 (unaudited). The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is not required to provide a separate audited financial statement.

2.3.03. OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER

	Actual \$	Estimates	
		Amended \$	Original \$
01. Salaries.....	539,396	541,400	516,400
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	3,235	3,600	3,600
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	5,795	6,800	6,800
<i>Supplies</i>	2,602	1,900	1,900
<i>Professional Services</i>	69,298	222,000	186,000
<i>Purchased Services</i>	405,909	277,400	277,400
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	400	400	400
02. Operating Accounts.....	487,239	512,100	476,100
Total: Office of the Chief Medical Examiner...	1,026,635	1,053,500	992,500