

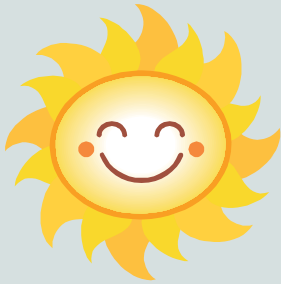


The Examiner

<http://www.wcmea.com>



Summer 2014



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope that this WCMEA newsletter finds everyone enjoying the summer, and some well deserved vacation time. The year is already more than half over and I'm not really sure where it has gone. It won't be long and we will be shoveling snow again so I guess the message is to enjoy the nice Wisconsin weather while it's here.

As everyone knows, this bill had bipartisan support, with some lawmakers saying we, or perhaps they, needed to do more to require mandated training. We hope that taking these steps in the upcoming session will allow us to see success.

I recently received an email from Dr. Doug Kelley, Fond du Lac County's Chief Medical Examiner regarding some of the federal efforts that will require far reaching changes in the forensic community. This will affect everyone in the business from the Deputy Coroner or Medicolegal Investigator to the forensic pathologists that perform our autopsies. For those that doubt that the federal government is actually going to take these steps I would submit that the doubt be removed. The initiative for standardization in forensics is well underway. I would encourage everyone to visit this site, and look at others that have been shared in the emails and newsletters that you have received. You can see the article that Dr. Kelley shared here: <http://www.nist.gov/forensics/osarc.cfm>.

Mass fatality (MF) planning has certainly been an issue at the forefront for 2013 and 2014. I am sure that each of the office leaders has had the opportunity to work with their Public Health, and EM offices as the mandate to develop or update your MF plan moves forward. I think we are fortunate that our Public Health partners have this as one of their mandates. It allows us to take the time to revisit our plans that may need updating.

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I think that an update on a couple issues is in order. First, the plans for the 979 legislation; The Board has decided to take some steps to resolve some of the problematic issues we faced in the last session. The first of those is to remove the mandate requiring elected Coroners to receive the training otherwise required for a license. This was an issue for the Wisconsin Counties Association and seemed to be a sticking point for one of the Sheriff's Associations as well. Our hope is that the elected officials will still avail themselves to the training and the bill will still fund the training for those officials.

The Board has also concurred with our Lobbyists regarding potential sponsors for the bill in the upcoming session. We hope to have the sponsors and the bill in its final format toward the end of the year so that we can get it moving as soon as our governmental lawmakers get back in session.

We owe a large debt of gratitude to Amy Sue Vruwink for her efforts in getting our bill into law. Unfortunately, the political situation in Wisconsin, for better or worse, won't currently allow us to reach our goal with Amy Sue as the sponsor.



Conference Highlights

The 2014 Annual Spring Conference was held in Marathon County at the beautiful Jefferson Street Inn April 7, 2014 through April 9, 2014. There were approximately 60 attendees who were welcomed by Marathon County Sheriff Scott Parks and Medical Examiner Jessica Blahnik.



The conference-goers enjoyed presentations from local and national names on topics ranging from police/in-custody deaths and court testimony to motor vehicle fatalities and the lost art of external examinations.

Vital Records provided updates and helpful tips regarding SVRIS, and representatives from the Wisconsin Injury and Violence Prevention Program provided research updates regarding suicides throughout the state. The association also heard from lobbyist Lenzendorf-Winters & Associates regarding the progress of the 979 legislation and the plan for the WCMEA moving forward.



An evening social event was generously sponsored by American Tissue Services Foundation on Monday, April 7, 2014 and proved to be an event to remember. It marked the first-ever roast of a retired Medical Examiner and WCMEA Past President, John Larson. Memories and laughs were shared by all who attended.

The WCMEA would like to thank our amazing host Marathon County, the wonderful staff at the Jefferson Street Inn, as well as the many superb presenters, sponsors, and exhibitors for their time, hospitality and expertise.

The 2014 Fall Conference and Annual Meeting will be hosted by La Crosse County from October 27, 2014 through October 29, 2014. Please visit the WCMEA website for more details!

Findings from the Wisconsin Violent Death Reporting System: Suicide in Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Violent Death Reporting System (WVDRS) is a public health surveillance tool that collects comprehensive information on all incidents of violent death in Wisconsin, including: homicides, suicides, deaths due to legal intervention, unintentional firearm deaths, deaths of undetermined intent, and deaths due to terrorism. The system compiles existing data from death certificates, law enforcement records, and coroner and medical examiner reports, including toxicology results, in order to identify patterns in the characteristics of victims and circumstances related to violent death. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) uses the data gathered by WVDRS to inform violence prevention efforts across Wisconsin. WVDRS plays a critical role in translating the information obtained during the investigation of violent death incidents into the knowledge used to develop, implement, and evaluate effective strategies for mitigating violence.

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Suicide in Wisconsin *Continued from Page 2*

Most recently, DHS has used data from WVDRS to examine the nature and extent of suicide in Wisconsin. Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death among people of all ages in the state and the fourth leading cause of years of potential life lost, following unintentional injuries, malignant neoplasms, and heart disease. From 2007 to 2011, Wisconsin averaged 724 suicides per year, meaning that approximately two people in Wisconsin took their own lives every day. Improving our understanding of suicide with the help of tools such as WVDRS is an important step in reducing these numbers. Key findings from WVDRS related to suicides among Wisconsin residents aged ten and over during 2007-2011 are summarized below:

- Those aged 45-54 experienced the highest rate of suicide.
- Males died by suicide four times more often than females.
- Whites and American Indians/Alaskan Natives experienced the highest rates of suicide, followed by Asians/Pacific Islanders, Blacks, and Hispanics of any race.
- People who did not graduate from high school were overrepresented among suicide decedents, while people with graduate degrees were underrepresented.
- Divorced people were overrepresented among suicide decedents, while married people were underrepresented.
- Approximately 20% of Wisconsin residents who died by suicide had served in the armed forces. In the general population of Wisconsin, only 10% of residents have served in the armed forces.
- Nearly half of all deaths due to suicide involved firearms.
- Among suicides with known circumstances, 51% of decedents were experiencing a current diagnosed mental health problem and 43% were receiving treatment.
- Among suicides with known circumstances, 26% of decedents were suffering from an alcohol problem and 13% were suffering from another substance abuse problem.
- Among suicides with conclusive toxicology findings, 37% of decedents tested positive for alcohol and 19% tested positive for opiates.
- Among suicides with known circumstances, 35% of decedents were experiencing intimate partner problems, 23% were experiencing physical health problems, and 21% were experiencing job problems.
- Among suicides with known circumstances, 24% of decedents had a history of suicide attempt (s) and 34% disclosed their intent to die by suicide to at least one person.

These findings are further explained in the report, *The Burden of Suicide in Wisconsin: 2007-2011*, expected to be released in July 2014. The report will be available on the DHS Injury and Violence Prevention Program website: <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/InjuryPrevention/index.htm>. The Department of Health Services, Prevent Suicide Wisconsin, and other stakeholders are using the information in this report to direct Wisconsin's strategic plan to prevent suicide. As partners in the collection of WVDRS data, the coroners and medical examiners of Wisconsin are instrumental to understanding suicide in Wisconsin. WVDRS program staff understand that this process can require additional time on the part of coroner and medical examiner agencies and would like to sincerely thank all those who contribute data to the system. Please contact Dr. Harold Weiss, Principal Investigator of the Wisconsin Violent Death Reporting System, with any questions or requests for additional information at (608) 266-3008 or Harold.Weiss@wi.gov.

Matt Guerrieri, Public Health Associate, Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Heat Related Deaths in Wisconsin- Important Information from Wisconsin Emergency Management, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and the National Weather Service

In 2013, Wisconsin had 11 confirmed heat related deaths. Many of those victims were socially isolated maintaining little contact with family and friends. In 2012, Wisconsin had confirmed 24 heat related deaths, most occurred during five days of Excessive Heat Warnings from July 2-6. The heat index rose to 105° F degrees for 48 hours with night time lows of 75° F. It was the second hottest and third longest heat wave in Wisconsin. None of the victims had air conditioning and they did not seek shelter at one of the many cooling centers which opened around the state.

In 2011, excessive heat claimed five lives and injured more than 100 people in Wisconsin during the July 17-21 heat wave. Once again none of those victims had air conditioning. The combination of the warm temperatures and high humidity caused the heat index to rise between 100° F and 117° F.

NOAA's National Weather Service

Heat Index

Temperature (°F)

Relative Humidity (%)	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	100	102	104	106	108	110
40	80	81	83	85	88	91	94	97	101	105	109	114	119	124	130	136
45	80	82	84	87	89	93	96	100	104	109	114	119	124	130	137	
50	81	83	85	88	91	95	99	103	108	113	118	124	131	137		
55	81	84	86	89	93	97	101	106	112	117	124	130	137			
60	82	84	88	91	95	100	105	110	116	123	129	137				
65	82	85	89	93	98	103	108	114	121	128	136					
70	83	86	90	95	100	105	112	119	126	134						
75	84	88	92	97	103	109	116	124	132							
80	84	89	94	100	106	113	121	129								
85	85	90	96	102	110	117	126	135								
90	86	91	98	105	113	122	131									
95	86	93	100	108	117	127										
100	87	95	103	112	121	132										

Likelihood of Heat Disorders with Prolonged Exposure or Strenuous Activity

Caution
 Extreme Caution
 Danger
 Extreme Danger

Summer heat waves have been the biggest weather-related killers in Wisconsin for the past 50 years, far exceeding tornadoes, severe storms and floods combined. Heat is the number one weather-related killer in the United States. People at higher risk of a heat-related illness include:

- Older adults, Infants, and young children
- People with chronic heart or lung problems
- People with disabilities
- Overweight persons
- Those who work outdoors or in hot settings
- Users of some medications, especially those taken for mental disorders, movement disorder, allergies, depression, and heart or circulatory problems
- People who are socially isolated and don't know when or how to cool off – or when to call for help

President's Message....Continued from Page 1

I know that this task can seem daunting. Certainly we can't plan for every mass fatality event that is possible. What we can benefit from is the process of identifying the resources in our individual counties and giving thought to what we would need for a given event. What partner counties can we get assistance from? The pandemic plans that counties worked on several years ago can provide a starting place and really any effort to update the plans will help to inform not just the C/ME community but the other county leaders as well.

Another effort that is being worked is a way for other county Coroner and Medical Examiner staff to be involved with the Dane Fatality Incident Response Support Team (D-FIRST). Certainly others can be involved if a county has a MF event. The issue we took to the state was the fact that there is nothing in place to cover insurance concerns or compensation when one office helps another. This is something that part of the Mass Fatality Expert Panel is working on with Public Health and Wisconsin Emergency Management. I am hopeful that this moves forward because there really is no mutual aid language in our statutes for the Coroner/Medical Examiner offices. The hope is that statutory language may mirror that of the Structural Collapse or CBRNE Teams. I know that when a Coroner or Medical Examiner calls another county for help, the help will come. My hope is that the questions surrounding those other issues can be resolved. Stay tuned for more information.

The fall conference is shaping up nicely. Jennifer Schroeter the WCMEA 1st VP is working hard to put things together. Mark your calendars, the conference is in La Crosse and the dates are October 27 - 29, 2014.

Elections are on the horizon. The open membership nomination papers were emailed to everyone and are on the WCMEA membership side of the website. Please take the time to nominate someone that you believe will serve the membership well. Log into www.wcmea.com, and then onto the "member only" side to get to the nomination documents. That nomination process is open until the end of August. I would also encourage anyone that can't make it to the conference to please use the absentee balloting. There won't be nominations from the floor (pursuant to the WCMEA constitution) so everyone will have a chance to vote!!

Another request is for you to provide your email address to the Association so that we can stay in touch with the membership. We still have some members that say they aren't receiving email information. Jennifer Schroeter and Mary Ricci are working hard to keep this list updated. Please help us stay connected to the membership.

Have a great summer, and if there is anything that I or any WCMEA Board member can do to help you, please let us know.

Barry E. Irmen
 President WCMEA
 irmen@countyofdane.com

Upcoming Training Opportunities

WCMEA Fall Conference
October 27-29, 2014 in La Crosse, Wisconsin

Milwaukee County ME's Office -25th Annual
John R. Teggatz Forensic Science Conference
November 5 & 6, 2014—Milwaukee, WI
For more information please go to:

New Mexico Tech has multiple training opportunities
available . For more information go to:
<http://www.emrtc.nmt.edu/training.php>

St. Louis University School of Medicine
Medicolegal Death Investigator Training Course
2015: January 5-9; April 20-24; and October 26-30
To register: <http://medschool.slu.edu/mlidi/>

Interesting Deaths in Wisconsin.....

- In **Washington County**- a 37-year old man and his 38-year old wife were killed in a crash in Richfield. The couple's car was northbound when it crossed the center line, entered a ditch, hit a culvert, went airborne and hit a utility pole before landing upside down. The man was thrown from the vehicle, and his wife was pinned inside. Both were pronounced dead at the scene. The couple left behind their 5 children ranging in age from 16 months to 13 years.
- In **Manitowoc County**- A 34-year old man was stabbed to death by his 54-year old stepfather. The two men were riding in a car with two other passengers when they began to argue. The car stopped, and the two men exited the vehicle where a scuffle ensued. The 34-year old man was stabbed in the chest; he then got back into the driver's side of the vehicle with one of the other men. He lost control of the vehicle and struck a truck. The man was transported to a local hospital where he later died of his injuries. The 54-year old stepfather left the scene of the stabbing and was later taken into custody. He has since been charged with the crime.
- In **Kenosha County**- A 34-year old man and his 33-year old wife were killed in a crash. The man was driving a minivan on I-94 when he crashed into the back of a semi-trailer. The man was taken by Flight for Life to Froedtert Hospital where he died of injuries days later. His wife was pronounced dead at the scene. The couple left behind their two young children ages 2 months and 2 years.
- In **Winnebago County**- The Menasha Police Department stopped a funeral for a baby boy, and postponed his burial. Just prior to the services, police were notified of concerns regarding the child's death. The baby had been born prematurely by emergency C-section. The death was never reported to the coroner's office by the hospital. An autopsy has since been ordered.
- In **Shawano County**- A body recovered from a pond near Shawano Lake in the town of Wescott has been identified as a 42-year-old man from Shawano who had been missing for 10 months. Friends and family last saw the man in mid-July but didn't report him missing for nearly three months, because it was not unusual for him to disappear for long periods of time. Sheriff's deputies conducted an investigation over five months and searched areas around the man's last-known locations, which included the area around the Loon Lake boat landing. The death does not appear to be suspicious.
- In **Rock County**- The body of a 21-year old woman was found near the Rock River. An autopsy revealed that the woman died from blunt force trauma to the head. The primary suspect has already been charged with attempted homicide following the stabbing of his best friend. According to police, the suspect admits to killing 3 people.
- In **Jackson County**- A 58-year old woman was killed in a crash with a semi. The woman failed to stop for a sign on Ellis Road and drove into the path of a semi. Authorities do not know yet if alcohol was a factor in the crash. State Patrol is doing the reconstruction.
- In **Dane County**- A 33-year old man was shot by police after he allegedly stabbed his neighbor, 57 years old, her 34-year old daughter, and her 20-year old son. The woman died at the scene of the attack, and her daughter died later at UW Hospital. The son suffered multiple stab wounds but was able to get outside and summon help. The suspect was also taken to UW Hospital where he died. DCI is the lead agency investigating the officer-involved shooting.
- In **Wood County**- A 29-year old man died in a motorcycle crash. The man was traveling east on Hwy 73 when he collided with a car that failed to yield. He was not wearing a helmet, and was pronounced dead at the scene.

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Interesting Deaths....Continued from Page 6

- In **Walworth County**- A 31-year old man is dead after he was stabbed inside an apartment. The Walworth County Sheriff's Department responded to the scene. The man was taken to a local hospital where he later died. Officials say that there were several people inside of the home at the time of the incident. One of them suffered minor injuries and was treated at the scene. A 39-year old man was taken into custody.
- In **Kenosha County**- A 61-year old woman and local pastor dies after a freak accident. The woman was going through the drive-thru at McDonald's when she dropped her debit card. She opened the car door to retrieve the card, but took her foot off the brake. The car rolled against the restaurant, pinning her between the door and the car. The woman was transported to a local hospital where she later died.
- In **Walworth County**- A 43-year old male doused himself with a gasoline/oil mixture and set himself on fire. He was flown to a Milwaukee hospital where he died hours later.
- In **Marathon County**- A 33-year old male was found dead along the shore of the Wisconsin River. The man's body was found lying on rocks next to the water on Wausau's west side. According to authorities, the body had been discovered by the man's significant other who had been searching for him on a trail they liked to hike together. The death remains under investigation.
- In **Manitowoc County**- A 53-year old male was killed in a motorcycle crash. The man was driving his motorcycle on County X when he collided with a corn planter pulled by a farm tractor. The man was pronounced at the scene. He was not wearing a helmet at the time of the crash. The driver of the farm tractor was uninjured. Alcohol and weather were believed to have been contributing factors.
- In **Milwaukee County**- a 38-year old man was killed in an industrial accident at Sonag Company. The Milwaukee Police Department investigated and determined the man was killed while making a repair in a concrete mixing tower. The man was a 5-year employee of the company. He leaves behind a wife and 3 young children.
- In **Milwaukee County**- A 6-year old boy died after being hit by a school bus. The boy had severe autism and ran from his house without his adult caregivers knowing about it. The entered a crosswalk against a red light and was hit by the bus. The boy died at the scene.
- In **Adams County**- A 55-year old man drowned while trying to launch his boat. The man and a neighbor were attempting to launch his pontoon boat into Lake Camelot when the boat got away. The man took off his coat and shoes and jumped into the water without a life preserver and attempted to swim after the boat. The man stopped responding to his neighbor who had been calling after him. Bystanders later pulled the man onto the beach and resuscitative efforts were attempted. The man was pronounced dead at the scene.
- In **Dane County**- A 26-year old woman was shot to death by 2 officers in her apartment. Officers were called to the apartment around 0120 hours for a report of a domestic disturbance. They found the woman armed with a semiautomatic handgun and spent 30 minutes talking with her. At one point, the woman presented a threat to the officers and was shot.
- In **Portage County**- A 30-year old man was shot and killed at the home of a Portage County Deputy. According to a news release, the man was masked and confronted the deputy and another individual as they returned home early in the morning. After a scuffle, the deputy, who was off-duty at the time, shot and killed the man. The man's vehicle was found parked outside of the home and a flammable liquid was found dispersed throughout the home. The man was known to the deputy and other individual.

Patrice Hall & Jennifer Schroeter
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Make a Splash WCMEA!

The Examiner is looking for interesting case investigations, as well as special WCMEA members to highlight in the fall publication. Please submit your case reports or personal entries to editors Patrice Hall or Jennifer Schroeter.

Forward submissions via e-mail:
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Or via USPS to:
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