



Madison County heroin deaths rise dramatically in 2015

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EDWARDSVILLE - The investigation of drug related deaths continued to keep the **Madison County Coroner's Office** busy during 2015. Although tests remain pending in some cases, it is believed that 77 people lost their lives last year in Madison County due to the scourge of drug abuse.

Nonn noted that the statistics reflects only those who died within the geographic boundaries of Madison County.

“This year’s statistics almost presents itself in a good news – bad news fashion” said Coroner Stephen Nonn. “The good news being that the total number of drug deaths are down from 92 in 2014. The bad news being that heroin deaths are up to a suspected 43 in 2015 from 26 in 2014.”

As of Dec. 31, 2015, the breakdown of drug-related death investigations undertaken by the Madison County Coroner’s Office include:

Heroin overdose, confirmed: 38

Suspected heroin (cases pending): 5

Fentanyl overdose: 7

Prescription Medication, confirmed: 11

Suspected Prescription, (pending): 8

Other Drugs, Pending: 1 (synthetic drugs)

Alcohol Poisoning, pending: 2

Other deaths as a complication of drug abuse/usage: 5

- Drowning due to methamphetamine intoxication
- Positional asphyxia due to alprazolam and ethanol intoxication
- Cardiac tamponade due to prolonged methamphetamine use
- Drowning/hypothermia due to opiate use (probable Heroin)
- Hypertensive cardiovascular disease exacerbated by methadone

“It is to say the least, disappointing to see the heroin numbers rising as they did”, said Coroner Nonn, “however, the numbers only parallel what is being seen nationally. We will continue with our drug take-back days that we hold in conjunction with the sheriff and the state’s attorney as well as our school presentations. Hopefully, we can plant seeds today that will bear fruit tomorrow.”

In overall agency operations during 2015, the Madison County Coroner’s Office generated reports on 2,635 cases of which 2,207 resulted in the case being cleared as an

anticipated death or where the decedent's physician could certify the death as a natural, medical event.

Coroner's investigations with subsequent issuance of the death certificate by Coroner Nonn was present in 349 cases. **These cases categorized by the manner of death are:**

Natural Causes: 152

Accident: 124

Suicide: 33

Homicide: 4

Pending cases: 36

The remaining 79 miscellaneous case reports reflect assistance to other law enforcement agencies, death notifications for out of area police and coroners, cases that are determined to be non-human bones and remains, and other assistance provided to area coroners.