

Medical Examiner

The Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office is a public service agency responsible for the investigation of violent, suspicious, and sudden and unexpected deaths and the provision of laboratory services. The agency is committed to the dignified and compassionate performance of these duties with impartiality and the highest professional levels of quality and timeliness in the service of the general public, medical, and legal communities and the overall public health of the citizens of Cuyahoga County.

Key Performance Measures

Indicator	2023 Actuals	2024 Actuals	2025 Target	2026 Target	2027 Target
ME Investigator Attendance at Death Scene	1,405	1,190	1,250	1,250	1,250
Total Cases Admitted	2,306	2,067	2,250	2,250	2,250
Total Autopsies (Jurisdictional)	934	925	1,000	1,000	1,000
Autopsies Performed (Other Counties)	475	485	500	500	500

Source of Funding and How it is Spent

FUNDING SOURCE	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Mid-year Forecast	2026 Executive Recommended Budget	2027 Executive Recommended Budget
General Fund	\$17,356,811	\$18,386,051	\$20,450,437	\$20,328,392	\$20,886,262
HHS Levy Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Special Revenue Fund	\$769,468	\$1,443,086	\$1,501,904	\$1,690,549	\$1,533,479
All Funds	\$18,126,279	\$19,829,137	\$21,952,341	\$22,018,941	\$22,419,741

EXPENDITURES	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Mid-year Forecast	2026 Executive Recommended Budget	2027 Executive Recommended Budget
Personnel Services	\$13,503,346	\$14,429,430	\$16,168,837	\$16,230,870	\$16,620,174
Other Expenses	\$4,887,432	\$5,399,707	\$5,783,504	\$5,788,071	\$5,799,567
Total	\$18,390,778	\$19,829,137	\$21,952,341	\$22,018,941	\$22,419,741
Staff Count	105	114	118	115	115

2026 – 2027 Budget Overview

The Medical Examiner's office is primarily funded with the General Fund but also receives revenue for services provided to external agencies, and grants. A total of 76% of the Medical Examiner's budget is expected to be spent on personnel costs, the remaining budget will be used to support operations of the Medical Examiner's office.

2026 – 2027 Technical Adjustments/Recommended Budget Realignment/Recommended Budget Requests

- Base budget adjustment for 115 Staff at Pay 19 for 2026 and 2027 Staff Count
- Base budget adjustment to increase 2% for Cost-of-Living adjustments in 2026 and 2027
- Base budget adjustment to increase 10% for Employer's Share of Health Coverage costs in 2026 and 5% in 2027



2026-27 BUDGET PRESENTATION

CUYAHOGA COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE & REGIONAL FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY



CCMEO- 2025 Accomplishments (So far)

MAJOR

- Office and Labs continue to maintain full accreditations
- Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Thomas Gilson serving final year as President, Ohio Coroner Association
- Partnerships with Public Works and IT to complete major security and building projects (new generator, security Phase 1 cameras and card readers, new body elevator). Phase 2 security planned for 2026-27 and major construction projects for new roof and continued elevator replacement.
- Solved two cold case identifications in partnership with BCI
- Dr. Gilson delivers paper at NAME Conference discussing the end of the fentanyl phase of the opioid crisis

CCMEO- 2024 Accomplishments

MAJOR

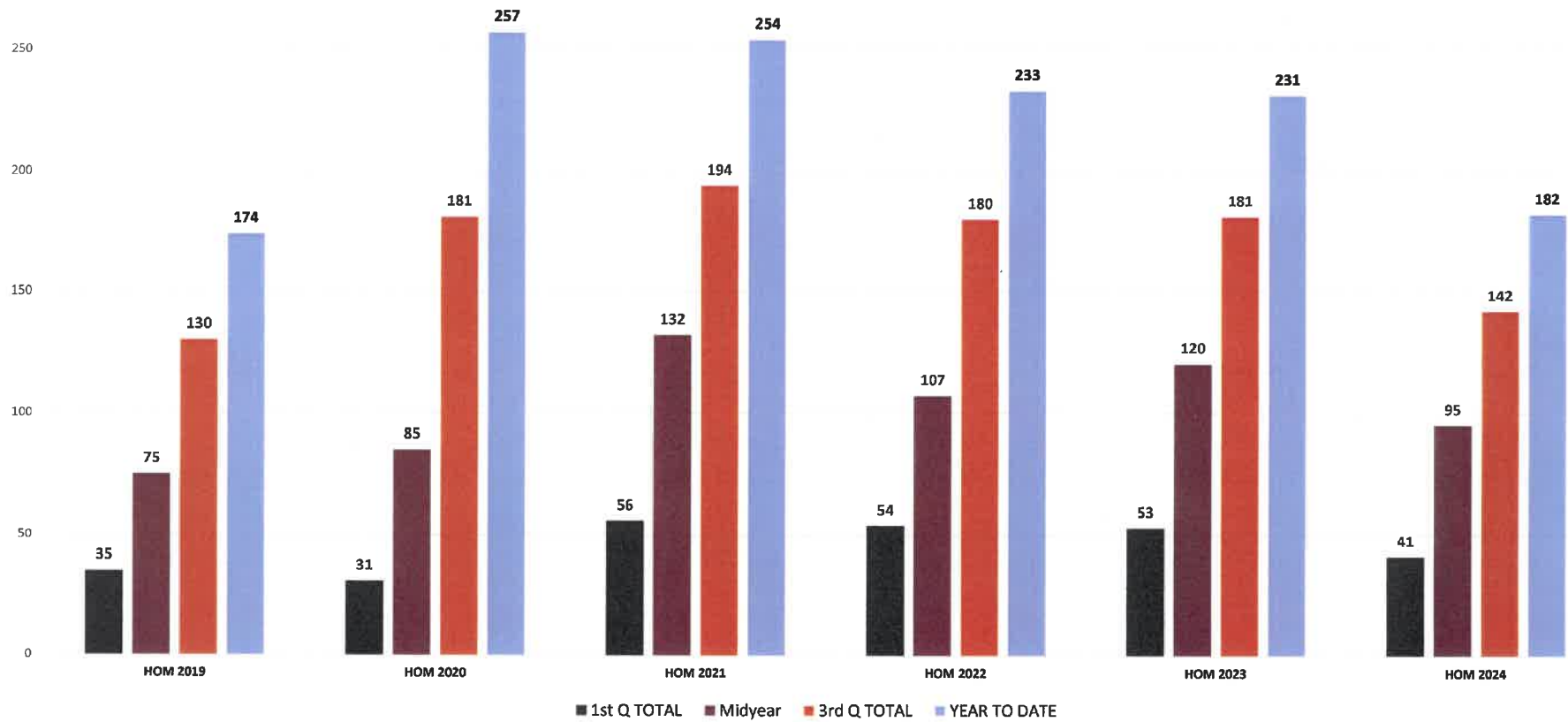
- Office and Labs continue to maintain full accreditations, including re-established accreditation to American Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)
- Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Thomas Gilson serving as President, Ohio Coroner Association
- CONTINUED program through grant funding to aid coroners in Ohio in comprehensive death investigation (rolled out January 2024)
- OD2A project to monitor the drug use trend for public health and safety purposes, including syringe exchange drug testing program.

OTHER

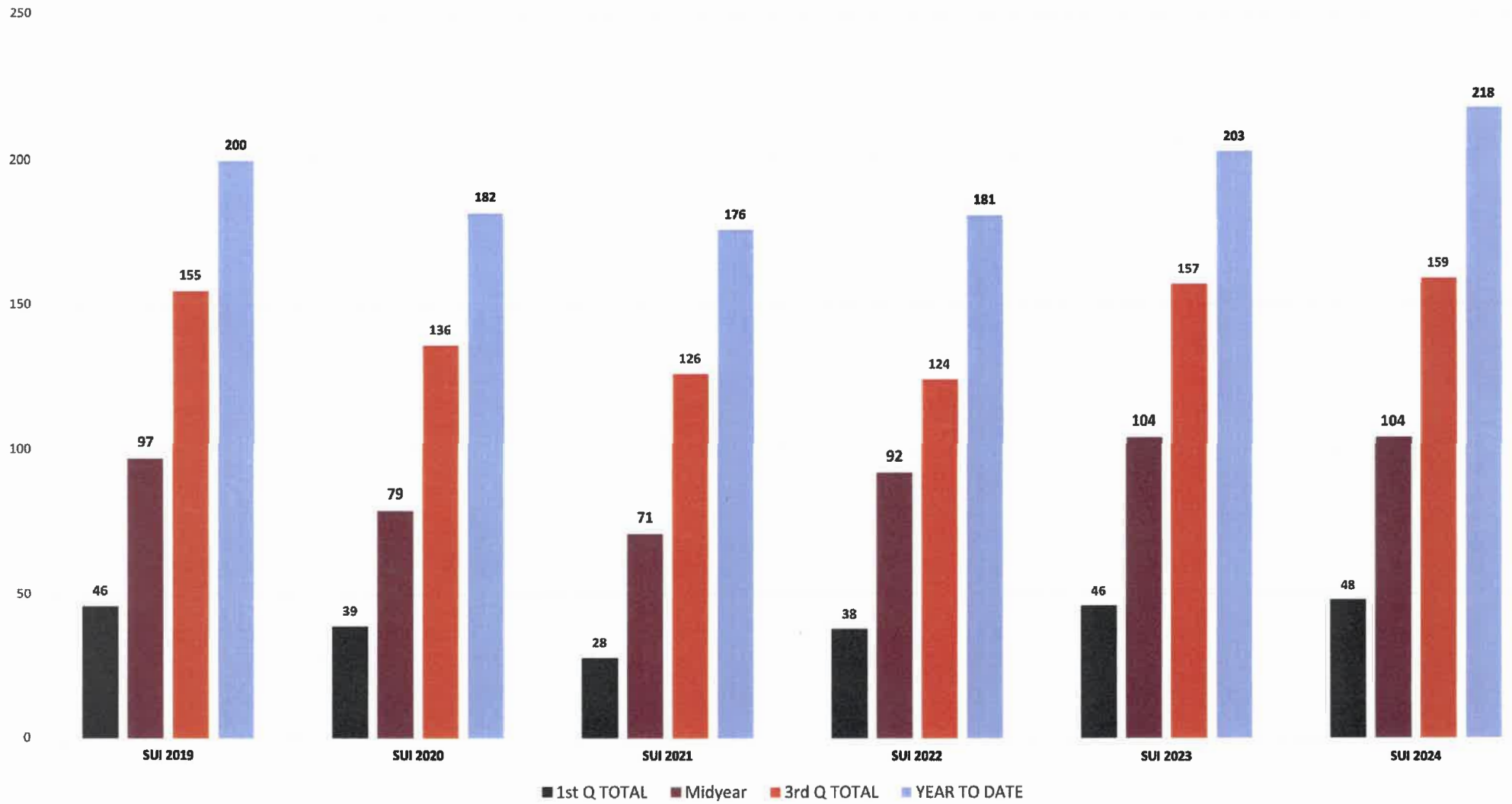
- Out of County autopsies performed exceed 400 for 8th year in a row.
- Sexual Assault kit testing on-going exceeding 5,500 cases submitted since start in May 2012.
- Firearms lab marks 8,000+ leads from submissions to NIBIN.
- Over 1,200 persons trained by CCMEO both in-person and remote Death Investigation training courses.
- The Laboratory/CCMEO staff continue to contribute to professional committees (including those for new psychoactive substances, postmortem toxicology, and computational toxicology)
- The laboratories have been able to replace and/or upgrade specialized technical instrumentation for testing and bring latest technologies to provide better service to county residents, utilizing ARPA, Grants and Opioid settlement monies.
- The Toxicology laboratory now fully paperless, recognized with a national award.
- Participated in the National Residency Matching Program (NRMP) inaugural forensic pathology fellowship match filling all positions. CCMEO is the oldest training program for forensic pathology in the country
- Working with Ohio Violent Death Reporting System to track deaths in Ohio by homicide, suicide and deaths be accidental gunshot injury.



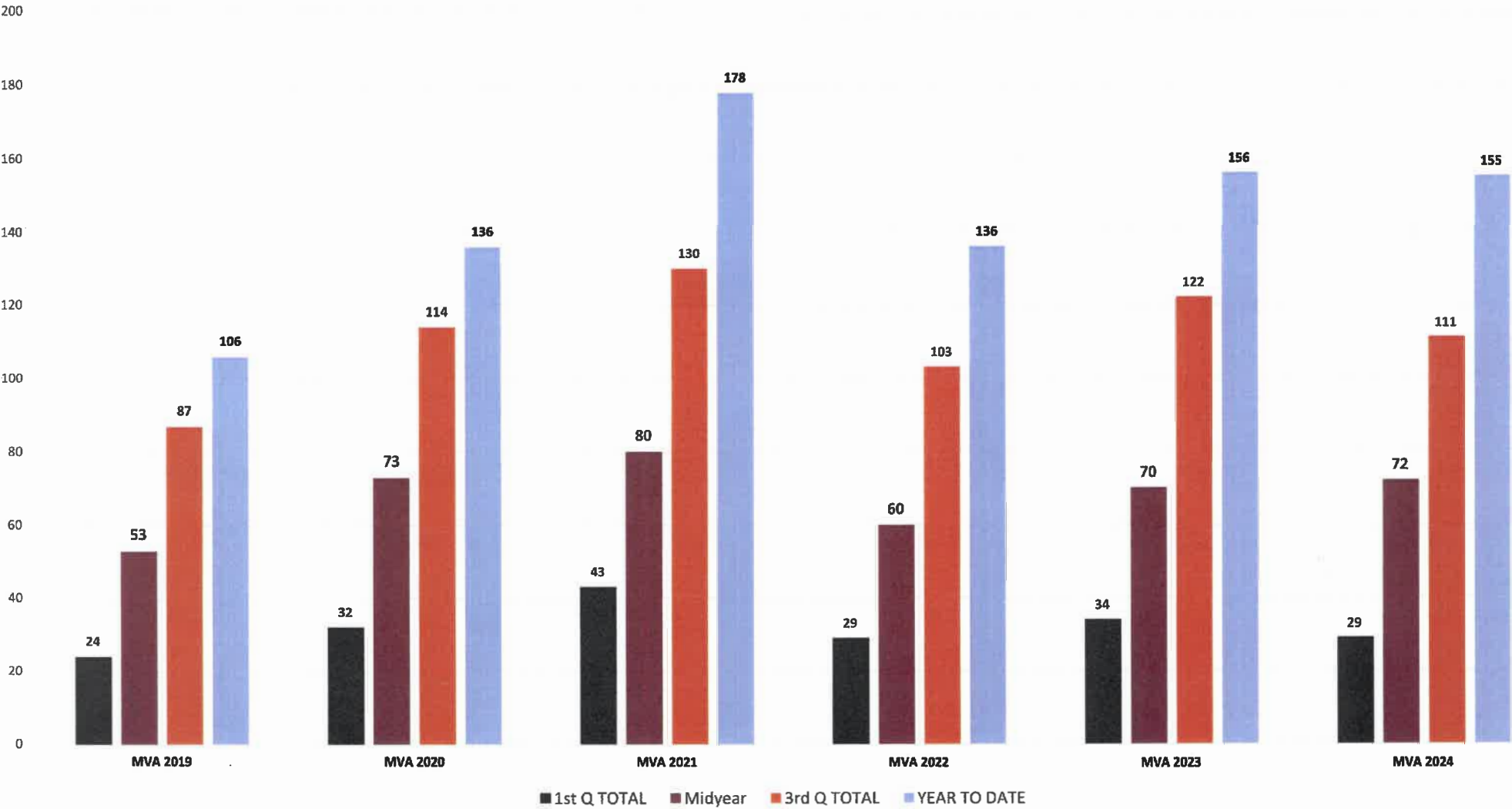
CCMEO 2019-2024 HOMICIDE Comparison



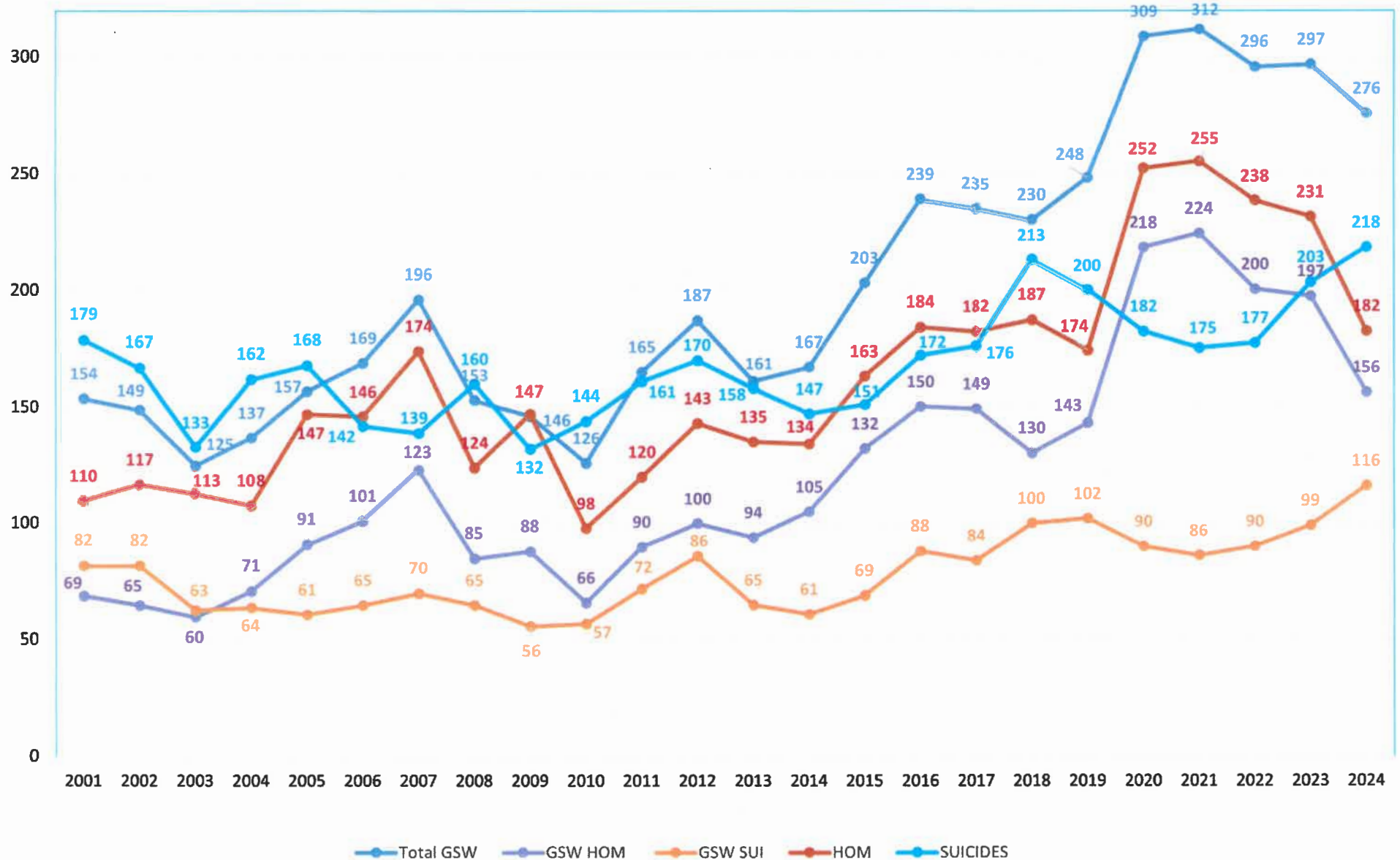
CCMEO 2019-2024 SUI Comparison



CCMEO 2019-2024 MVA Comparison



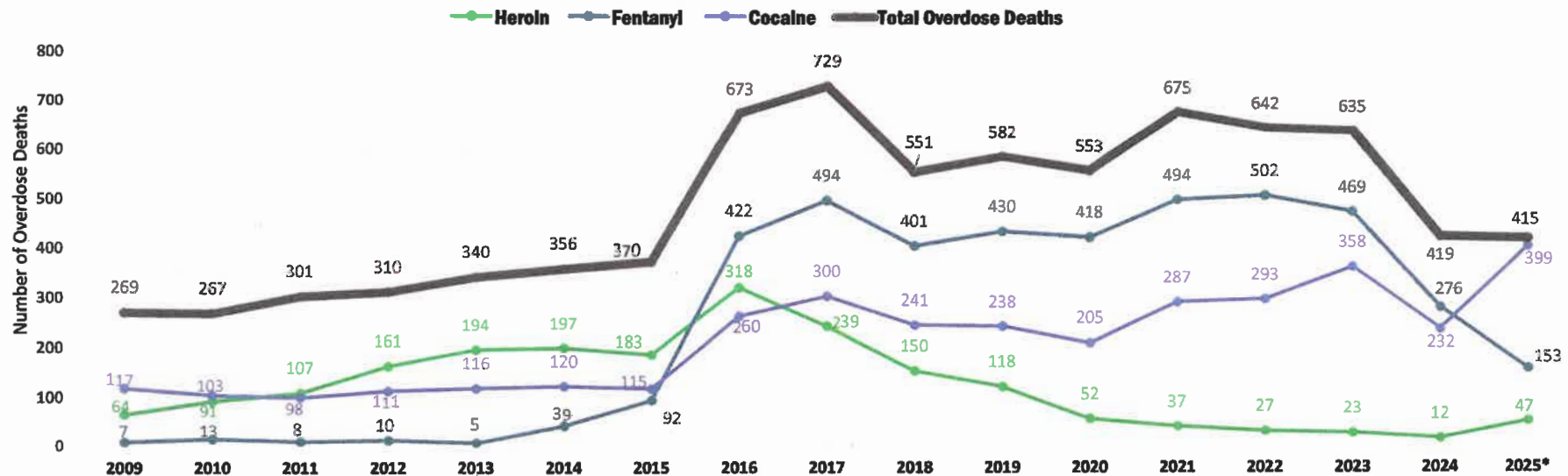
CCMEO Gun Related Homicides/Suicides, Total Homicides/Suicides and Total Gun Related Deaths 2001-2024



281

Suspected Overdose Deaths, Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (CCMEO): January to September 2025*

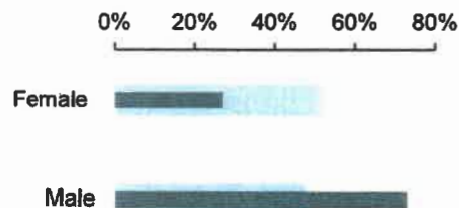
Cuyahoga County (CC) Drug Overdose Deaths 2009 to 2025*



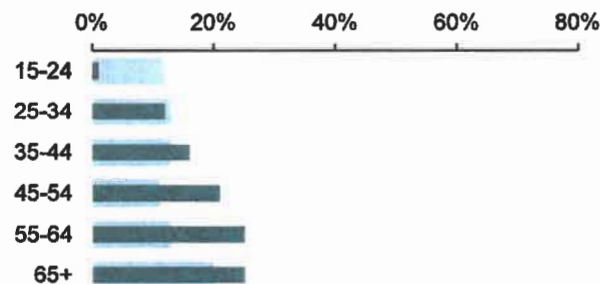
Data Source: CCMEO & Cuyahoga County Regional Forensic Science Laboratory (CCRFSL) accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners. The CCRFSL, accredited by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology, provides forensic analytical testing of specimens. The detection of substances by the laboratory may not necessarily be the ultimate cause of death as determined by the pathologist, therefore data are provisional and subject to change. *Drug categories are not mutually exclusive, as most deaths are attributed to multiple drugs. *2025 projections based on data through September 29, 2025.

Demographics of Suspected Overdose Deaths* Compared to Overall CC Population Estimates^

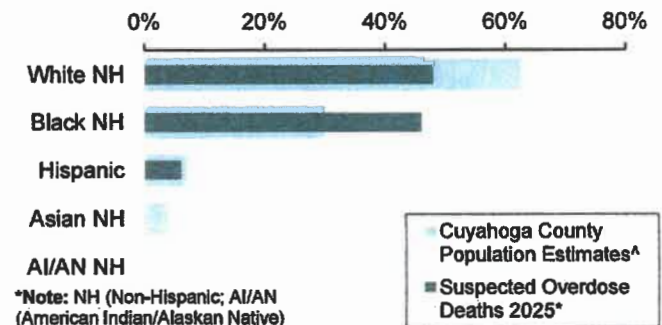
Deaths by Sex



Death by Age Group



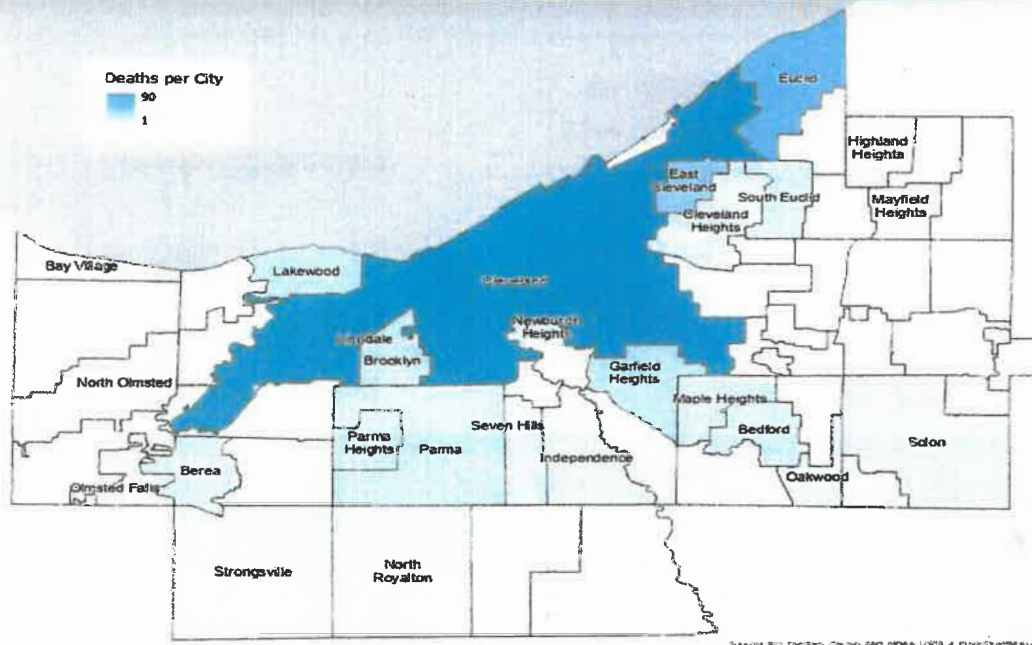
Deaths by Race/Ethnicity



^Data Sources: Population Data—U.S. Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov>



Counts of Overdose Deaths in Cuyahoga County by City of Residence



Highest Counts of Drug Overdose Deaths Among Cities with >2 Deaths

City	Deaths	Percent
Cleveland	169	68
Euclid	17	9
East Cleveland	7	6
Garfield Heights	6	3
Parma	8	3
Parma Heights	5	2
Unknown/Missing	4	1
Out of County*	20	7
Total*	236	

*This table represents 85% of all suspected overdose deaths within the report period by cities with the highest counts. Highlighted are the decedent's city of residence. Decedents who died in Cuyahoga County, but resided outside the County are included in the "Out of County" group.

Last 16 Months of Confirmed[^] & Suspected Overdose Deaths*



[^] This category reflects the number of deaths that have been confirmed as overdoses, regardless of intent, based on the results of a comprehensive death investigation.

* Suspected drug overdose deaths are based on death scene investigations, and preliminary toxicology screens. These data are considered provisional and subject to change as cases continue to be finalized. CCMEQ will update graphs on a monthly basis to reflect suspected overdose deaths and recently confirmed deaths.