INTRODUCTION TO DATA SECTION

We are clearly mandated to determine the cause and manner of death for each person that falls under the Medical Examiner. However, another critical function of the Office is to identify patterns and trends of various types of deaths, allowing other agencies to identify issues that need additional resources or to confirm that the hard interventional work that has been done in the past is accomplishing its goal.

This section is designed to provide data in an easy-to-understand format so that the reader, including regional agencies and groups, can easily use the information to make decisions and stay informed. Most of the data is designed to speak for itself, but where applicable a narrative or explanatory caption will be provided to further explain the data, point out caveats, and give background and context. In some areas, a 10-year perspective is given to demonstrate trends over time and show how 2010 compares to previous years.

Keep in mind that this report represents investigation of only a certain subset of deaths in the county – approximately 13.5% (2,718) of the approximately 20,000 deaths in 2010. These are the deaths in which we chose to or were required to take jurisdiction (see Deaths We Investigate for more information) and include ALL deaths due to non-natural causes (injury, drugs/alcohol, homicides, suicides, etc.) and a small group of natural deaths (4% of all natural deaths) in the county.