



County of San Diego Department of the Medical Examiner Quarter 3 Comparison Report

Report time frame: Jan - Sep 2018

(comparing to: Jan - Sep 2017)

Total cases
2,398
(+2% from 2,354 in 2017)
Note: Q3 Total includes 5 cases still under investigation

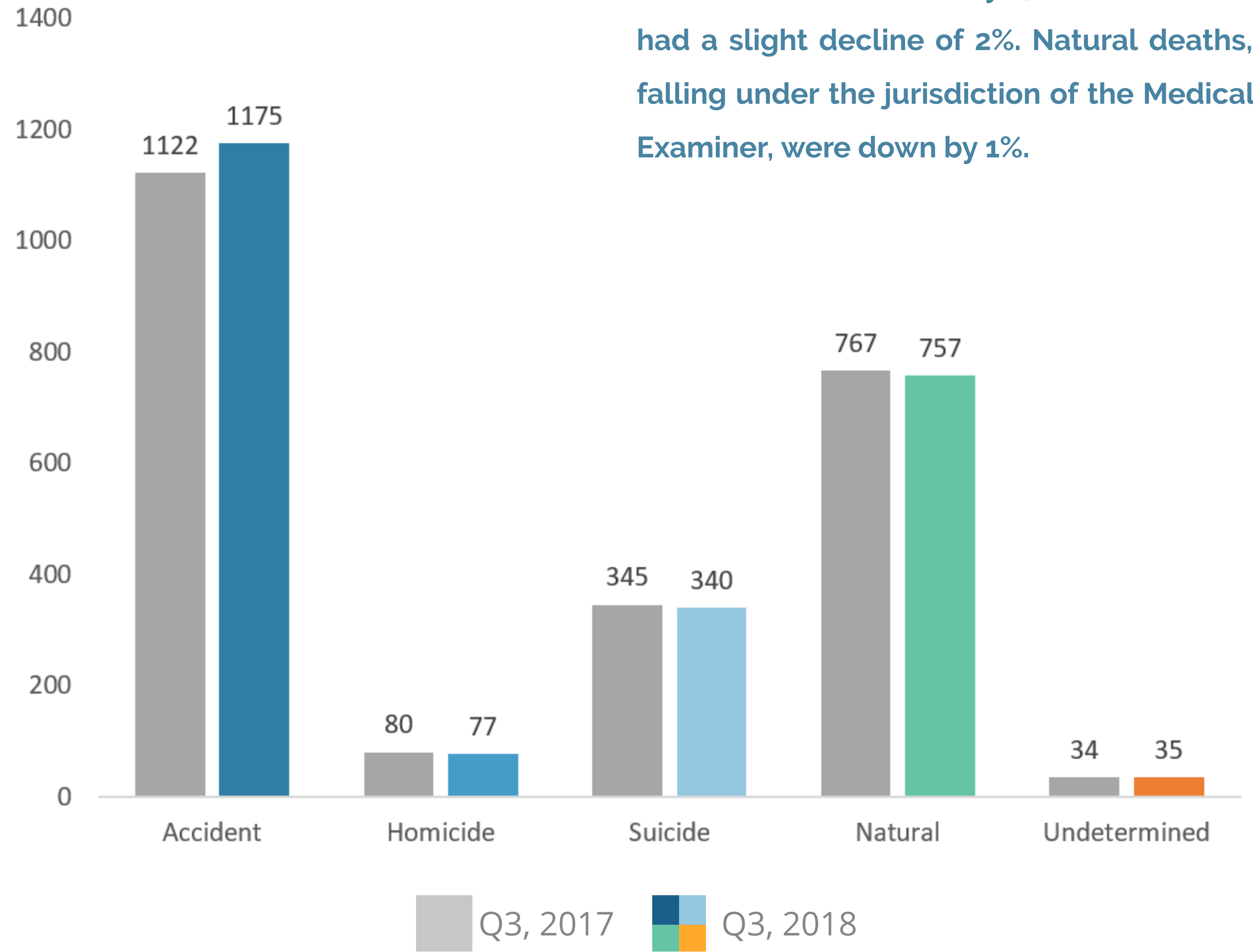
Accident
1,175
(+5%)

Homicide
77
(-4%)

Suicide
340
(-2%)

Natural
757
(-1%)

MANNER OF DEATH



While accidental deaths have increased 5% since 2017, all other manner of death types were down through Quarter 3 of 2018. Homicides decreased by 4% and suicides had a slight decline of 2%. Natural deaths, falling under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner, were down by 1%.

Accidents

Unintentional Drug and Medication related deaths remained high, representing 36% of all accidental deaths through Quarter 3 of 2018; Falls accounted for 30% and Motor Vehicle related accidental deaths were at 20% during this time period.



- Unintentional deaths from drug toxicity increased by 10% at the end of Quarter 3, 2018, compared to 2017
- Although cases involving opioids had an increase of just over 3% (233 to 241), they were involved in 50% of all unintentional drug fatalities
- Fentanyl related deaths continued to climb, increasing by 26%



- While Falls saw a 10% decline compared to the end of Quarter 3, 2017, it remained a significant cause of accidental deaths, representing 30% of all such cases
- Blunt head trauma was the leading cause of fall related deaths



- Motor Vehicle related deaths saw an overall increase of 13%
- At 34%, pedestrians continue to represent the largest group of accidental motor vehicle-related fatalities
- Motorcycle related deaths, including both solo and those involving another motor vehicle, saw a 40% decline (52 to 31)

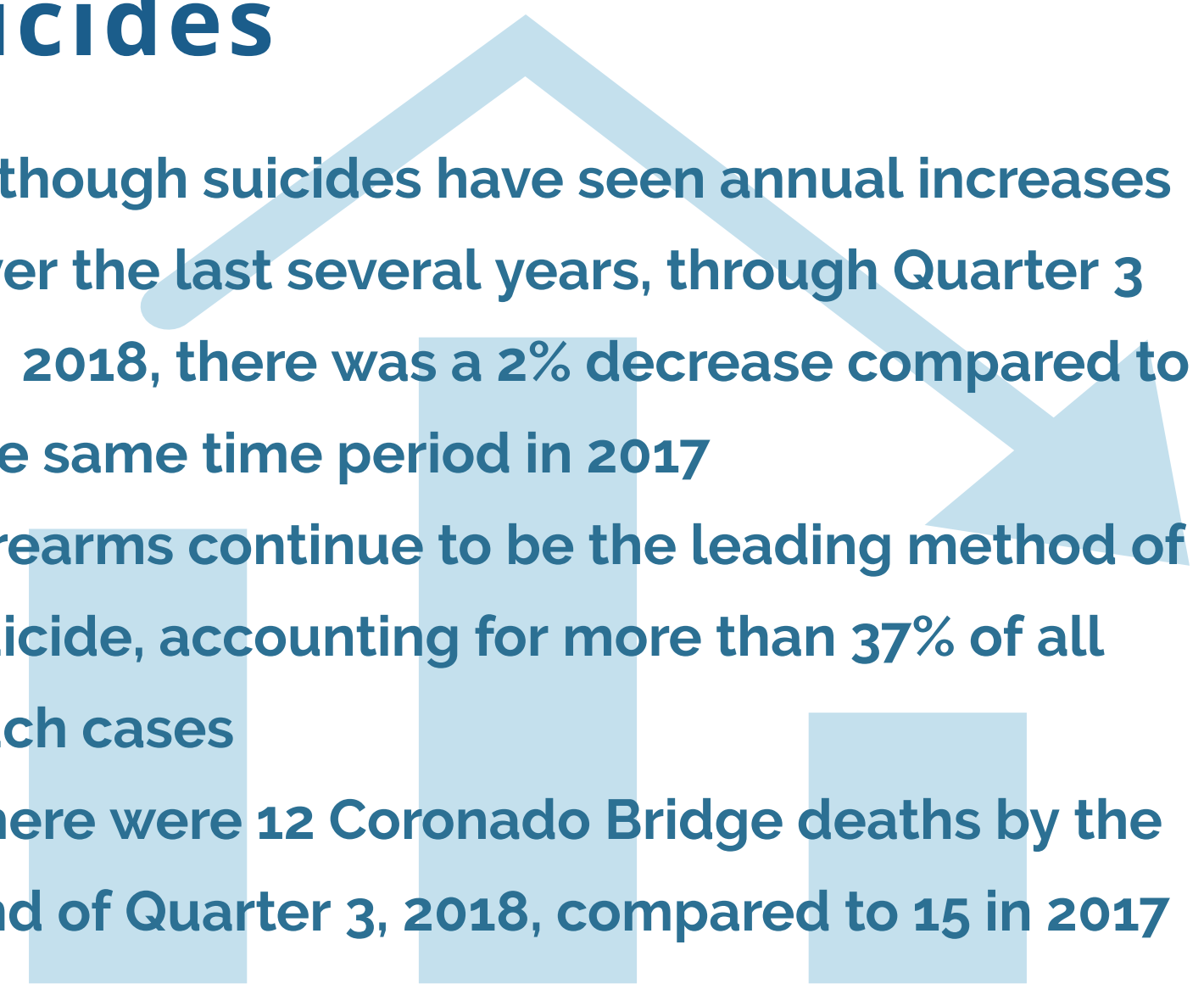
Homicides

4%
DECREASE

Firearms remain the most common method

Suicides

- Although suicides have seen annual increases over the last several years, through Quarter 3 of 2018, there was a 2% decrease compared to the same time period in 2017
- Firearms continue to be the leading method of suicide, accounting for more than 37% of all such cases
- There were 12 Coronado Bridge deaths by the end of Quarter 3, 2018, compared to 15 in 2017



The work of the Department of the Medical Examiner is largely based on Government Code § 27491, which states that all unnatural deaths including homicides, suicides, accidents, and deaths in custody are under the coroner/medical examiner's jurisdiction to investigate. Also falling under our jurisdiction are infectious diseases reaching epidemic proportions, deaths in state or local institutions, and deaths believed to be natural but that occurred suddenly and unexpectedly where the decedent had not seen their health care provider in the last 20 days of life. Note: All deaths that fall under § 27491 are also subject to whether the facts indicate the death occurred under natural circumstances and the physician of record has sufficient knowledge to reasonably state the cause of death occurred under natural circumstance. Therefore, not every death that falls under one of these categories will be investigated by the Medical Examiner's office. See Govt. Code § 27491.