

OFFICE OF LYCOMING COUNTY CORONER

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1

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1. Position and how Heroin affects my office?

As the Lycoming County Coroner for the past 15 years my staff and I are continuing to investigate an increasing number of deaths related to Heroin, other illicit and prescription drugs. These deaths are frequently young persons with no past medical history therefore requiring Forensic Autopsies and Toxicology to be able to determine the cause and manner of death as required by PA Coroner State Statutes. Forensic Autopsies can cost from \$1,600 - \$2500 and Toxicology costs can range from \$200 - \$700 per case. So far this year I have expended over \$16,000 in autopsy and toxicology services. Forensic Pathology Services are not available in Lycoming County or other surrounding Counties, requiring the transportation of decedents to and from Forensic Pathology Associates in Allentown. Additionally thousands of dollars are spent every year from Coroner's and Law Enforcement budgets to fund travel and salaries for personnel to attend autopsies.

2. What am I doing to address the problem?

As an EMT, Registered Nurse for 35 years and the elected Coroner for the past 15 years I have seen firsthand the lives and families destroyed by drug addiction. I have been involved in the local Heroin Task Force, participating in public meetings as we work to address the issues surrounding drug addiction. I have been speaking in the schools as requested to educate our youth to the deadly consequences of drug abuse.

3. What should the Legislature do to help?

Funding to provide education in our schools in effort to reduce drug addiction before it begins.

I see drug dealers as murderers and I believe that legislation must be changed to hold these murderers accountable for the deaths that they create. Increased penalties must be handed down to drug dealers especially when their delivery of drugs can be linked to the death.

Funding for Regional Forensic Facilities would reduce the non-productive travel time for Coroners and Law Enforcement Personnel across the Commonwealth. These would also improve turnaround times for autopsy and toxicology reporting, which presently can take 8 – 12 weeks or more.

Thank you for inviting me to participate in this event.

“Protecting County Residents Through the Investigation of Death.”