

The Corporate Area Coroners and The Special Coroners Court

(April 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024)

OVERALL QUANTITATIVE HIGHLIGHTS APRIL 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2024

| Court | Case Disposal Rate (%) | Case Clearance Rate (%) | Average time to Disposition (months) |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Corporate Area Coroners Court | 100 | 108.13 | 2.15 |
| Corporate Area Special Coroners Court | 12.5 | 600 | 49.98 |
| Weighted Average | 94.66 | 138.17 | 15.75 |

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CHIEF JUSTICE'S MESSAGE FOR SPECIAL CORONERS AND CORPORATE AREA CORONERS COURT

This report acknowledges the consistent efforts of the Coroners and the Special Coroners Courts to improve efficiency. While clearance rates remain high, the significant time lag between the event prompting an inquiry and the submission of files to both courts is a concern. This report identifies the need to examine the operations of the Corporate Area Coroners Court to reduce the average case disposal time to 24 months or less from the date of filing. A key contributing factor is the average 1.4-year delay between the reporting of a death and the opening of the corresponding file. This delay requires engagement with stakeholders and in particular the police to identify its causes and implement solutions.

Similarly, the Special Coroners Court has an estimated average case disposition time of 4.1 years, which significantly exceeds the 24-month standard. As with the Corporate Area Coroners Court, it is crucial to consult with the stakeholders of the court and in this instance particularly with the Independent Commission of Investigations to understand the challenges they face in file completion and determine how the court can support in improving this rate, thereby enabling cases to be disposed of within the 24-month target.

I express my gratitude to the Coroner for the Corporate Area, the Special Coroner, and the Assistant Special Coroner for their ongoing efforts to reduce the backlog.

The Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD
Chief Justice of Jamaica

Executive Summary

The Corporate Area Coroners Court demonstrated efficiency and effective case management, having achieved a 100% disposal rate and a 108.13% clearance rate. The Corporate Area Coroners Court not only resolved all newly filed cases but also made significant progress in addressing backlog cases.

The Special Coroners Court reported a clearance rate of 600%, reflecting its concentrated effort to address a substantial backlog having resolved six times the number of cases filed during the reporting period. This focus on historical cases resulted in a low disposal rate of 12.5% for newly filed cases, illustrates the challenge of prioritizing backlog reduction over addressing more recent filings and emphasizes the balance between the two.

A total of 131 new cases were filed across both courts (123 in Corporate Area Coroners Court and 8 in Special Coroners Court). In the report period a total of 181 cases across both courts (including backlogs) were also disposed. The weighted case clearance rate across both courts was 138.17% with the average time to disposal of 15.75 months.

Key performance Summary-Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Court | Disposal Rate (%) | Case Clearance Rate (%) | Average time to disposition (months) |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Corporate Area Coroners Court | 100 | 108.13 | 2.15 |
| Special Coroners Court | 12.50 | 600 | 49.98 |
| Weighted Average | 94.66 | 138.17 | 15.75 |

In the report period 90.84% of the cases in the Corporate Area Coroners Court originated from police reports. The most common cause of death recorded was multiple gunshot wounds (7.97%) and traumatic brain injury (3.62%). Of the total deceased, 67.18% were male and the remaining 32.82% were female with the average age of the deceased in the report period being 60 years.

average time between reporting death and the case opening was estimated at 1.4 years for the report period in the Corporate Area Coroners Court.

The Special Coroners Court recorded 8 new cases filed, with 1 disposed of within the quarter. Custodial and JCF deaths were all filed by the Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM). All the recorded deceased were male with an average age of 44 years. The majority of dispositions were resolved via Section 14¹ (71.43%). The average time to disposition for cases resolved in the report period was estimated at 4.1 years.

Forecasted case flow performance estimates for the quarter ended September 30, 2024

| Parish Court | Forecasted number of new cases | Forecasted number of disposed cases | Forecasted gross number of disposed cases (regardless of origin) | Forecasted case disposal rate (%) | Forecasted case clearance rate (%) |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Corporate Area Coroners Court | 125 | 123 | 137 | 98.40 | 109.60 |
| Corporate Area Special Coroners Court | 7 | 1 | 31 | 14.29 | 442.86 |
| Total/Weighted Average | 127 | 119 | 155 | 93.70 | 122.05 |

The above table forecasts core activity for the Corporate Area Coroners and Special Coroners court. The forecasts are generated using the method of exponential smoothing which uses weighted averages from past observations with weights decaying exponentially as the observations get older. See further explanation of the mathematical science behind the method of exponential smoothing in the glossary of terms.

The data shows that the overall forecasted case clearance rates for the Corporate Area Coroners court in quarter three (Jul.-Sep. 2024.) is 109.60%, which would be 1.47 percentage points lower than

¹ Section 14 of the Coroners Act grants coroners the discretion to forgo an inquest if the cause of death is clearly established, there is no suspicion of foul play, or an inquest would not provide further insights. This provision aims to improve efficiency, avoid unnecessary burdens on families, and ensure judicial resources are used effectively.

that of the 108.13% recorded in quarter two (Jan-Mar.2024).

The overall forecasted case clearance rates for the Corporate Area Special Coroners court in quarter three (Jul. – Sep.2024.) is 442.86%, which would be 157.14 percentage points lower than that of the 600% recorded in quarter two (Apr.-Jun.2024).

Introduction

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of case activity and operational performance for the Corporate Area Coroners Court and the Special Coroners Court during the second quarter of 2024. The Coroners Court serves as the judicial body responsible for determining the cause of death in diverse circumstances. Although the Coroners Court operates across all parishes in Jamaica, this report concentrates specifically on the Corporate Area Coroners Court and the Special Coroners Court. It is important to note the distinction between these two entities: the Special Coroners Court focuses on cases involving deaths caused by individual or institutional state actors or occurring under state care. Despite there being only one Special Coroners Court on the island, located in Kingston and St. Andrew, it conducts special sittings in all parish courts, ensuring full coverage. The report evaluates key performance indicators, including case clearance and disposal rates, average disposition times, and factors influencing case outcomes and any associated delays.

Using detailed statistical analysis, the report identifies both achievements and areas for improvement within these judicial entities. It examines the volume and nature of cases filed, their origins, and the demographic characteristics of the deceased. Furthermore, it assesses operational metrics such as time-to-disposition and adherence to international case management standards.

The report also addresses discrepancies between reported and determined causes of death, thereby reflecting procedural accuracy. Overall efficiency is evaluated using weighted averages of disposal and clearance rates, providing a holistic performance overview.

This analysis is intended to inform strategic decision-making aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Coroners Court system. By comparing current performance with prior periods and international benchmarks, the report emphasizes the importance of timely and equitable administration of justice in mitigating systemic delays.

Chapter 1.0: The Corporate Area Coroners Court

This subsection on the Corporate Area Coroners Court details information on the case activity in this court for the second quarter ended June 30, 2024, as well as the associated measurements of productivity in the disposal of cases, time lag measures outlining the average times between important events on the case flow continuum, as well as other supplementary measurements and information.

Table 1.1: Summary of time interval between date death reported and date case opened for the second quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Descriptive Statistics (in days) | |
|---|------------------|
| Number of observations | 129 |
| Mean | 500.78 |
| Median | 211.00 |
| Mode | 100 ^a |
| Std. Deviation | 907.58 |
| | 8 |
| Skewness | 4.270 |
| Std. Error of Skewness | .213 |
| Range | 5990 |
| Minimum | 24 |
| Maximum | 6014 |

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The table above provides a descriptive summary of the time taken between the date deaths were reported and the date that the cases for investigation of causes of death were opened in court at the Corporate Area Coroners Court for the second quarter ended June 30, 2024. It is seen that from a sample of 129 observations, the average time taken between the date deaths were reported and the date that the associated cases were opened in Corporate Area Coroners Court was roughly 1004 days (or 1.4 years). The modal time taken was 100 days or 3.3 months and the median was 211 days or approximately 7 months. The standard deviation stands at a high of 907 days or 2.5 years,

strongly suggesting that the alignment between the time of reporting death and the date cases open in the court varies widely around the mean. The acutely high positive skewness further suggests that decisively more of the scores fall below the overall average, a result that is not surprising considering that the modal and median values are significantly below the overall mean. The maximum time shown between date deaths reported and date case opened is approximately 16.5 years, while the lowest is 24 days.

Table 1.2: Case Activity Summary for the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Approximate Number of new cases filed | Approximate Number of active cases | Number of disposed or inactive cases (from those filed in the quarter) | Estimated Case disposal rate (%) |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 123 | 0 | 123 | 100 |

The above table provides a summary of the cases filed at the Corporate Area Coroners Court in the second quarter ended June 30, 2024. It is shown that 123 new cases were filed during the quarter, 20 cases or 19.42% less than the 103 cases filed in the similar second quarter of 2023. There were 123 disposed cases at the end of the quarter. These results yield to a case disposal rate of 100%. This disposal rate satisfies the international standard on this measure and suggests that for every 100 cases filed over the period, roughly 100 cases were resolved. The case clearance rate will be examined later in this report.

Table 1.3: Sampling distribution of Source of cases filed for the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024.

| Source | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|------------|----------------|
| Police | 119 | 90.84 |
| Family | 12 | 9.16 |
| Total | 131 | 100 |

A sample of 131 cases filed at the Corporate Area Coroners Court shows that 119 cases or 90.84% of cases filed were filed by the police, while 12 or 9.16% were filed by the family of deceased.

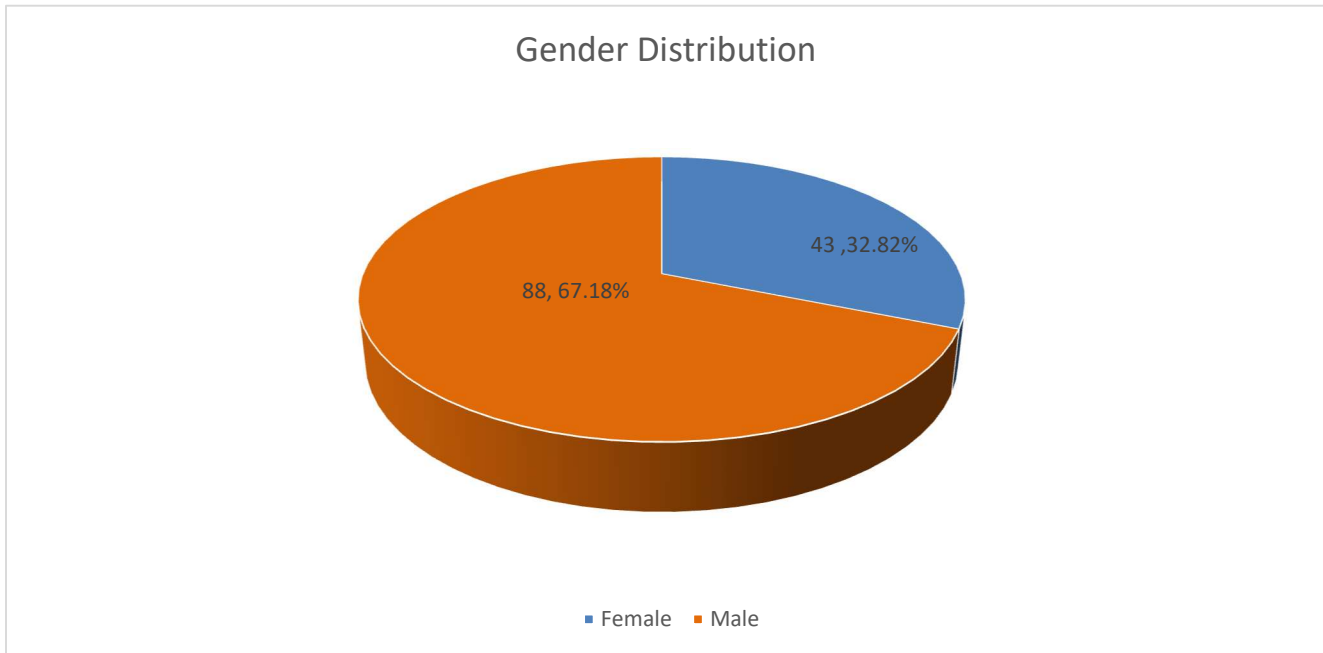
Table 1.4: Sampling distribution of deaths reported at various Police and brought before the court for the quarter ended June 30, 2024.

| Police Station | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Half Way Tree police Station | 14 | 10.85 |
| Hunts Bay Police Station | 14 | 10.85 |
| Major Investigations Division | 12 | 9.30 |
| Elletson Road Police Station | 10 | 7.75 |
| Vineyard Town Police Station | 10 | 7.75 |
| Sub-Total | 60 | 47 |

Sample of observations (N) = 134

The data showed a sample of 129 Coroners Court cases reported at the different police stations in the Corporate Area which were subsequently brought to the court. Of that number, the Half Way Tree and Hunts Bay Police Station accounted for the highest proportion of cases filed/investigated during the quarter with 10.85%, while the Major Investigation Division followed with 12 or 9.30%. The Elletson Road and Vineyard Town Police Station rounded off the top five Police Station with 10 cases each or 7.75% of the sample.

Chart 1.1: Distribution of gender of the deceased for new cases filed in the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024



The above chart summarizes gender distribution, using a sample of 131 deceased persons involved in the cases filed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2024. It is shown that 88 or 67.18% of the deceased were male, while the remaining 43 or 32.82% were female. In the similar quarter of 2023, males also accounted for a larger proportion, 93 or (83.04%) of the total sample. For the reporting period the absolute number of cases of males increased by 5.68% when compared to 2023.

Table 1.5: Descriptive Statistics on the age of the deceased in cases filed during the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Descriptive statistics (age in years) | |
|--|--------|
| Number of observations | 127 |
| Mean | 60.32 |
| Median | 62.00 |
| Mode | 81 |
| Std. Deviation | 22.440 |
| Skewness | -.284 |
| Std. Error of Skewness | .215 |
| Range | 82 |
| Minimum | 17 |
| Maximum | 99 |

A sample of 127 ages of the deceased involved in the cases filed revealed that the average age is roughly 60 years while the median age is 62 years, and one of the most common age value is 81 years. The standard deviation stands at a moderate value of 22 years, indicating a modest variation of the scores around the mean. The skewness is low negative value, suggesting that the distribution of ages largely clusters around the mean. The smallest age value in the data set is 17 years, while the largest age value was 99 years.

Table 1.6a: Sampling distribution of the causes of death reported for cases filed during the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Cause of death | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| Multiple gunshot wounds | 11 | 7.97 |
| Gunshot wound of head, of chest, of torso | 9 | 6.52 |
| Traumatic brain injury gunshot wound to the head | 5 | 3.62 |
| Acute myocardial infarction end stage renal disease, Diabetes mellitus, Hypertension prostate cancer | 4 | 2.90 |
| Acute heart failure, Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, Atherosclerotic coronary artery disease | 3 | 2.17 |
| Sub-Total | 32 | 23 |

Sample size (N) = 140

The above table is computed using a sample of 140 observations of the causes of death associated with cases. It is shown that among the most common causes of death reported are death caused by multiple gunshot wounds with 11 or 7.97% of the sample and gunshot wounds of the head chest and torso with 9 or 6.52% followed by Traumatic brain injury with 5 or 3.62%. Acute myocardial infarction end stage renal disease, Diabetes mellitus, Hypertension prostate cancer with 4 or 2.90%, and Acute heart failure, Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, Atherosclerotic coronary artery disease with 3 or 2.17% rounded off the top five causes of death.

Table 1.6b: Sampling distribution of the causes of death as officially determined by the coroner for matters disposed during the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Cause of death as determined by Coroner | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| Death due to natural causes | 89 | 67.94 |
| Death due to gunshot wounds | 37 | 28.24 |
| Death due to fall from a ladder | 2 | 1.53 |
| Death due to motor vehicle | 2 | 1.53 |
| Death undetermined due to decomposition | 1 | 0.76 |
| Total | 131 | 100 |

Number of observations N= (131)

The above table is computed using a sample of 131 observations of the causes of death as officially determined by the Coroner. It is shown that among the most common causes of death reported are deaths due to natural causes with 89 or 67.694% of the sample and deaths due to gunshot wounds with 37 or 28.24% of the sample. It is important to note that there may often be variances between the causes of death as reported and the causes of death as determined by the Coroner.

Table 1.7: Sampling distribution of the Summary of outcomes of Form D applications made during the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024.

| Outcomes | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Section 14 ² | 93 | 70.09 |
| Other | 37 | 28.24 |
| Trial and Judge | 1 | 0.76 |
| Total | 131 | 100.0 |

During the processing of a case at the Coroners Court, a Form D application is made which the judge reviews in order to determine the direction of the case thereafter. The above table provides a summary of the outcomes of these applications over the period under examination. It is seen that the dominant outcome from Form D applications were decisions in accordance with Section 14, which means that the matter was accepted for an inquest to be carried out by the Coroner. Section 14 accounts for 93 or 70.99% of the outcomes, Trial and Judge accounted for 0.76%. While the generic category 'other outcomes' accounted for 37 or 28.24%. These results are typical to the trends observed in the Coroners Courts Island wide. The data was computed using a sample of 131 cases.

² Section 14 of the Coroners Act grants coroners the discretion to forgo an inquest if the cause of death is clearly established, there is no suspicion of foul play, or an inquest would not provide further insights. This provision aims to improve efficiency, avoid unnecessary burdens on families, and ensure judicial resources are used effectively.

Table 1.8: Sampling distribution of reasons for adjournment/continuance during the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Reasons for adjournment/continuance | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--|-----------|----------------|
| Part-heard | 12 | 50.00 |
| Mention/Awaiting Jury Panel | 7 | 29.17 |
| File incomplete/awaiting medical certificate | 5 | 20.83 |
| Total | 24 | 100 |

In the report period, 23 matters were adjourned/continued. Continuances (delays attributable to case progression stages) by way of part heard matters accounted for the highest portion of the sample with 10 or 43.48%. Adjournments due to incomplete files/awaiting medical certificate, and continuances for mention/awaiting jury panel also accounted for 43% of the sample. Other and Mention/ Awaiting Jury Panel accounted for 8.70% and 4.35% respectively of the sample.

Table 1.9: Sampling distribution of the type of hearings in the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Type of hearing | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|------------|----------------|
| Chambers | 138 | 99.28 |
| Trial Judge Only | 1 | 0.72 |
| Total | 139 | 100 |

A sample of 139 hearings at the Corporate Area Coroners Court in the second quarter of ended June 30, 2024, reveals that 138 were chamber hearings, and the remaining 1 or 0.72% was trial by Judge and Jury.

Table 1.10: Sampling distribution of the methods of Disposition of matters completed during the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Methods of disposition | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Section 14 ³ | 94 | 66.67 |
| Section 10 | 42 | 29.79 |
| Open Court Verdict | 3 | 2.13 |
| Inquest | 2 | 1.42 |
| Total | 141 | 100 |

The methods of disposition for a sample of 141 matters which were disposed during the quarter revealed that 94 or 66.67% of matters were disposed by way of an Inquest, under the provisions of Section 14 of the Coroners Court Act. Matters disposed by way of inquest under the provision of Section 10 of the Coroners Court Act followed this with 42 or 29.79% of the sample. Matters disposed by open court verdict or by inquest accounted for 2.13% and 1.42% respectively.

³ Section 14 of the Coroners Act grants coroners the discretion to forgo an inquest if the cause of death is clearly established, there is no suspicion of foul play, or an inquest would not provide further insights. This provision aims to improve efficiency, avoid unnecessary burdens on families, and ensure judicial resources are used effectively.

Table 1.11: Descriptive Statistics on the time to disposition for matters completed during the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Number of observations | 141 |
| Mean | 64.3617 |
| Median | 7.0000 |
| Mode | 7.00 |
| Std. Deviation | 242.94333 |
| Skewness | 4.584 |
| Std. Error of Skewness | .204 |
| Range | 1382.00 |
| Minimum | 1.00 |
| Maximum | 1383.00 |

The above data shows that the average time taken to dispose of matters during the quarter is approximately 64 days. This was derived from a sample of 141 matters resolved during the quarter. The data also revealed that the median time taken to dispose of the matters was 7 days and the modal time was also 7 days. The standard deviation of 241.94, however, suggests that there is a wide variation in the individual scores and the high positive skewness indicates that a larger proportion of the scores fell below the overall mean. The minimum time taken was 1 day, with the maximum time taken being 1383 days. The average time taken between the date the file was received, and the date of first hearing was 4.15 days compared to the 3.70 days recorded in the similar quarter of 2023.

Table 1.12: Case clearance rate summary for the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Approximate Number of new cases filed | Approximate Number of cases disposed or inactive | Estimated Case clearance rate (%) |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 123 | 133 | 108.13 |

Courts that consistently maintain an average case clearance rate of between 90%-110% long enough will at a minimum have its disposals keeping up with the number of new cases filed but may also likely make considerable strides in reducing its case backlog rate to an acceptable level of under 10% of its active cases. The Corporate Area Coroners Court with a case clearance rate of 108.13% for the quarter ended June 30, 2024, down from the 118.45% recorded in the similar quarter of 2023, falls within the above –mentioned range which shows promising signs of a well-managed caseload. Currently it has a net case backlog rate of approximately 20%. There were 123 new cases filed during the quarter and 133 cases were disposed (regardless of date of origin), leading to the stated clearance rate. It suggests that for every 100 new cases filed, 133 cases were resolved during the quarter.

Chapter 2.0: The Special Coroners Court

This section provides a detailed summary of case activity and events as well as case outcomes and related factors at the Special Coroner's Court during the second quarter ended June 30, 2024.

Table 2.1a: Case activity summary for the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024, in the Special Coroners Court

| Approximate number of new cases filed | Approximate number of active cases | Approximate number of disposed or inactive cases (from those filed in quarter) | Estimated Case disposal rate (%) |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 8 | 0 | 1 | 12.50 |

Note 1: There were 7 new pending cases at the end of the quarter

The above table provides a summary of the cases filed at the Cooperate Area Special Coroners Court. It is shown that 8 new cases were filed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2024, and 1 disposed case at the end of the quarter leading to a disposal rate of 12.50%.

Table 2.2: Sampling distribution of the parish of origin of matters filed during the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Parish Origin | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|
| Kingston | 6 | 40.00 |
| Clarendon | 3 | 20.00 |
| Trelawny | 3 | 20.00 |
| Portland | 1 | 6.67 |
| St Catherine | 1 | 6.67 |
| St James | 1 | 6.67 |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 |

As a parish court, the Special Coroners Court has a single location in Kingston but is deployed island wide to hear cases originating in the various parishes. The above table provides a summary of the 'parish of origin' of cases filed in the Special Coroners Court. It is seen that Kingston with 62.50 of the cases filed, St. Catherine with approximately 25% and St. James accounted for 12.50% share of new cases filed in the Special Coroners Court during the second quarter ended June 30, 2024.

Table 2.3: Sampling distribution of the source of matters filed during the Second Quarter ended June 30,2024

| Source | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------|-----------|----------------|
| INDECOM | 8 | 100 |

A sample of 8 matters filed at the Special Coroners Court during the second quarter ended June 30, 2024, shows that all 100% were filed by INDECOM.

Table 2.4: Sampling distribution on the type of death by Institution for the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Type of death | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|
| JCF | 5 | 62.50 |
| Custodial | 3 | 37.50 |
| Total | 8 | 100.0 |

It is seen in the above table, that 62.50% of all the matters filed in the first quarter of 2024 were matters related to JCF deaths, while the remaining 37.50% were related to custodial deaths.

The majority of the causes of death as reported in the cases filed during the second quarter of 2024 were stated as "hemorrhage and shock" or "gunshot wound to the body", accounting for 50% of the sample.

The sex distribution of the deceased involved in the 8 cases filed in the second quarter of 2024, were all (100%) males.

Table 2.5: Descriptive Statistics on the age of the deceased in cases filed during the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| | |
|------------------------|--------|
| Number of observations | 7 |
| Mean | 44.29 |
| Median | 34.00 |
| Mode | 31 |
| Std. Deviation | 20.990 |
| Skewness | .923 |
| Std. Error of Skewness | .794 |
| Range | 54 |
| Minimum | 23 |
| Maximum | 77 |

The above descriptive summary on the age of the deceased involved in cases filed during the second quarter of 2024 revealed that from a sample of 7 observations, the average age was roughly 44 years, while the most frequently occurring age was 31 years old. The highest age recorded was 77 years, while the lowest is 23 years old. The moderate standard deviation of roughly 20 years suggests that there was a modest variation of the individual ages from the overall mean, while the positive skewness shown is an indication that proportionately more of the scores fell below the overall mean.

Table 2.6: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for matters resolved during the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Methods of distribution | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Section 14 ⁴ | 40 | 71.43 |
| Section 16(1) | 16 | 28.57 |
| Total | 56 | 100.0 |

The methods of disposition for a sample of 56 matters, which were disposed of during the second quarter ended June 30, 2024, revealed that 40 or 71.43% of matters were disposed of by way of an inquest under the provisions of Section 14 of the Coroners Court Act. The remainder were matters disposed by way of Inquest under the provision of Section 16 of the Coroners Court Act with 16 or 28.57% of the sample.

Table 2.7: Descriptive Statistics on the time to disposition for matters completed during the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024**Descriptive Statistics (Days)**

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Number of observations | 56 |
| Mean | 1499.4 |
| Median | 3 |
| Mode | 1257 ^a |
| Std. Deviation | 971.71 |
| Skewness | .764 |
| Std. Error of Skewness | .319 |
| Range | 3830 |
| Minimum | 28 |
| Maximum | 3858 |

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

⁴Section 14 of the Coroners Act grants coroners the discretion to forgo an inquest if the cause of death is clearly established, there is no suspicion of foul play, or an inquest would not provide further insights. This provision aims to improve efficiency, avoid unnecessary burdens on families, and ensure judicial resources are used effectively.

The above table uses a sample of 56 cases disposed of in the second quarter of 2024 reveals an estimated average of roughly 49.98 months, with a maximum of approximately 10.57 years and a minimum of 28 days.

The low positive skewness is an indication that proportionately more of the scores in the distribution were clustered around the series mean, while the moderate standard deviation shows some amount of variation in the data points around the overall mean.

Table 2.8: Descriptive statistics on the age of active cases as at June 30, 2024

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Number of observations | 20 |
| Mean | 1198.8 |
| Median | 985.00 |
| Mode | 352 ^a |
| Std. Deviation | 725.86 |
| Skewness | 1.645 |
| Std. Error of Skewness | .512 |
| Range | 3094 |
| Minimum | 352 |
| Maximum | 3446 |

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The above data is based on sample of 20 active Special Coroners matters during the second quarter ended June 30, 2024. The average age of these matters was roughly 1198 days or approximately 40 months, while one of the most frequently occurring age in the distribution was 352 days. The standard deviation of roughly 725 days suggests that there is a large dispersion in the individual scores from the average, while the positive skewness seen is an indication that there were more scores in the data set which fell below the overall average age of the active cases. The oldest active matter was

3446 days old or 9.4 years, while the youngest case is 352 days.

Table 2.9: Case clearance rate summary for the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Approximate number of new cases filed | Approximate number of cases disposed | Estimated Case clearance rate (%) |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 8 | 48 | 600 |

Courts that consistently maintain an average case clearance rate of between 90%-110% for long enough will at a minimum, have its disposals keeping up with the number of new cases filed but may also likely make considerable strides in reducing its case backlog rate to an acceptable level of under 5% of active cases.

The Corporate Area Special Coroners Court with a case clearance rate of 600% in the second quarter of 2024, exceeds the above-mentioned range, which shows promising signs of a well-managed caseload, there were 8 new cases filed, and 48 cases were disposed (regardless of date of origin), leading to the stated clearance rate.

Aggregate Case Activity Summary

Table 2.10: Aggregate case flow performance estimates for the Second Quarter ended June 30, 2024

| Metric | Corporate Area Coroners Court | Corporate Area Special Coroners Court | Total/Weighted Average |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Approximate number of new cases | 123 | 8 | 131 |
| Approximate number of disposed cases | 123 | 1 | 124 |
| Approximate gross number of disposed cases (regardless of date of origin) | 133 | 48 | 181 |
| Estimated Case Disposal Rate (%) | 100 | 12.50 | 94.66 |
| Estimated Case Clearance Rate (%) | 108.13 | 600 | 138.17 |
| Average Time to Disposition | 2.15 | 49.98 | 15.75 |

The above table provides a summary of aggregate case activity across the featured specialized Coroners Court and Special Coroners Court during the second quarter ended June 30, 2024. It is shown that a total of 131 new cases were filed in these courts, while 124 of these cases were disposed of, leading to an estimated weighted case disposal rate of 94.66%. The Corporate Area Coroners Court had an estimated case disposal rate of 100%, an impressive result. The table also shows that a gross number of 181 cases were disposed of in the quarter, leading to an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 138.17%. The Corporate Area Coroners Court recorded a case clearance rate of 108.13% and the Special Coroners Court had an estimated case clearance rate of 600%, both notable results which exceed the international standard.

Concluding Note

The Corporate Area Coroners Court and the Special Coroners Court exhibit both notable achievements and persistent challenges in case management during the reporting period. Key performance indicators, including case disposal rates, clearance rates, and time-to-disposition, presented differences in performance between the two institutions.

The Corporate Area Coroners Court demonstrated efficiency in caseload management and systemic integration in the report period. This enabled the timely resolution of cases, resulting in a 100% case disposal rate and a 108.13% clearance rate surpassing international benchmarks. The Court's caseload was primarily comprised of police investigations (90.84%), with natural causes of death accounting for a substantial proportion (67.94%), demonstrating the courts ability to manage both routine and complex cases adeptly. Delays caused by incomplete files and late medical reports are challenges which persisted in the Corporate Area Coroners Court in the report period. These challenges highlight the need for improvements in file integrity and inter-agency coordination.

The Special Coroners Court has made substantial progress in addressing its backlog, achieving an impressive 600% clearance rate during the reporting period. However, it continues to face challenges in balancing backlog reduction with the timely processing of new cases, as evidenced by a 12.5% case disposal rate for new filings. The high proportion of deaths linked to law enforcement (62.5%) necessitates specialised resources and streamlined processes to manage these sensitive investigations effectively. Additionally, the protracted average time to disposition of approximately 50 months underscores the urgency of implementing measures to enhance procedural efficiency and reduce delays.

Despite these disparities, both courts operate under the framework of Sections 14 and 16 of the Coroners Court Act, with natural causes and gunshot wounds being the most prevalent causes of

death. Discrepancies between reported and officially determined causes of death underscore the importance of thorough and meticulous inquests. Demographic data reveal a disproportionately high number of male decedents (67.18%), particularly in cases of violent death, presents the need for targeted prevention initiatives and informing not only justice policies but also broader public health.

Both courts demonstrate a clear commitment to fulfilling their mandates, though their performance outcomes differ significantly. The Corporate Area Coroners Court serves as a model of efficient case management, areas of development though further enhancements in file management and inter-agency collaboration are necessary. The performance of the Special Coroners Court posits opportunity for strategic interventions, including improved resource allocation, procedural streamlining, and collaboration with key stakeholders, to bring about the needed balance in reducing its backlog and the timely processing of new cases. Performance evaluation and optimization measures not only serve to strengthen public confidence in the Coroners system but also enhance the broader administration of justice nationally.

Glossary of Terms

Sampling Distribution: A sampling distribution of a given population is the distribution of frequencies of a range of outcomes that could possibly occur for a statistic of a population. A population is the entire pool from which a statistical sample is drawn.

Range: This is a measure of the spread of values in a data set, calculated as the highest minus the lowest value. A larger range score may indicate a higher spread of values in a data set.

Standard deviation: This is a measure of how widely spread the scores in a data set are around the average value of that data set. The higher the standard deviation, the higher the variation of the raw scores in the data set, from the average score. A low standard deviation is an indication that the scores in a data set are clustered around the average.

Outlier: An outlier is a value that is too small or too large, relative to the majority of scores/trend in a data set.

Skewness: This is measure of the distribution of scores in a data set. It gives an idea of where the larger proportion of the scores in a data set can be found. Generally, if skewness is positive as revealed by a positive value for this measure, this suggests that a greater proportion of the scores in the data set are at the lower end. If the skewness is negative as revealed by a negative value for this measure, it generally suggests that a greater proportion of the scores are at the higher end. If the skewness measure is approximately 0, then there is roughly equal distribution of scores on both the higher and lower ends of the average figure.

Clearance rate: The ratio on incoming to outgoing cases or of new cases filed to cases disposed, regardless of when the disposed cases originated. For example, in a given Term 100 new cases were filed and 110 were disposed (including cases originating before that Term) the clearance rate is 110/100 or 110%.

Note: The clearance rate could therefore exceed 100% but the disposal rate has a maximum value of 100%. A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system. The inferred international benchmark for case clearance rates is an average of 90% - 110 annualized. This is a critical foundation to backlog prevention in the court system.⁵

Disposal rate: As distinct from clearance rate, the disposal rate is the proportion of new cases filed which have been disposed in a particular period. For example, if 100 new cases are filed in a particular Term and 80 of those cases were disposed in said Term, then the disposal rate is 80%.

Note: A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system.⁶

Case congestion rate: The ratio of pending cases to cases disposed in a given period. It is an indication of how fatigued a court is, given the existing state of resources and degree of efficiency. A case congestion rate of 150% for example is an indication that given the resources currently at a court's disposal and its degree of efficiency, it is carrying 1.5 times its capacity.

Trial/hearing date certainty: This is the proportion of dates set for trial or hearing which proceed without adjournment. For example, if 100 trial dates are set in a particular Term and 40 are adjourned, then the trial certainty rate would be 60%. The international standard for this measure is between 92% and 100%.

⁵ Source:

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf>

⁶ Source:

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf>

Case File Integrity Rate: Measures the proportion of time that a case file is fully ready and available in a timely manner for a matter to proceed. Hence, any adjournment, which is due to the lack of readiness of a case file or related proceedings for court at the scheduled time, impairs the case file integrity rate. The international benchmark for the case file integrity is 100%.

Courtroom utilization rate: The proportion of courtrooms in full use on a daily basis or the proportion of hours utilized in a courtroom on a daily basis. The international standard for this rate is 100%.

Case backlog: A case that is in the court system for more than two years without disposition.

The **gross backlog rate** measures the proportion of all cases filed within a given period which remain unresolved for a period of over two years.

The **net backlog rate** on the other hand measures the proportion of active cases filed in a given period which are unresolved for over two years.

Continuance and Adjournment: In a general sense, any delay in the progression of a hearing in which a future date/time is set or anticipated for continuation is a form of adjournment. However, in order to make a strict distinction between matters which are adjourned for procedural factors and those which are generally avoidable, court statistics utilizes the terms 'continuance' and 'adjournment'. Here, 'continuance' is used strictly to describe situations in which future dates are set due to procedural reasons and 'adjournments' is used to describe the circumstances in which future dates of appearance are set due to generally avoidable reasons. For example, adjournments for another stage of hearing, say from a plea and case management hearing to a trial hearing or from the last date of trial to a sentencing date are classified as 'continuance' but delays for say, missing or incomplete files, due to outstanding medical reports or attorney absenteeism are classified as 'adjournments'. Adjournments as defined in this document have an adverse effect on hearing date certainty rates, but continuances do not.

Percentile Rank: This refers to the percentage of scores that are equal to or less than a given score. Percentile ranks, like percentages, fall on a continuum from 0 to 100. For example, a percentile rank of 45 indicates that 45% of the scores in a distribution of scores fall at or below the score at the 45th percentile. Percentile ranks are useful when you want to quickly understand how a particular score compares to the other scores in a distribution of scores. For instance, knowing a court disposed 300 cases in a given period doesn't tell you much. You don't know how many case disposals were possible, and even if you did, you wouldn't know how that court's score compared to the rest of the courts. If, however, you were told that the court scored at the 80th percentile, then you would know that this court did as well or better than 80% of the courts in case disposals.

Difference between percentage and percentage points: The difference between percentage and percentage points, the latter is strictly used to compare two percentages, for example, if the clearance rate in 2018 was 89% and the clearance rate in 2019 is 100%, then the appropriate expression to compare these would be "an 11 percentage points increase". However, if we are comparing two absolute numbers, say, 1000 cases were disposed in 2018, and 1500 in 2019, then there would be a 50% increase in cases disposed.

Weighted Average: Weighted average is a calculation that takes into account the varying degrees of significance of the groups or numbers in a data set. In calculating a weighted average for a particular variable, the individual scores or averages for each group are multiplied by the weight or number of observations in each of those groups and summed. The outcome is then divided by the summation of the number of observations in all groups combined. For example, if we wish to calculate the weighted average clearance rate for the parish courts, the product of the clearance rate and number of cases for each court are computed, added, and then divided by the total number of cases across all the parish courts. This means that a court with a larger caseload has a greater impact on the case clearance rate than a smaller court. A weighted average can be more

accurate than a simple average in which all numbers in a data set are assigned an identical weight.

Exponential Smoothing: Exponential smoothing of time series data assigns exponentially decreasing weights for newest to oldest observations. In other words, the older data, the less priority ("weight") the data is given; newer data is seen as more relevant and is assigned more weight.

Smoothing parameters (smoothing constants) – usually denoted by α – determine the weights of the observations.

Exponential smoothing is usually used to make short term forecasts, as longer-term forecasts using this technique can be quite unreliable.

- **Simple (single) exponential smoothing** uses a weighted moving average with exponentially decreasing weights.
- **Holt's trend-corrected double exponential smoothing** is usually more reliable for handling data that shows trends, compared to the single procedure.
- **Triple exponential smoothing** (also called the Multiplicative Holt-Winters) is usually more reliable for parabolic trends or data that shows trends and seasonality.