



## Mesa County Coroner's Office

Dean M. Havlik, MD, Coroner

Steven Stogsdill, D-ABMDI, Chief Deputy Coroner/Chief Investigator

Kim Hollingshead, D-ABMDI, Deputy Coroner/Investigator

## MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: 970-256-6462  
[coroner@mesacounty.us](mailto:coroner@mesacounty.us)

For Immediate Release

The Mesa County Coroner's Office has completed its examination regarding the death of Brian J. Merola, a 57-year-old male resident of Grand Junction. Mr. Merola was discovered deceased in his residence by friends reportedly coming there to "party." The **Cause of Death** was a **Gastrointestinal Hemorrhage due to Esophageal Varices due to Chronic Alcohol Use** and the **Manner of Death** was **Natural**.

Chronic alcohol abuse results in liver damage that alters the blood flow through the liver. This damages the liver resulting in increased blood pressure in the vasculature leading to his liver. This is known as portal hypertension. That leads to the vessels around the esophagus to become engorged with blood (esophageal varices). This increased pressure can lead to those vessels rupturing causing sudden death.

The Grand Valley area has many resources to help those with alcohol dependency. Alcoholic's Anonymous of Western Colorado can be reached at 970-245-9649 or 888-333-9649. They are also found online at [www.aa-westerncolorado.org](http://www.aa-westerncolorado.org).

The law enforcement agency overseeing this investigation is the Grand Junction Police Department. Please contact them for any further details.

Thank you