

Florida Vital Statistics Makes History

Vital Statistics history was made in November — the first record ever was keyed into the Florida Electronic Birth Registration (EBR) system!! If you've been following the newsletter articles over the last couple of years, you know we've been working towards this day for awhile. Getting to this place and time with EBR has truly been a team effort. State office staff have spent hours and hours (dare we say, years?) working on a system that we think will be one of the best around. Jana Duffy, the project lead for this exciting project, and our first pilot facility, Baptist Medical Center South, have been busy entering the birth information into the database—no more paper records, no more courier delivery, and online edits resulting in a whole lot less errors!! We're all winners with this system.

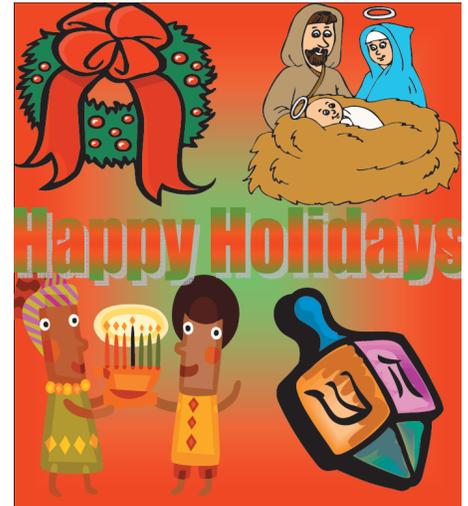
This new technology streamlines the registration process. Once the hospitals come online, birth certifications will be available to the parents the day they leave the hospital - they just need to stop by the county health department on their way home. Hospital birth registrars really enjoy the ease the system brings to performing their job.

The next pilot will be at Baptist Medical Center Downtown, followed by Shands Jacksonville, and Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare. We hope to be "on the road" with our statewide rollout by early spring 2007, so stay tuned for visits and more updates.

These are exciting times in vital statistics. If you have any questions until then please feel free to call Jana at (904) 359-6900 or SunCom 826-6900, ext. 1087.

CDRAC Update

The Chief Deputy Registrar Advisory Committee offers their best wishes for a happy holiday season to their fellow CDRs, to hospital birth registrars, funeral directors and subregistrars, and medical examiners.



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Meet 'N Greet

With this issue, we introduce the members of the **Adoption and Delay Unit**. This unit comes under the "amendment" umbrella and is led by Lorraine Kratz. Sharon Byrd, Suzanne Dicks, Nora Ramey, and Debbie Wollitz work primarily with Adoptions, a special area requiring an extra level of confidentiality. Barbara Smith files Delayed Certificates of Birth. Registrars are familiar with these cases where someone comes in and learns a birth certificate has never been filed for them; these ladies assist the clients in getting that problem fixed. The Putative Father Registry is manned by Cristina Serrano, Dorothy Palmer, and Janelle Santos. We know the putative father issue has become an important one in the last year or so and these ladies process the fathers' claims and maintain the Search Registry. Janet Lockhart and Ruth Day work both in adoptions and delays. We want to thank this unit for the hard work they do to reach their respective goals.



Janelle, Cristina, Nora, Suzanne, Sharon, Debbi, Ruth, Janet, Dorothy, Barbara and Lorraine.

E-Vitals Project

As you know, agencies requiring birth records such as Social Security and Passport Services require that the amendment information relative to a correction or legal name change and documentation used in support of filing a delayed birth record appear on certifications.

The legislature has appropriated funding for purposes of contracting additional staffing to assist with updating the E-Vitals system to document amendments that were completed prior to the implementation of E-Vitals. On July 24th, we brought on board 18 temporary staffing folks who are aggressively verifying and keying amendment information on birth records for 1940 to the present.

We are committed to updating over 200,000 birth records by the end of this project which will make all our jobs a lot simpler.

Thanks for your patience.



Failed To Notify Medical Examiner

The burial transit permit serves many functions, one of which is for the funeral director to receive assurance from the physician that the death was from natural causes and that there is no condition that would require the medical examiner (ME) to be notified (s. 382.006, F.S.). This particular function is not being used as intended in many cases and fractures, and sometimes even true trauma cases, are slipping through the cracks.

We suggest that when the physician is contacted by the funeral director or subregistrar, ask the questions related to external cause as the permit states; if the decedent is elderly, ask if there was any type of fracture or fall.

Section 406.12, F. S. requires anyone with knowledge of a potential ME case to notify the ME. It is imperative that they be notified of any case that possibly comes under their jurisdiction, *before* final disposition. The permit is constructed in such a manner that this question is asked at the beginning of the process, so if procedure is followed, these cases would not bypass the ME. Should the cause of death or circumstances of death be such that the ME had to take jurisdiction, it would be difficult for everyone if a loved one's remains had to be exhumed simply for the reason the ME was not properly and timely notified.

With all of us working together, we can avoid putting families through additional pain and suffering — none of us wish to go through this experience.

The revised Vital Records Registration Handbook & the *new* Birth & Death editions of the handbook can be downloaded from the website at: http://www.doh.state.fl.us/planning_eval/vital_statistics/index.html.

Passport Update

The following article was taken from the newspaper, the *Florida Times Union*:

Although Congress has voted to postpone some new passport requirements, anyone flying outside the U.S. will still need a passport by Monday, January 8, 2007. Here's how things stand:

- Those flying between the U.S. and Mexico, Canada, Bermuda, and the Caribbean can no longer show just a photo ID and proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate, come January 8, 2007. Exceptions: those flying to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.
- Cruise passengers also *were* slated to need passports as of January 8, but the new law moves that deadline to June 1, 2009.
- Anyone crossing land borders into the U.S. *would have* needed a passport or other accepted document, yet to be created, as of January 1, 2008, but Congress voted to push that deadline to June 1, 2009 — the same as for cruise passengers whose trip does not include a flight from a foreign port.

Fewer than 30% of Americans have a passport, according to the U.S. Department of State, and millions more than usual are expected to be inundating passport offices in coming months. If you think you might need one, get it now.

To find out how to get a passport, visit the State Department's new travel web site, www.travel.state.gov, or call the U.S. National Passport Information Center at (877) 487-2778. To find a post office or other facility near you where passports are processed, type in your zip code at www.iafdb.travel.state.gov/.

Allow six weeks for processing. Fees for getting a new passport total \$97, not including the cost of getting passport photos. For children under 16, the fees total \$82. Passport renewals are \$67. An adult passport is good for 10 years.

When obtaining a passport for the first time, the passport office requires the presentation of a certified copy of the birth certificate. For a Florida birth from 1930 to the present, certifications can be obtained from any county health department vital statistics office. Certifications can also be obtained from the state office. Information on obtaining a certification from the state office can be found at our website at: http://www.doh.state.fl.us/planning_eval/vital_statistics/index.html

Welcome Aboard



The following appointments have been made to the position of Registrar:

Local Registrar

R. Jason Newsom, M.D. Bay County
 Steven Mitnick Charlotte County
 Eugene Charbonneau Liberty County

Chief Deputy Registrar

Jeb Kelly Indian River County
 Amy Anderson Putnam County

Greetings From The State Registrar



As the 2006 holiday season embraces us, I find I am at that point once again where I reflect on the past year and all of our accomplishments. I feel especially privileged to be a part of the department's vital statistics community. This community includes not just those dedicated, hardworking people within the county health departments and the state office, but the hospital birth registrars, nursing staff and their administrators; funeral directors and subregistrars; medical examiners and their staff; physicians and their staff; clerks of court; and all those who come together to make Florida's registration system one of the best in the country. We're proud of the work we do together.

The final Florida vital record was revised in 2006—the Certificate of Fetal Death. We can be pleased that we have completed the revisions and are ready to meet the next 10 or 15 years. Katherine's Law was implemented in 2006, allowing parents of a fetal death delivery to obtain a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth. The loss of a child is traumatic and this certificate will help provide some closure for grieving parents. A "data warehouse" has been

created to assist DOH users of vital statistics data for more efficient use of time and resources. Vital Statistics was part of a workgroup that included the Clerk of Court, Department of Revenue/Child Support, the Florida Hospital Association, and Department of Children and Families. The workgroup was charged to conduct a feasibility study of electronic filing of birth certificates, paternity establishments, and adoptions. An important byproduct of this workgroup has been the strengthening of the bonds among these various agencies — partnerships such as these help us to achieve our goals in a cooperative spirit.

We're quite excited about our Electronic Birth Registration process whereby birth certificates are filed via the web rather than the manual hard copy. We have piloted with our first hospital and we look forward to implementing statewide over the next year.

As State Registrar, I again want to thank all of you for your continued support and commitment. During this holiday season, I extend my best wishes to you and your families for health, prosperity, and joy for the new year.

C. Meade Grigg, State Registrar

The County Health Department phone list (with fees) is posted to the Internet at:

http://www.doh.state.fl.us/planning_eval/vital_statistics/index.html.

The list is updated quarterly & can be downloaded at any time

QA EXPANDS



No, we're not talking about waistslines!! In our last issue, we announced that Kevin Wright had moved into another position here at the state

office. With this issue, we introduce Doug Hemphill and Jana Duffy, our two new quality assurance field representatives. Doug comes to us with vast training experience and he looks forward to putting his skills to work as soon as possible. Jana has come into the program to act as the lead on the Electronic Birth Registration project; with her systems and training experience, we just know we're in good hands.

DEATH AMENDMENTS, DH 433

When it's necessary to amend a demographic item on the death certificate, the affidavit form, DH 433, must be an **original** form. Photocopied forms or faxed copy forms are unacceptable. The quality of these copies is such that information is distorted and oftentimes illegible. When affidavits have to be returned, unnecessary delays ensue for the family.

Please remember, in most cases this affidavit will be attached to the original death certificate and become a permanent part of the certificate.

Contact your CDR for a supply of the *original* forms. CDRs can order their supply of forms from the warehouse.

BITS 'N PIECES

- CDRs should remember to respond promptly to inquiries from the state office regarding the **infant death** reconciliation process.
- All those **entering dates** on Florida vital records - be mindful that we've moved to another year come January 1, 2007!

The statistical tables, along with past issues of the *Vital News*, are found on the department's website at the following address:

http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Planning_eval/Vital_Statistics/VitalNews/vn-index.htm

