

Holiday Greetings



The holidays are once again upon us and it's time to evaluate the past year. Before doing that, however, I looked back over the last few years' seasonal articles of the *Vital News*, just to get an idea of where we've been. The list of events is quite impressive: Y2K, and we thought *that* was going to be a big deal; re-formation of the Chief Deputy Registrar Advisory Committee (CDRAC), an integral component of what has happened these last few years; September 11, 2001 and the anthrax scare right here in our own Palm Beach County—classic examples of why a strong public health system is so important; Charlie, Francis, Ivan and Jeanne, not names found on the most popular baby names list, but opportunities to see our own people rise to the occasion more than once; implementation of e-Vitals, providing us a more efficient and comprehensive system to issue, track and account for vital record events; Katrina and Rita, catastrophes that brought us closer to our Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama neighbors; revision of the birth, death, and fetal death certificates—need I say more? The list goes on and on, but *I* won't!

This brings us to 2007. Surely it was just yesterday when we were so excited about launching the Electronic Birth Registration (EBR) system. Our 2008 EBR schedule is an ambitious one, but we embrace it knowing it brings us closer to our goal of full implementation. We are not satisfied to stop with EBR, no, we have assembled a workgroup for the Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS). Funeral directors, physicians, medical examiners, and a hospice physician, as well as representatives from the Florida Hospital and Medical Associations make up this workgroup and are fine-tuning EDRS for its debut in late 2008.

Such monumental tasks could not have been accomplished without the concentrated effort made by our outstanding team — that's the county and state vitals statistics staff, Healthy Start staff, and other county health department individuals; funeral directors, morticians, subregistrars, and other funeral home staff; medical examiners and their staff; physicians and their staff; hospitals and staff, midwives; Clerks of Court and their staff; NAPHSIS and NCHS staff; public health and vitals statistics folks all over the country. Wow, that's some team; dedicated, conscientious, service oriented - the list of accolades is seemingly endless!! I feel honored to work with such exemplary individuals to serve the needs of our citizenry.

May this holiday season bring all of you joy, peace, and prosperity.

C. Meade Grigg, State Registrar

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MEET 'N GREET



Front Row: Diane Bellamy, Willie Mae Melendrez, Melanie Nelms, Lester DeLeon, Brittany Slaughter, Vickie Asay. Back Row: Kenny Higginbotham, Lillie Williams and Judy Fernandez.

Kenny Higginbotham manages the **Death, Fetal Death, Marriage and Divorce Units**. Death Registration is comprised of Judy Fernandez, Records Specialist, Melanie Nelms and Willie Mae Melendrez, Records Technicians. Diane Bellamy, Records Specialist, and Vickie Asay, Records Technician, make up the Marriage and Divorce Unit. OPS staff who

work in both units are: Lucille Battle, Lester DeLeon, Ome James, Brittany Slaughter, Labrina Whitner, and Lillie Williams. This dedicated staff is very focused and works closely on a daily basis with the county health departments, medical examiner offices, funeral homes, doctor offices, the clerk of courts offices, attorney offices, as well as our public clients to achieve a correct and completed record that will serve both as a statistical and legal document. For 2006 this unit filed: 169,365 Deaths, 158,167 Marriages, 85,955 Dissolution of Marriages (divorces). We count these individuals as assets to the Vitals Statistics Office!

Electronic Death Registration (EDRS)

The funeral directors, medical examiners, and vital statistics members of the EDRS workgroup held a conference call in November to review the proposed electronic burial transit permit report. A subsequent call that also included the physicians on the workgroup, was held in December, where the remote fax attestation process was the subject under discussion. Both calls brought

forth good suggestions and recommendations.

Illinois is also in the midst of their EDRS, utilizing the same vendor as Florida. We will be speaking with them on what they see and experience, as well as sharing our own experiences. This collaboration between states helps us achieve a higher success rate with the best possible outcome.

CHANGE IN LATITUDE



Doug Hemphill, Quality Assurance Field Representative has left Vital Statistics for a position with the federal government in Washington, D.C. QA and the rest

of the state office staff as well as our county registrars will certainly miss Doug and all he brought to the program. We wish him well.

As always, someone's leaving brings a new face into the picture. The newest QA Field Rep is Chris Mays, formerly of the Birth Registration Unit. Chris brings a sound technical background to the QA team, which will be invaluable to us as we continue with EBR rollout. We welcome him to the QA team!!

2008 Self Assessment Tool (SAT)

The State Office of Vital Statistics will be sending out the annual Self Assessment Tool (SAT) to the chief deputy registrars in January 2008. Remember, the completion of the SAT is done through a Sharepoint website and requires:

- The county file be checked out
- Entries made within the site
- The file subsequently checked back in
- Please do not do a "file/save" as this will have you working on your desktop in an Excel file, and entries will not be made to the actual Sharepoint site.

Business managers and local registrars each have a role in reviewing the SAT, entering any comments, and signing off on the file. Offices will be allowed a couple of weeks to complete, review, and sign.

The SAT is a valuable resource in the day to day operations of a local vital statistics office. It assists staff in determining if they are on task and following the laws, guidelines, and procedures laid out in the Chief Deputy Registrar Operations Manual (COM). The monthly review and sign-off by the business manager helps ensure that the office maintains compliance.

If there are questions on the SAT, contact your Quality Assurance Field Representative at the state office.

Putative Father Registry

The purpose of the Putative Father Registry is to permit a man alleging to be the biological father of a child to assert his parentage, independent of the mother, and preserve his rights as a parent.

A Florida Putative Father Registry Claim, per statute, is done without the consent or involvement of the mother. The registry, maintained by vital statistics, is where the putative father claim is filed and recorded. The putative father's name is not added to the birth record. Should the child be placed for adoption, the putative father must be named a party to the adoption proceedings.

The county office must keep a supply of putative father related forms. Brochures are available in English, Spanish and Creole. Questions on the Putative Father Registry should be referred to the Adoption Unit, Lorraine Kratz at (904) 359-6900 ext. 1081, call group 9001, or refer to the website at: http://www.doh.state.fl.us/planning_eval/vital_statistics/Putative.htm

Welcome Aboard



The following appointments have been made to the position of registrar in the county health department:

Local Registrar:
 Miranda Swanson.....Indian River
 Chief Deputy Registrar
 Sandra Lupton.....Putnam

The Vital Records Registration Handbook 2007 Revision & the 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

Electronic Birth Registration

As we bring 2007 to a close we are happy to be able to share our accomplishments with you. We look forward to moving into 2008 and bringing more hospitals on board. We have passed our one year mark of having records entered electronically and know everyone's continued efforts will show even greater success for 2008. The Electronic Birth Registration System has brought opportunities for us to come together and we thank you for your efforts and support. Our commitment for the coming year is to reach as many hospitals as we can. We are committed to making your facilities a part of our success. Questions on EBR should be directed to Project Lead, Jana Duffy, (904) 359-6900 ext. 1087.

Chief Deputy Registrar Advisory Committee (CDRAC) Update

The Chief Deputy Registrar Committee (CDRAC) members have been busy with trendsetting this year. We know about Orange County's satellite office within a hospital as being the first of its kind statewide, and they have recently added another satellite office in Winnie Palmer Hospital, the largest birthing facility in the state — way to go, Gloria!! Well, not to be outdone, a couple of other CDRAC members have followed suit. Luz Perez, CDR, Hillsborough County and CDRAC chair has opened a satellite vital statistics office in St. Joseph's Women's Hospital in Tampa, the second largest birthing facility in the state. Victoria Brack, CDR, Osceola County, plans to open their first satellite at Osceola Regional Medical Center in Kissimmee, on January 1, 2008. This is an innovative group, the CDRAC; they are constantly thinking of new ways to better serve their clients. CDRs, if you want to do some brainstorming, contact your CDRAC representative for a good sounding board.

Luz Perez represents CDRAC and CDRs statewide on the EDRS Workgroup. Luz has indicated her excitement with the direction EDRS is going, "electronic registration of deaths will be beneficial to all of us and make for a more efficient way of doing business".

The entire CDRAC wishes a happy holiday season to their "sister" CDRs throughout the state, and look forward to the challenges and opportunities of the new year!

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. Be sure to verify with county should there be additional fees.



Certificate Of Birth Resulting In Stillbirth

Florida's 2006 legislation allows for the creation and issuance of a Certificate of Birth Resulting in a Stillbirth. Section 382.0085, Florida Statutes, allows for the issuance of this special certification from the state office only and there must already be a fetal death certificate on file.

The certificate is created and issued upon the parent's request. Subsequent to the initial request, the Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth becomes available as a public record. The certification is not considered proof of a live birth and copies are available from 1947 to the present. An informational brochure, "How to Apply for a Florida Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth", is available to the funeral director when meeting with families; contact your CDR for a supply. There is also a specific application intended for this purpose, the Application for Florida Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth, which is available on the website at: http://www.doh.state.fl.us/planning_eval/phstats/index.html

Questions on the issuance of this certificate should be directed to Kevin Wright, at (904) 359-6922.

BITS 'N PIECES

Hospital birth registrars, funeral directors, medical examiners, physicians, and county vital statistics staff: remember the date change on January 1, 2008. Be sure to pay attention when dating vital records in order to avoid unnecessary amendments!!!

floridashealth.com

State of Florida Vital Records



The statistical tables, & 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

