

## Legislative Update: HB243

### Impact On Funeral Directors And Medical Examiners

The 2015 Florida Legislature passed a bill affecting Vital Statistics and our partners involved in the death registration process. House Bill 243, Death Registration, effective July 1, 2015, revises and clarifies the duties of the Department of Health with respect to production and maintenance of death certificates and burial transit permits. The bill references electronic filing of death certificates and transmission of death records. Prior to passage of this bill, the county health department issued and maintained paper permits and if a funeral home had a subregistrar, they were authorized to issue the paper permit. House Bill 243 authorizes funeral directors to issue the electronic permit generated from the Electronic Death Registration System to the person in charge of final disposition of the decedent; it directs the funeral director or direct disposer to file paper death certificates and paper permits; the funeral director is responsible for producing and maintaining death certificates/permits in accordance with Chapter 382, Florida Statutes. The bill also directs funeral establishments to file death certificates electronically.

Some of the details of the law include :

- A definition of a burial transit permit has been added to the definitions: "Burial transit permit" means a permit issued by the department that authorizes the final disposition of a dead body; "entombment" has been added to the list of terms under "Final Disposition."
- The funeral director must provide either the electronic permit or the paper permit to the person in charge of the place of final disposition.

- The burial transit permit on file may satisfy the requirement for the person in charge of the place of final disposition to maintain a record of the decedent's name, place of death, date of final disposition, and the name and address of the funeral director.
- The bill charges the funeral director with the responsibility of maintaining the paper permit for at least three years; the county health department is no longer responsible for maintaining the paper permit.
- References to providing the permit to the county of final disposition within 10 days of the disposition have been removed.
- References to the department have been added alongside the local registrar and in some instances the local registrar reference has been removed; the department reference simply is inclusive of both the local registrar as well as the state office.
- Referencing the "back of the certificate" for AKAs/aliases has been removed.
- The bill provides a better reference to the source of the information for the death record for the funeral director, rather than simply "next of kin," it references "... a legally authorized person as described in section 497.005 (39), Florida Statutes..."

Questions regarding the statutory changes should be directed to Sharon Dover, [Sharon.Dover@flhealth.gov](mailto:Sharon.Dover@flhealth.gov), 904-359-6951, or to a quality assurance field representa-

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# Spotlight on Collier County

Collier County was originally a part of Lee County, and was created amidst a dizzying land boom in 1923. Collier County is named for Barron Gift Collier—a pioneering businessman whose vision and personal fortune were tied to much of Southwest Florida’s early growth.

Stephanie Vick is the Local Registrar (LR) at the Collier County Health Department, and has been serving Florida for 23 years. In charge of the day to day operations of the vital statistics office is Chief Deputy Registrar (CDR), Louis “Lou” LaFemina, who has been with vitals for a little less than a year. Lou is assisted by Deputy Registrar, Lakeya Stokes, who has worked with vitals for more than six years. Backing up Lou and Lakeya when needed are Deputy Registrars: Olga Jerome (27 years), Kate Rewis (10 years), Glenn Church (1 year), and the former CDR, Mark Lemke (5 years).

In 2014, the vital statistics team handled over 13,000



*Pictured: (L-R) Deputies Lakeya Stokes, Kate Rewis and Olga Jerome; CDR Lou LaFemina. Not pictured are Local Registrar Stephanie Vick and deputies Mark Lemke and Glenn Church*

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

#### Local Registrar:

- Robert “Bob” Snyder ..... Flagler
- Adrian Cooksey, M.D. .... Gadsden
- Henry M. Kurban, M.D. .... Lee
- Tiffany Collins ..... Okeechobee
- Ulyee Choe, M.D. .... Pinellas, Hardee (Interim)
- Clint Sperber ..... St. Lucie

#### Chief Deputy Registrar:

- Jinny Trammell ..... Franklin
- Bridgett Chandler ..... Gadsden
- Audra Gorby ..... Taylor



customer requests, and issued nearly 43,000 certificates. GO TEAM COLLIER!

## FUNERAL DIRECTOR’S CORNER

The Bureau of Vital Statistics is excited to announce the launching of a pilot for the Electronic Fetal Death Registration System (EFDRS). The pilot will be conducted with five funeral homes from various areas of the state and is scheduled to begin in August and last for a few months. Once the pilot has concluded, any updates or changes will be made and tested, with statewide EFDRS implementation to follow.

## CDR/DR TRAINING

CDR/DR training was conducted by QA Field Representative, Mary Boutté, in Palm Beach County August 18-20, and was attended by vitals personnel from Palm Beach, Broward, Martin, Hendry, Charlotte, and Miami-Dade counties.

The next CDR/DR training will be held in Jacksonville and is tentatively scheduled for January 2016. The exact dates are yet to be determined, so be sure to listen in on the monthly CDR conference call for updated information. If interested in attending the upcoming CDR/DR training contact Michael Edwards at 904-359-6900 ext. 1123, or [Michael.Edwards@flhealth.gov](mailto:Michael.Edwards@flhealth.gov).

The County Health Department phone list (with fees) is posted to the Internet at:  
[www.floridahealth.gov/certificates/certificates/publications-page.html](http://www.floridahealth.gov/certificates/certificates/publications-page.html)  
 The list is updated quarterly & can be downloaded at any time.  
 Be sure to verify with the county should there be additional fees.

## Clerk's Corner:

# Moving With Our Partners

The Bureau of Vital Statistics, in partnership with the Clerks of the Circuit Court, is moving toward paperless registration. As of this writing, more than 70% of the state's divorce records are filed electronically, which equates to 32 counties online, with another 14 counties ready to begin transmitting in August/September.

Vitals hopes to fully implement the divorce project and have all counties online by the end of the year. Electronic transmission saves time and resources not only for the Clerks and their staff, but for Vital Statistics staff as well.

Our next step is to work with the clerks and have

marriage records transmitted electronically. Currently, there are no clerks' offices submitting marriages electronically, but more than a dozen have expressed an interest. These counties are currently online for divorce, and we are awaiting test data files for initial review.

If your clerk's office is not yet online for divorce files or you wish to discuss the marriage transmittal project, contact Mike Edwards, 904-359-6900, extension 1123, Michael.Edwards@flhealth.gov OR Rebecca Bird, extension 1005, Rebecca.Bird@flhealth.gov.

## Bits N' Pieces

- Computer certifications of Fetal Death Certificates, 2009 to present, are available for issuance from any county health department as well as the state office.

- CDRs have a new tool to help ensure the accounting of safety paper; run the MISSING DOCTRACKING REPORT from the BATCH MENU.

- Safety Paper must be inventoried EVERY Month.

- CDRs who have TAX COLLECTOR offices issuing birth certifications must monitor their activity daily through the reconciliation of the safety paper reports as well as the every other month site visit to the tax collector offices.

## 2015 Annual NAPHSIS Meeting Pittsburgh, PA

**NAPHSIS** (National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems) is a national association of US state and territorial vital records and public health statistics offices. NAPHSIS meets annually to discuss important topics related to public health and vital statistics. This year's meeting was May 31-June 3 and was held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the "City of Bridges." The theme of the meeting was "Building Bridges Together" and some of the topics of discussion were how vital records offices' relationships with other state agencies, private entities and public programs are beneficial to improve the overall health of the population. A trend noticed was states pushing electronic registration systems and the use of informatics data as essential elements in monitoring public health. Security concerns are always interesting and those sessions were highly attended; speakers included experts from the Department of State and the Center for Identity. Overall, the meeting was informative and productive; the annual meeting continues to assist in the building of relationships with our neighboring states and those all over the country.

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