

## Season's Greetings From The State Registrar

We approach the end of another exhilarating and challenging year in Vital Statistics. As the leader of such a vibrant and diverse community, I am in awe when I consider your many accomplishments. 2009 has brought the Electronic Birth Registration System (EBRS) closer to full implementation, which is expected in the spring of 2010. This has been a tremendous effort not only for vitals' state and county staff, but hospital staff who have also worked diligently to streamline their processes and help make EBRS a success. We continue to refine the death registration system (EDRS) and plan to pilot in summer 2010. It's exciting to look forward to the opportunities and challenges EDRS will bring for the vitals community and our good partners, the funeral directors and their staff, medical examiners and their staff, and physicians and their staff. Together we will be moving into a new age for death registration.

Electronic registration is not the only accomplishment we have experienced this past year. State office staff have undertaken the task of scanning huge numbers of records, making them accessible electronically, thus saving time, space,

and money. Electronic certifications are now the norm for both marriage and divorce certifications. Working with other agencies within the department, we now have e-vault to assist with their data needs. The annual report reflects the collective effort of both Tallahassee and Jacksonville staff to produce a useful, comprehensive tool in monitoring Florida's public health. Clerks of Court are working closely with Vital Statistics on the possibility of electronic transfer of their files.

All of these things have come about due to the hard work and diligence of so many dedicated people. Tough times have not swayed your commitment to Florida's citizens in the pursuit of meeting their needs and the goals of the department. I am honored to work in such company and wish you and your families peace, happiness, and good health in the coming year.

C. Meade Grigg, State Registrar



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## Spotlight On ... Orange County

To say Orange County has a large office would be an understatement. The Orange County Vital Statistics office consists of the main location on West Church Street and four satellite offices led by Chief Deputy Registrar, Rafael Sanchez. The locations are bustling with 18 energetic staff members, whose combined experience in Vitals equates to more than 73 years!!

Back in October 2009, Rafael was proud to announce his county's hospitals were 100% online with the Electronic Birth Registration System. "We are extremely excited about the EBRS process. Our county had over 18,000 births last year. Going electronic improves our internal process and customer service to our clients", states Rafael Sanchez. With Winnie Palmer Hospital, the leading birthing hospital in Florida and third largest in the nation, with over 14 thousand births last year, that was a huge undertaking. Besides Winnie Palmer, Orange county hospitals include Florida Hospital Orlando, Health Central, and Winter Park Hospital.

Orange County was the first county to house a VS office within a hospital, at Winter Park Hospital. They have opened an office at Winnie Palmer Hospital and offer in-room delivery service for this huge facility. Since EBRS implementation, the Winnie Palmer office has issued more than 2,500 birth certifications. They have also opened an office within the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Last year, the Orange County office issued 42,168 birth and death certifications. Their office services 81 funeral homes. With over 3 million people living in the county, Rafael's team continues to give the community their best customer service. Keep up the good work, Orange County Vital Statistics!



# EBRS Training



Florida Hospital DeLand began using the Electronic Birth Registration System on October 19, 2009. Pictured is C. Meade Grigg, State Registrar, who wanted to observe a new EBRS facility during their training. Meade even

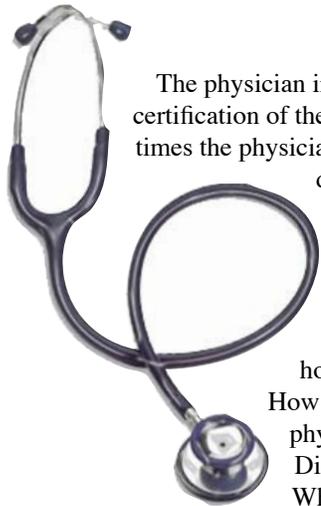
volunteered to be a witness on one of the in-hospital paternity birth records. He can now be classified as one of the QA Team!! Also pictured are two of the birth registrars, Leah Dreggors and Karen Hulsman, two members of a strong birth registration team.

During training day a slideshow presentation was shown, giving an overview of Vital Statistics and EBRS, followed by a practice session creating birth records in the training environment. A typical birth scenario often encountered is one that requires paternity signatures as those records require additional signatures to complete their registration process. To re-enforce what was learned, we completed their first birth record electronically. By the end of the day, everyone knew they had put in a good day's work and were excited to start the following day.

On the "go-live" day, the QA field rep shadowed the birth registrars while they created and registered their births electronically. The field rep is there to get them over any bumps in the road and to provide the best possible customer service to our hospitals. Once the hospital is fully in production, batch reports can be run, providing a variety of data on what has been entered. These reports help monitor the birth registrar's progress and keep track of the records they create. At the end of the week, the reconciliation report was reviewed. This report is part of the checks and balances in place to ensure a record is received for each delivery and that no fraudulent records are filed. It is faxed to the CDR who reviews and works with the hospital if there are any questions. Jane Gray, Volusia County CDR attended the first day of training and since she already has a hospital online, she was familiar with the reconciliation report.

Overall, the training week went smoothly. Each facility is unique. It's an enjoyable experience learning their process and fitting it into EBRS, then sitting back and observing their delight as they become familiar with EBRS and begin to love all that it can do for them and the new parents.

## Reluctant Physician



The physician in charge of the patient's care for the illness or condition that resulted in death must complete the medical certification of the certificate of death within 72 hours after being presented the death record by the funeral director. Many times the physician is reluctant to sign a death record. He/she may feel they are not completely sure of the actual cause of death or that it had been some time since they had last seen the decedent. Florida statute and the death record both state the physician should determine cause of death to the best of their ability. The funeral director must explain to the physician their responsibility and reference s. 382.008 (3) F.S. regarding who the rightful certifier might be.

The following are some suggestions for the a funeral director when dealing with a physician who is reluctant to sign a death certificate. Remember, it is the funeral director's responsibility (not funeral home staff, not law enforcement).

How did the funeral director determine who the certifier should be? Is there a possibility that another physician would sign? Could it fall under the medical examiner's jurisdiction?

Did the funeral director confirm with the physician that he/she would sign the death certificate?

What does the burial-transit permit reflect for certifier?

Where did the death occur? If at home, was there a police report?

If in a medical facility, has risk management been contacted?

Why is the physician refusing to sign the death certificate?

- Not the physician's patient?
- Covering physician?
- Hadn't seen within 30 days?
- Not expected to die?

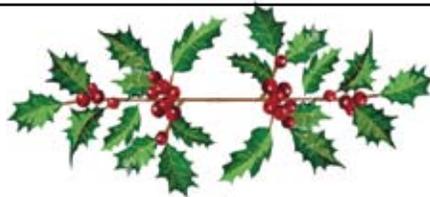
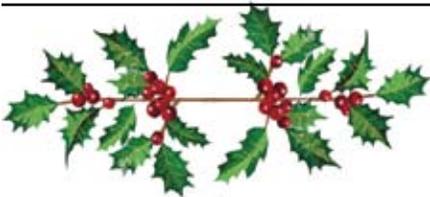
If all efforts fail, the funeral director should provide written documentation to the CDR that shows all their efforts to have the physician certify the death (Death Registration Delay Report, 1355). The CDR will then attempt to get the physician to sign.

**Welcome Aboard**

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

**Chief Deputy Registrar**

Lyana Icaza ..... Miami-Dade  
 Lisa Makal ..... Polk



## E-Vitals Online Training

The state office has completed its first in a series of online training for e-Vitals. The class is taught as an online meeting through Dim/Dim Web Meeting/Conferencing System. Mike Grant and Ray Herz are the trainers and they began with “The e-Vitals Hour — Setting DOCSEQUENCE”, a review of DocSequence and how it is handled. There were six sessions offered in order to accommodate the varied schedules of county health department staff. More than 50 deputy registrars signed on and many more participated by gathering at the same computer for the training. From the feedback received, the classes are a success!

The next installment will be in January and will cover DocTracking. Be sure to sign up when Mike sends out the announcement.



**The Chief Deputy Registrar Operations Manual (COM), 2009 Revision is available on the department intranet website. CDRs should be sure to download the latest version.**

## CDRAC Update

The Chief Deputy Registrar Advisory Committee (CDRAC) has been involved in several discussions with the state office. Whenever there are questions regarding policy and procedure, CDRAC is the first resource consulted when considering the overall impact, especially on county offices.

Recently there was some question regarding proper IDs and after much deliberation and with the expert advice from CDRAC, the issue was resolved. There also was collaboration on doing away with the phone queries for birth records. As always, they review the revisions for both the CDR Manual and the handbook. As the primary users, there is no one better able to tell us what needs clarification, what is obsolete, and what needs to be added.

Both the state office and the county offices are grateful to this group for their collective expertise.

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](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 for any additional fees.

## CDR Presentations To Department of Corrections

For the past few years CDRs in Marion, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, and Sumter counties (maybe more) have worked with Adult Protective Services, the Department of Corrections, and other local social service agencies within their counties to provide a table at cooperative workshops/job fairs for inmates scheduled for release back into the community.

The CDRs provided information on how to apply for Florida vital records, what kinds of ID are required, who is authorized to obtain confidential information, and how to allow someone other than themselves to access their confidential record. Copies of various forms were available for the inmates, such as applications, paternity acknowledgment forms, affidavits to

amend the birth record, and affidavits to authorize release of a record. They were provided information on the vitals website and the kind of information and various forms that can be found on the website. For questions outside the CDR's purview, the state office phone number/business cards were made available so the inmate could contact the appropriate office for their questions. Because many of the inmates were born in other states, information on “where to write” was quite popular with the attendees.

These workshops are valuable to the inmates and provide the CDR the opportunity to assist another segment of the community. We applaud the efforts of these county staff.

## BITS 'N PIECES

CDRs, birth registrars, and funeral directors — be mindful of the year change when preparing and reviewing vitals records; make sure the dates are correct!

CDRs, birth registrars, funeral directors — be sure printers are printing legibly and have high quality toner; illegible records are just that, illegible, and must be returned

**Past issues of the Vital News can be found on the department's website at the following address:**  
**[http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Planning\\_eval/Vital\\_Statistics/VitalNews/vn-index.htm](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Planning_eval/Vital_Statistics/VitalNews/vn-index.htm)**

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