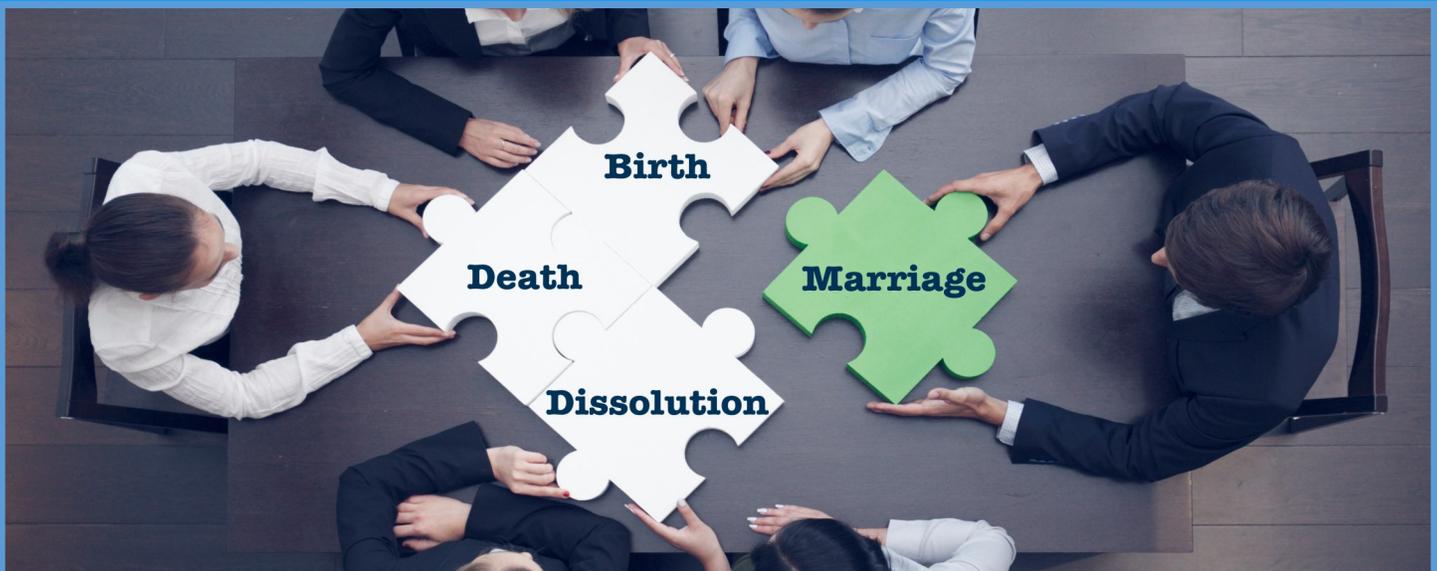


VITAL NEWS IN THE SUNSHINE STATE

DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS IN PUBLIC HEALTH



ORLANDO STRONG

VITAL STATISTICS AT WORK DURING CRISIS

Vital Statistics recognizes Lamont Riddick, Chief Deputy Registrar at the Florida Department of Health in Orange County (FDOH—Orange), who was instrumental in coordinating efforts between state agencies, hospitals, funeral homes, social security, law enforcement, as well as the District 9 Medical Examiner’s office and Florida Emergency Mortuary Operations Response System during the tragedy at the Pulse Night Club in Orlando.

Lamont has been with FDOH-Orange for seven years, and has been the Chief Deputy Registrar responsible for the day to day operations of the vital statistics office for 5 1/2 years.

Lamont says, “During this time the thing that he is so grateful for is the help and support that he received from the state office.”

Thank you, Lamont, for your excellent work and a job well done.



LAMONT RIDDICK
CHIEF DEPUTY REGISTRAR
ORANGE COUNTY

SIGNING A FLORIDA DEATH CERTIFICATE

WHAT PHYSICIANS NEED TO KNOW

Completing the death certificate is one of the last things a physician can do in caring for the patient. Without a death certificate families cannot proceed with some very important business such as closing estates, filing insurance claims, social security benefits, veteran's benefits and/or retirement benefits. The death certificate is also an important public health monitoring tool.

Who should sign the death certificate?

- A primary or attending physician who treated the decedent through examination, medical advice or medication (even if not physically seen) during the 12 months preceding the date of death is the most knowledgeable about the decedent and should sign the death certificate. Chapter 382.008(3), Florida Statutes.
- In some cases, the physician in charge of the decedent's care for the illness or condition that resulted in death, or by the physician in attendance either at the time of death or immediately before or after is also qualified to sign.
A physician covering for an absent colleague who has access to the patient's medical records is able and qualified to sign. (Just as you would treat a colleague's patient, you are responsible for signing the death certificate he/she would sign.)
- If the patient dies at home, and has been seen by a physician within the last twelve 12 months, it is considered an attended death even if you were not at bedside. A death at home does not automatically fall within the jurisdiction of the medical examiner's office.

Refusing to sign could incur the following penalties:

- Misdemeanor of the 2nd degree. Chapter 382.026(8), Florida Statutes.
- Fines from \$1,000 to \$10,000. Chapter 382.026(9) Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Code, Rule 64B8-8.001(2)(g).
- Notice of Noncompliance. Florida Administrative Code, Rule 64B8-8.011(3)(b)(1).

Within 72 hours after receipt of a death certificate, the medical certification of cause of death shall be completed and made available to the funeral director by the physician. Chapter 382.008(3), Florida Statutes.

Florida Administrative Code Chapter 64V-1.0061(3) states that a physician's signature and statement as to the cause of death does not constitute prima facie proof of the cause of death. Terms such as "Probable" and "Possible" are acceptable terms preceding causes of death.

As a physician you have a statutory obligation to sign the death certificate. Signing a death certificate does not infer that the death is the fault of the physician certifying the death. You are merely completing a legally obligated last act of patient care.

Additional information and training can be found on the Vital Statistics website at www.FloridaVitalStatisticsOnline.com.

* Contributor: Kimberly Groeneveld, Risk Management-Lee Memorial Health Systems

WHAT'S NEW?

QUICK SNIPPETS REGARDING CURRENT OR UP-COMING PROJECTS

- **Vital Statistics** expects to move away from our current Citrix-based platform to a new HTML5 platform within the next 12-18 months. We expect the changes in platform to greatly enhance the usability, and functionality for our users.
- Vital Statistics will be coordinating activities with District Medical Examiner Offices to help further improve the collection of specified drugs related to deaths associated with poisoning by drugs. The project will be a 1 1/2 year study that is conducted through a grant with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) to further enhance the data collection of specific drugs.
- Vital Statistics is excited to be working with the Florida Clerks of Court regarding electronically transmitting documents such as marriage amendments, Legal Changes of Name, Adoptions, Paternity Orders, TPR (Termination of Parental Rights), and Children in Common, through their e-portal system. E-portal will help ensure the timely, and accurate filing of amendment information coming from the Clerks of Courts. Vital Statistics is also currently working with the Clerks of Court on electronically transferring marriages and dissolution of marriage data, thus eliminating the need for paper records.
- Vital Statistics recently partnered with the Veterans Administration in the development of a brochure that discusses how families may benefit when the death record properly shows the Service-Connected Disability that contributed to the decedent's death. To get a copy of the VA Service Connected Disability brochure, contact the Bureau of Vital Statistics, or the Veterans Administration. For an informational brochure [click here](#).
- Vital Statistics is currently developing a presentation to be used in medical residency programs throughout the state. The program will familiarize the medical student with what their obligation will be to sign the death certificate once they become a Florida physician.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS

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TO ADD YOUR NAME TO OUR MAILING LIST, PLEASE [CLICK HERE](#).

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

E-MAIL US AT LORRAINE.KRATZ@FLHEALTH.GOV OR CALL 904-359-6900 EXT. 1136