Florida HEALTH

Vital News

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Season's Greetings from the State Registrar

The annual "Seasons Greetings" from Florida's State Registrar will carry a different flavor as C. Meade Grigg, State Registrar for the past 20 years, has retired. Meade transitioned a basic vital statistics unit into a national leader among offices of health statistics through staff development, technological innovation, community partnerships, and integration of data access with public health practice in Florida. His leadership will be sorely missed, but he has earned this time to devote to his personal interests and to his family.

With that, I take on the task of providing greetings for this year. Following in the footsteps of such a strong leader encourages me to reflect on the successes made under Meade's leadership. There are so many who contribute to this success and I extend my gratitude and thanks for the opportunity to work together with them, making Florida a better place for its citizens. Our professional partners at the hospitals, in the funeral industry, in physicians' offices, medical examiners' offices, the newly added tax collectors' offices, and more, bring subject matter expertise and professionalism to the Vitals table. County health departments, central office staff in Tallahassee, and staff at the state office in Jacksonville give untold hours toward making a better program. When a client walks into a vitals office, whether it is here at the state office, in a county health department office, or a tax collector office, they receive the benefits from all of us working together.

I look forward to working with everyone in the "Vitals family" and wish for you a healthy and prosperous 2015.

Ken Jones
State Registrar

Clerk's Corner

On September 19th, the Bureau of Vital Statistics participated in a Florida Court Clerks and Comptrollers Association sponsored webinar on the Bureau's Electronic Divorce Data Transmittal project. The goal of the project is to transition each Clerk's office from the process of collecting and transporting monthly paper divorce records to the state office to transmitting those same records electronically. The realized cost savings vary in each Clerk's office depending on the number of records to be sent but the savings are there for all.

From 100% of the total state file, 60% is now sent to us electronically. That's over HALF of the overall file for the entire state currently on line! Another 34% are in the process of getting on board with paperless transmittals which leaves about 6% still waiting in the wings. When we have all of the Clerks of Court sending electronic divorce records, marriages can't be far behind!

If you would like to discuss your office transmitting divorce records electronically, you may e-mail Rebecca.bird@flhealth.gov or Michael.edwards@flhealth.gov for more information or call (904) 359-6900, extension 1005 for Rebecca or extension 1123 for Mike.

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Spotlight on... Alachua County

Alachua County takes its name from the Indian word "alachua" meaning "sink" which was how they depicted the layout of the land. Nestled beneath huge live oaks, magnolias, cedar and hickory trees, the town of Alachua is steeped in Florida history.

Today, with a population of more than 125,000, the Alachua County Vital Statistics team, Local Registrar Paul Myers, Chief Deputy Registrar Wendy Simpson, Deputy Registrars Evelyn Collins, Tina Cribbs, Charlete Dittman, Michelle Vreeland, Donna Jarmon, Susan Dees, and Cathy Cornett keeps up the pace with their clients. With more than 26 years of combined experience, last year their office issued 2,725 birth certifications and 15,769 death certifications. They serve 15 funeral homes. With two tax collectors offices in their county now issuing birth certifications, they hope to have the third location up and running by the end of the year.

Alachua County Vitals, keep up the super customer service!

Pictured from left to right: Deputy Registrars Cathy Cornett, Charlene Dittman, Tina Cribbs, Evelyn Collins, Chief Deputy Registrar Wendy Simpson, Deputy Registrars Donna Jarmon, Michelle Vreeland, and Susan Dees

Quality Assurance Recruiting Physicians to Become Online Certifiers

The Department of Health Bureau of Vital Statistics' Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) has been in use for a few years now and as a result, 99.4% of all death records are being filed electronically. Most of the death records are certified by physicians through the fax attestation process which requires the physician to complete the medical portion on a fax, and then return to EDRS so the funeral director can complete the death record. If disposition approval is required, the EDRS record makes a detour to the medical examiner's office, before it is Registered/Completed.

The Bureau of Vital Statistics' Quality Assurance unit has been tasked to recruit physicians to become online certifiers for EDRS. One of the many benefits with online certifiers includes better causes of death due to edits and a built-in dictionary designed to help the online physician. Also, the EDRS record does not need to be returned to the funeral director. Once an online certifier completes the medical portion, EDRS will either send the death record to the medical examiner for disposition approval; or it is Registered/Completed. The quicker the death record is filed; the sooner certifications can be issued. The timelier reporting of the cause of death information to the state office and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) can help improve real-time public health surveillance and mortality statistics.

External Comment in Pinellas County

Recognized by Pinellas County Health Department

Comment:

"Jennifer was the employee who most helped my family in getting the death certificates after the passing of my father in July. Jennifer was extremely professional, compassionate and helpful to me by providing information, making contact with persons in Jacksonville, FL, and keeping me informed. She went above and beyond expectations in helping us get the amended certificates which we finally received after almost two months due to problems with a funeral home. My family cannot express enough thanks to Jennifer for her steadfast assistance and genuine concern in seeing this process to its successful completion. We are sincerely grateful to your office for help but most importantly to Jennifer."

October 2014 CDR~DR Training

The fourth quarter CDR-DR training for 2014 was held at the state office in Jacksonville, October 24th and 25th.

Congratulations to the graduating class from our Quarter 4 training session: Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Hamilton, Highlands, Liberty, Okaloosa, and Seminole counties.

We have tentatively scheduled the next quarterly CDR-DR Training for January 2015, so if you have an interest in coming contact Lorraine Kratz at (904) 359-6900 ext. 1136, or email Lorraine.Kratz@FLHealth.gov.

Please note that the training is developed for Vitals Statistics staff only, and access to e-Vitals is essential to the training.

FETAL DEATH < 20 WEEKS GESTATION

When there is a delivery of fetal remains that has not reached the 20th week of gestation, many families still wish to have a funeral service for that child. In these instances, funeral directors have asked about obtaining medical examiner approval for final disposition since many of these deliveries result in cremation. Section 11G-2.001(3)(c), Florida Administrative Code, reads, "Fetal deaths for which cremation, anatomic dissection or burial at sea of the remains is intended must be referred to the medical examiner for investigation. For the purposes of this section, "fetal death" is defined by Section 382.002, F. S."

Based on the above reference, medical examiners do not have to be notified of disposition of any fetal deaths less than 20 weeks gestation. Funeral directors cannot complete a burial transit permit as they are used for deaths and fetal deaths that meet the definition as outlined in s. 382.002, F.S. From a vital statistics perspective, s. 382.002, F.S. does not allow for a vital record to be filed.

Questions on how to account for these cases on the monthly reports and embalmers' affidavits should be directed to the Division of Funeral, Cemetery and Consumer Services, the regulatory board over the practice of funeral directing.

Changes in Latitude

The Vital Records Unit is pleased to announce Sheila Perez as the new Health Services Manager. Sheila replaced Jim Ballard whom re-retired in October. She has more than 23 years' experience, most recently as the Records Center Manager over the Adoption/Delay Unit in the Amendment section.

Please join us in congratulating Sheila on a well-deserved promotional opportunity.

The Amendments Unit is delighted to announce Kristy Holton as the new Records Center Manager in the Adoption/Delay Unit. Kristy has almost 15 years of experience with the Bureau of Vital Statistics and has worked in several different departments, of which the majority of her time has been in the Correction Unit.

Please applaud Kristy in her promotion.

The Vital Records Unit is happy to announce Tracy Wren as the Records Center Manager over the Storage Facility. Tracy has worked on the Help Desk for three years. She will be overseeing and reorganizing our two primary vaults and the duties that come with the position.

Please salute Tracy in her promotion.

NAPHSIS Southern Regional Meeting 2014

A NAPHSIS update was provided by Trish Potrzebowski, the NAPHSIS Executive Director. The small group setting provided for frank and open discussions regarding current issues within states. Specific topics included: Electronic Reporting Systems, STEVE, and EVVE fact of death; EDRS implementation experiences and improvement projects; working with outside agencies; and quality improvement initiatives. Michael Allen, the Fraud Program Manager, US Passport Agency presented a power point on detection of fraud on documents. Hot Topics were also discussed in a "round table" setting, allowing each state to provide an overview of their state.

Welcome Aboard

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

Local Registrar

Stephanie Vick..... Collier County
Robert Palussek..... Lee County

Chief Deputy Registrars

Lisa Daniels ..... Duval County
Maria Quintero..... DeSoto County

Funeral Directors' Corner

- Reminder to use Funeral Director Notes field to document efforts to get record signed, other wise it may appear that YOU are at fault for not following up with the physician.
- Funeral directors must remember that a death certification with cause of death is restricted to statutorily authorized people only, Section 382.025(2a), Florida Statutes. "Next of kin" or "Informant" is not sufficient as relationship to decedent to obtain cause of death. Confidential cause of death may be issued as follows:

1. "To the registrant's spouse or parent or to the registrant's child, grandchild, or sibling if of legal age..."
   a. Spouse
   b. Parent
   c. Child
   d. Grandchild
   e. Sibling
2. "... or to any person who provides a will that has been executed pursuant to s.732.502, F.S., insurance policy, or other document that demonstrates his or her interest in the estate of the registrant..."

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE ALL INFORMATION

Date:_____

Address as shown on current newsletter_____

_____

_____

New Mailing Address: _____

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PLEASE MAIL NAME CHANGE OR CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO:
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS, QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT
P.O. BOX 210
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32231-0042

Department of Health
Bureau of Vital Statistics
Quality Assurance Unit (HPEVSRR)
P.O. Box 210
Jacksonville, FL 32231-0042

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