FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Vital News

VITAL STATISTICS

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REVISED DEATH CERTIFICATE

Vital Statistics reached almost 1000 people statewide in its first live broadcast for the revised Florida Death Certificate on October 28, 2004, and taped re-broadcast on November 4, 2004. Funeral Directors and staff, medical examiners and staff, and county vital statistics staff were targeted and provided valuable feedback to the state office. Many of their submitted questions were answered on air. Chief Deputy Registrars (CDR) were provided a copy of all questions and answers resulting from this training. A list of the questions and answers is also available on our website at:

http://www.doh.state.fl.us/planning_eval/vital_statistics/index.html

CDRs and site coordinators throughout the state worked cooperatively to make it possible for people in their county to receive the training in their home county. Surrounding county health departments worked with their hurricane damaged neighbors to be sure everyone had adequate opportunity.

Physicians throughout Florida were also invited to attend the broadcasts on the revised death certificate. Vital Statistics placed articles in the Florida Medical Association quarterly publication as well as their bi-weekly FMA e-news. Informational brochures have been mailed to 37,000 physicians and several local medical societies have provided information to their memberships. Copies are available upon request.

Implementation of the revised death certificate is scheduled for January 2005. It will be imperative for funeral directors and medical examiners to utilize the correct form when filing. All 2004 deaths and prior will continue to be filed using the current DH 512. Deaths occurring in 2005 and forward must be entered on the revised DH 512, 11/04 Revision. Pre-printed forms are available from the chief deputy registrar. Funeral homes utilizing approved software to generate the death record have been working with these vendors, who have, in turn, been working with the state office, to ensure updates are made.

With all the effort to reach those involved in the death registration process, we are confident of a successful transition.

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E-VITALS "TRAIN"

The e-Vitals train has left the station and is chugging throughout the state of Florida. The train officially departed in September and already 37 of Florida's 67 counties have been successfully trained.

Trainers Kevin Wright and Mike Grant, both Quality Assurance Field Representatives, are extremely pleased with the caliber of those who have attended the trainings. "We are amazed at the "eager - beaver" attitude of the trainees and how quickly they catch on to the new system", says Mike Grant. "Most of the time we have to slow the trainees down, to keep them from getting too far ahead of us", reports Kevin Wright. The single most popular feature of the new system is its search capabilities. Running a close second and third are reports and the tracking of security paper.

The support end of the system is also a success. Ray Herz, System Administrator, who primarily mans the e-Vitals Help Desk, reports a steady stream of calls averaging two to three per day. "The calls I've received thus far reflect that the trainees are asking good questions", says Ray. Just as a reminder, that number for the Help Desk is (904)359-6900 ext. 14357 or SC 826-6900 ext. 14357.

Be sure to check your e-Vitals schedule to make sure you "climb aboard" before this train leaves your station!

CHANGE IN LATITUDE

Priscilla Smith , Program Administrator for the Certification and Search Sections, retired in November 2004. Priscilla spent four years in the Navy before joining us here in Vital Statistics, where she has remained for the past 38+ years. All of us wish her well and will miss her expertise as well as her presence here at the state office.

MINOR REVISION TO BC

A change in statute during the last legislative session, Senate Bill 160, now allows for either a notary or two witnesses when acknowledging paternity on the Certificate of Live Birth Florida, DH Form 511 (see article, September 2004, *Vital News*). This necessitated a change in format of the Paternity Acknowledgment on the DH 511. The form has been redesigned and is available in the warehouse. CDRs should order a supply of the preprinted form for their users. Brookins Communications, Inc. has updated their software to reflect the changes and have begun providing the new program to their clientele. Brookins customers should contact the company regarding the software upgrade.

We will be working with CSE field staff, Florida hospitals, and chief deputy registrars regarding training on the new procedure.

VS & OUR CSE PARTNERS

The Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement (CSE) office and the Office of Vital Statistics have been working cooperatively for many years in obtaining paternity acknowledgments for unmarried mothers. Ken Jones, Deputy State Registrar sits on a committee to review how we can improve the process by which the father signs the in-hospital Paternity Acknowledgment on the birth record.

In 2004, Florida implemented a revised birth certificate and CSE was part of the team assembled to develop the revised record. Vital Statistics has worked with CSE in the development of an informational brochure, "What you Need to Know before Signing Your Child's Birth Certificate" as well as a similar CSE informational brochure and instructional video. We are currently working together on the Florida In-Hospital Establishment Resource Guide to be used along with the new legislation allowing for two witnesses when a notary is unavailable.

In 2002, the rate of in-hospital acknowledgements was 79%. Currently the rate is 91%. This collaborative effort has succeeded in helping not only the children of Florida, but the parents as well. We will continue our efforts in this direction until all children have the rights entitled to them from having a legal father named on their birth certificate.

'Twas the Night Before ...

'Twas the night before implementation and all through the state,
Not a creature was worried, the training went great!
The forms were all ready, the warehouse was stocked.
The vendors were too, they'd worked 'round the clock!

Funeral directors prepared, their confidence was high,
Doctors knew too, they were eager to try.

When out in the field, there arose such a chatter.
CDRs chimed, "We'll make it work, no matter!"

So what did my wondering ears then hear?
The State Registrar cried, "We'll persevere.
Happy implementation to all and to all a good year!"
~ A nony mouse

Funeral directors who want to be *emailed* the quarterly updates to the County Health Department phone list can provide their email address, and the listing will be sent automatically. To have your name put on the list, send an email to:
sharon_dover@doh.state.fl.us

ADMINISTRATIVE FINE AWARDED

An administrative complaint was filed against Willis O. Cooper, licensed funeral director, of Cook-Cooper Funeral Home, Madison, Florida for failure to file death certificates and burial transit permits on time. An administrative fine of $5,400.00 was awarded to the Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics, pursuant to section 382.026, Florida Statutes.

Welcome Aboard

The following appointments have been made to the position of Chief Deputy Registrar:

Chief Deputy Registrar
Sherry L. Drawdy ..... Citrus County

HOLIDAY GREETINGS FROM THE STATE REGISTRAR

Just when you think things can't get any more interesting, along comes 2004 — revised records, hurricanes, e-Vitals, oh my! We began the year with the implementation of the revised Florida Birth Certificate, the first major revision since 1989. A cooperative effort from hospitals, the Florida Hospital Association, county vital statistics staff, and the state office resulted in a relatively smooth transition from the old to the new. Summer brought forth the hurricane season and the challenges in filing vital records with four, back to back, major hurricanes. It was nearly impossible to find an area in the state that had not been impacted. What a fine example of ingenuity, diligence and sacrifice — funeral directors, medical examiners, physicians, hospital staff, county health department staff, and state office staff all had to get outside that box and figure how to serve the needs of Florida citizens, which they did in an exemplary fashion!

With the revised birth certificate well on its way, we began the task of reviewing the National Center for Health Statistics' recommendations for the revised death certificate. Workgroups assembled and reviewed the draft. Department of Health representatives, members of the Medical Examiner Commission, Florida Medical Association, Independent Funeral Director's Association, Funeral Directors of Florida Association, Florida Morticians Association, Florida Hospital Association, and Florida Board of Funeral Directors met over the summer and with their assistance, the revised Florida Death Certificate came to be. A live broadcast and subsequent re-broadcast provided training on the revised record and all players eagerly await the January 2005 implementation. Now, just to make it interesting, the Office of Vital Statistics incorporated a significant update to the records registration system, **e-Vitals**. The state office began using the new system in February 2004, and county rollout began in the summer. As of this press date, 37 counties are up and running on the new system, with full county implementation expected by spring of 2005.

Whew, just reading over all we've done this year takes my breath away. Such amazing accomplishments are only possible when we work together, keeping our eyes and minds set on the objective of serving Florida's citizens in the best possible fashion. I am proud to be State Registrar and I welcome the opportunity to thank all who have contributed to the successes of 2004. May your holiday season be joyous and your new year be prosperous and we look forward to the opportunities 2005 will bring.

MEDICAL AFFIDAVIT & REVISED DC

With the implementation of the revised death certificate came the need to revise the Affidavit of Amendment to Medical Certification of Death, DH 434. This forms contains a facsimile of the medical portion of the record which has the item numbers, thus, the need to make it compatible with the revised record and its *new* numbers and *new items*. The number of the new form is DH 434B and it will be used for 2005 deaths and beyond. The current DH 434 will still be used when amending 2004 deaths and older.

Physicians and funeral directors who keep a supply of affidavit forms to assist their physicians can obtain the revised form from the local Chief Deputy Registrar. The two forms are *not* interchangeable, so it will be necessary to keep a supply of both versions. Should the state office receive an amendment on the incorrect form, it will be necessary to return it to the preparer for re-submission. Please remember to use the appropriate form in order to avoid unnecessary delays for the families needing amended records.

Questions on amending the cause of death should be directed to Dolores Smith at (904) 359-6900 ext. 1087 or SunCom 826-6900 ext. 1087.

The statistical tables, along with 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

BITS 'N PIECES

- Be careful when **entering dates for the new year**. The state office receives quite a few records for the new year that contain the last year's date — be vigilant and avoid unnecessary amendments and returns!
- **CDRs whose county is on the new e-Vitals system** should remember that Chapter 8, CDR Initial Set-Up of the e-Vitals manual is an *excellent* resource for many of your questions during the early days of operation. Be sure you keep this manual at hand for easy reference.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE ALL INFORMATION

Date: _____

Address as shown on current newsletter: _____

_____

_____

New Mailing Address: _____

_____

_____

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

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

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