



February 8, 2001

Dear Colleague:

Over the past several months, NCHS and several of our State colleagues have been working on implementing the new U.S. Standard Certificates of Live Birth and Death and the Fetal Death Report. As part of that process, we have developed a set of specifications for collecting and reporting the items on the birth and death certificates. George Van Amburg, former Michigan State Registrar, has been working with us under contract on this project. The purpose of these specifications is to clarify and define explicitly each item; to identify the best sources for the information sought in each item; and to promote uniformity in data collection, in particular electronic systems, across registration areas. The draft specifications for the birth certificate are now complete and we are enclosing a set. We would appreciate your reviewing the specifications. Please feel free to ask any questions or provide any comments. Our goal is that all the registration areas will be able to adopt these specifications when the revised certificates are fully implemented. We are still working to develop national imputation schemes for variables such as the day of the last menstrual period which may be replicable by the states.

You will note that we have included an "overview" of the specifications. The overview gives the rationale behind the approaches taken to develop the specifications. Also included in this package are draft copies of the birth certificate and the mother's and facility worksheets which we hope to have professionally formatted at a later stage. As you know, we are strongly promoting the use of standard worksheets to enhance the collection of quality, reliable data. We are also developing an instructional manual for data collection which we hope to have available in the near future.

If you have any specific or technical question, you may wish to contact staff in the Reproductive Statistics Branch. Joyce Martin (301-458-4362) and Stephanie Ventura (301-458-4547) have been extensively involved in the development of these specifications. In order to keep the implementation process on schedule, we are asking that you provide your comments no later than March 16, 2001. If you wish, you may e-mail your comments to Stephanie Ventura (SVentura@cdc.gov); she will share them with appropriate staff and you will receive a response. Alternatively, you can mail your comments to me or Stephanie at the above address.

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I want to thank you in advance for your assistance with this phase of the implementation process.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Freedman
Director
Division of Vital Statistics

Enclosure