

TEXAS VITAL STATISTICS NEWS

Texas Vital Statistics, Texas Department of State Health Services

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Electronic Death Registration Update

Texas Electronic Registrar (TER)-Death is on schedule to roll out officially on Sunday, January 1, 2006. As with any new Internet application, there exists the possibility of problems, bugs and attending frustration. While TER-Death will be extensively tested before January, there is nothing like the real world to uncover less than optimal performance.

To spare our partners any unnecessary frustration, the Texas Vital Statistics Unit will pilot in two areas of Texas where the majority of possible participants have already requested the system. For the first days of January, use of the live system will be restricted to the pilot communities. As successful registrations are made, other geographic clusters of participants will be quickly given access to the electronic death registration system.

Optimal benefits of TER-Death will occur when all partners in death

registration are participating: the certifier (physician, JP or ME), the local registrar and the funeral director. Another key element for optimal use of this system is training of all participants.

Basic orientation to TER-Death is our primary method of introducing the new system to our partners. If you haven't had an opportunity to attend one of these presentations or more advanced training on the electronic death registration system, the next opportunity will be at the 51st Annual Texas Vital Statistics Conference (see article on this page and registration on p. 3).

We are also coordinating group requests for training around the state in December, January and February. Once you have coordinated with other users in your community, please e-mail your request for TER-Death training to SusanL.Rodriguez@dsh.state.tx.us.

51st Annual Vital Statistics Conference: The Texas Recording Session, Dec. 4 - 6

Annual Conference time is a very special time in the Texas Vital Statistics calendar. The three-day conference, held in Austin at the elegant Renaissance Austin Hotel, is a wonderful opportunity to provide up-to-date training to you, our vital statistics partners. It is a time to learn about new statutes, techniques and systems that will improve the work you do and the service you provide your customers. It is also a time to meet with folks from all over the state who do what you do, be that registering hospital births,

determining cause of death, issuing marriage licenses, requesting disinterment permits, or delivering babies at home. And it's a lot of fun!

This year promises to be our biggest and best conference yet. Our theme this year, drawing on Austin's fame as "The Live Music Capitol of the World," is **The Texas Recording Session**. With a musical spin on the entire event, from the creative curriculum to the "On the Red Carpet" Awards Luncheon, we are planning a unique conference experience for you. (Continued on p. 2)

TER-Birth FAQ

The Field Services staff has made a whirlwind tour of training TER-Birth users this summer, and some interesting questions have arisen. In the spirit of sharing the information with all TER-Birth users, we address some of those questions here.

Is there a way to do manual ImmTrac forms? No. There is no manual version of the ImmTrac Consent form. It can only be generated by TER. Some users have been faxing in an outdated form that parents have completed manually. The fax server can only read TER-generated ImmTrac forms, so manual forms cannot be processed.

Under what circumstances may I submit a manual Acknowledgment of Paternity? Just as in the case of the ImmTrac form, the fax server can only read the TER-generated AOP. Any manual AOPs faxed to the server cannot be read and require hands-on review from staff. The only times an AOP should be done manually is if the parents are (continued on page 4)

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Guidelines on Fetal Death Registration

One of the hardest issues faced in both hospitals and funeral services is the fetal death of a child. This is a devastating event for parents, and oftentimes registration of this vital event adds to the trauma of this loss. Additionally, there is sometimes confusion about when a fetal death certificate is required. These guidelines are offered to minimize confusion and pain to the family, to introduce a new document available for grieving parents and to ensure that Texas Vital Statistics continues to receive accurate and timely data about fetal deaths in Texas.

The Texas Administrative Code [TAC 181.7] states that a fetal death record should be filed for a stillborn fetus weighing 350 grams or more regardless of the number of weeks of gestation. Gestational age is only considered when the weight of the fetus is unknown. In that case, the gestational age of 20 weeks or more, calculated from the start date of the last normal menstrual period to the date of delivery, requires the filing of a fetal death certificate.

The Fetal Death Certificate may be filed by a funeral director or by the hospital, depending upon the manner of disposition of the remains.

The 79th Texas Legislature recently passed Senate Bill 271 (also known as "The Missing Angels" bill) which calls for the creation of a new document for parents, the Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth. According to Sec. 192.0022 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, the person required to file the Fetal Death Certificate shall be responsible for advising parents of a stillborn child that they may request a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth from the State Office.

The request for a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth can only be fulfilled if there is an existing Fetal Death Certificate. The required Fetal Death Certificate and the courtesy document will contain the same information and have the same state file number. Only the Fetal Death Certificate is considered a vital record.

In order to assist hospital personnel and funeral directors in disseminating this information, Texas Vital Statistics has created a flyer about the Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth, fees for this document, and how to request it. This is available on our website. Please feel free to download, copy and distribute the flyer. We will be printing it in the future.

Annual Conference (continued from p. 1)

Of special interest at this year's annual conference will be lots of training on the new electronic death registration system, TER-Death, which will be rolled out on January 1, 2006. If you are a funeral director or funeral home staff, justice of the peace, medical examiner or ME staff, or work in the office of a local registrar, you don't want to miss all the vital information on this new system that will be provided at the conference.

The Texas Recording Session will have something for everyone! Training sessions on birth registration, death registration, marriage, Acknowledgment of Paternity certification, ethics, fraud prevention, stress management and customer service, among others, will be offered. Continuing education accreditation has been requested for AHIMA members, midwives, funeral directors, county and district clerks and justices of the peace. To see the agenda for the conference, check out our website: www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field/annual.shtm.

REGISTRATION: To register for the conference, use the registration form and instructions found on page 3 of this newsletter. The last date for pre-registration is November 18, 2005. Late and onsite registration are other options.

HOTEL ACCOMODATIONS: The conference will be held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel, 9721 Arboretum Blvd., Austin, TX. To make your room reservation, contact the hotel at (800)228-9290 or (512)343-2626 and state you are with the Texas Department of State Health Services Vital Statistics Conference to get the conference rate. Rates are as follows: Single: \$85/night; Double: \$125.00/night; Triple: \$150.00/night; and Quad: \$150.00/night. **The cut-off date for these special conference hotel rates is November 18.**

Planning to be a TER-Death User in 2006?

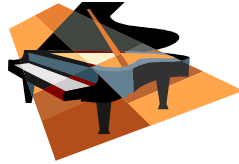
One of the most important steps in preparing for online death registration is making sure you have the right equipment and set-up for optimal use of the system. Our vendor has informed us that the following specifications are ideal.

- ◆ 1.0 gigabyte processor speed or faster with 512MB of RAM or more
- ◆ Adobe Acrobat Reader
- ◆ Pentium 4 or equivalent
- ◆ Windows XP Operating System
- ◆ Web browser with Flash Player (7.0 or greater)
- ◆ Internet access at 56K or better
- ◆ 1024 x 768 resolution color monitor

Anyone purchasing a new computer system or changing/upgrading a current system will want to keep this in mind.

*From the Live Music Capitol of the World,
Texas Vital Statistics & the Texas Public Health Association
present the*

51ST ANNUAL TEXAS VITAL STATISTICS CONFERENCE



THE TEXAS RECORDING SESSION

The Renaissance Austin Hotel

December 4 - 6, 2005

Vital Statistics Annual Conference Registration Form

Please print or type.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Office: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Please mark the category that describes your vital statistics role:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local registrar | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital/birthing center staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Funeral director |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local registrar staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Midwife | <input type="checkbox"/> Funeral home staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County clerk | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice of the Peace | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Dept. staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County clerk staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice of the Peace staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Examiner | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Examiner staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Pre-registration for the annual conference is \$95. Pre-registration deadline: November 18, 2005.

Enclosed is payment of \$_____ for _____ number of registrations.

To register: Enclose the registration form along with check, purchase order or money order made out to "Texas Public Health Association" and mail to: **Texas Public Health Association/Vital Statistics Conference, P.O. Box 201540, Austin, TX 78720-1540.** Registration fee is non-refundable. The pre-registration deadline is November 18, 2005. Late and on-site registration: +\$20.00 fee. Purchase orders are accepted. Please submit proper documentation with registration form when registering with a purchase order; TPHA Tax ID number is 74-6058233. Credit card payment option is available online at www.texaspha.org; click on "co-sponsored events". Returned check fee is \$20.00, payable by money order.

Questions? Contact Terri Pali by phone at (512)336-2520, by fax at (512)336-0533 or by e-mail at txpha@aol.com. Remember: **PRE-REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 18, 2005.**

Want to know more? As we get closer to the conference, check our website for the most current information about the conference: www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field

VS Fee Changes Pending

Texas Vital Statistics is requesting changes to the fees for vital records. The proposed request would change Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 181.22, with the fee for certified copies of birth certificates increasing to \$22.00 each, and the fee for certified death certificates increasing to \$20.00 for the first one and \$3.00 for additional ones purchased at the same time.

To change the TAC, three steps must be taken. The first step was taken on August 10, when State Registrar Geraldine R. Harris presented the fee proposal to the Texas Advisory Council (formerly the Board of Health). With Council approval, the request for TAC change moved into the second phase, publication in the *Texas Register*, a weekly publication from the Secretary of State's Office. The proposed changes were posted on September 9 for a thirty-day period for public comment. To view this posting, see www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg/index.shtml.

Finally, after the public comment period, the Executive Commissioner of Health and Human Services Commission, Albert Hawkins, will make the final decision. If ratified, an official memorandum will be sent out outlining the approved fee changes and the date effective. Please await our notification before implementing any fee changes.

Texas Vital Statistics
Texas Department of State Health Services
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756

Address Service Requested

TER-Birth FAQ

(continued from page 1)
completing the AOP prior to the birth, if the TER system is down when both parents are available or if you are a local registrar.

I'm a midwife who works for a birthing center and I also attend home births. Can I use my birthing center ID to register home births? No. If you are a midwife working in a birthing center and with a private practice for home births, you must have two TER user identifications to distinguish the facility births from home births.

Texas Vital Statistics News Now Available Online

We want you to be informed as soon possible, so now *Texas Vital Statistics News* is available online at www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field. Online issues will be posted before mailed out. If you prefer to get the news online rather than via mail, or if you want e-mail notification as well as a hard copy in the mail, e-mail your name, place of business, address and e-mail address(es) to Brenda.Briseno@dshs.state.tx.us. You will receive e-mail notification when the latest issue of the newsletter has been posted. Multiple e-mail addresses per hospital, birthing center, funeral home or local registration office are welcome.

Sign up today!

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Eduardo Sanchez, M.D., M.P.H.
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Contributing Staff

Steve Elkins Victor Farinelli

phone: (512)458-7111 (Austin); (888)963-7111 (toll-free)
fax: (512) 458-7233
e-mail: registrar@dshs.state.tx.us
internet: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs>

Area Representatives

www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field

North Texas Victor Farinelli
(512) 458-7111 x3651
Victor.Farinelli@dshs.state.tx.us

East Texas..... Susan Rodriguez
Field Services Team Leader
(512) 458-7111 x2530
SusanL.Rodriguez@dshs.state.tx.us

South & West Texas .. Albert Rivera
(512) 458-7372
Albert.Rivera@dshs.state.tx.us

Admin Support BrendaBriseno
(512) 458-7111 x2534
Brenda.Briseno@dshs.state.tx.us

Periodical Rate
Austin, Texas