



TEXAS VITAL STATISTICS NEWS

Texas Vital Statistics, Texas Department of State Health Services

Summer, 2005 Vol. 8, No. 3

Legislative Update

The recently completed 79th Texas Legislative Regular Session produced several bills that were signed into law that will impact vital statistics. The list below briefly enumerates and describes the new statutes. For full access to the new laws, see www.capitol.state.tx.us.

HB 93 impacts the Certificate of Death. This law mandates that the manner of death of an inmate of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice who is executed will be indicated as "Judicial Execution." When the Certificate of Death next goes through the revision process, Texas Vital Statistics will include this manner of death option.

HB 209 impacts the challenge period for an Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP). This law allows for a minor who has signed an AOP to have four years after the minor's 18th birthday to challenge the signed AOP.

HB 240 impacts the accessibility of sealed adoption records. This law states that an adopted person over the age of 18 who knows the name(s) of birth parent(s) on the original Certificate of Birth to obtain a non-certified copy of the original record without a court order. This law will apply only to Texas Vital Statistics.

HB 723 impacts District Clerks. This law requires District Clerks to complete sections of the Suits to Affect the Parent Child Relationship form if the applicant or attorney have not completed it.

HB 1604 impacts timeframes for filing very specific Certificates of Birth. This law allows for 15 days

to file a birth record if the family, for religious reasons, requests the extension for naming of the child. (See article on this page.)

HB 2100 creates a new heirloom wedding anniversary commemoration to be issued only by Texas Vital Statistics. The cost of this parchment commemoration will be \$50.

HB 2101 mandates the Texas Department of State Health Services to promote and sell heirloom Certificates of Birth and increases the cost to \$50.

HB 2769 impacts the Certificate of Death. This law mandates that the question "was the decedent ever a peace officer?" be changed to "was the decedent a peace officer or an honorably retired peace officer in this state?" When the Certificate of Death next goes through the revision process, Texas Vital Statistics will make this change.

SB 239 requires Texas Vital Statistics to issue non-certified copies of birth and death records to Child Fatality Review Teams at no charge.

SB 271 impacts birth registration. This law creates a "certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth" to be issued by Texas Vital Statistics upon the parents' request.

SB 1524 extends application of the preservation fee created in the 78th Legislative Session. This law extends the collection of a \$1 record preservation fee to county clerks for issuance of birth, death, fetal death, marriage, divorce and annulment records. This fee is also extended to records issued through the Remote Birth Access site.

All new statutes signed into law in

will take effect on September 1, 2005. The specifics of implementation will be thoroughly discussed at the Regional Conferences in August (see pages 2 & 3 for registration information). Watch for more information in future newsletter issues.

Timeliness & TER-Birth

With the implementation of TER at the beginning of the year, training users and eliminating any bugs and glitches in the system so that all births will be registered online have been the first priority. There have been some rough patches as we all learn the system and respond to unanticipated problems, such as the AOP backlog. Successful registration has been the focus.

Now that the transition to electronic birth registration is leveling out, Texas Vital Statistics will soon resume tracking the timeliness of each birth facility's registration. Texas Health and Safety Code (HSC) 192.003(d) says that births must be registered within 5 days of the event. (continued on page 4)

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Passport Initiative

A joint press release issued by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, an initiative to secure and expedite travel. This initiative will require all U.S. citizens (as well as Canadians, citizens of the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda and citizens of Mexico) to have passports or other accepted secure documents to enter or re-enter the U.S. by January 1, 2008.

This initiative will impact all Texans who are accustomed to traveling to Mexico without a passport and for all who issue birth certificates. Some local registrars have already reported an increase in requests for certified copies of birth records from customers who have heard of the upcoming passport requirement for travel that previously did not require passports. This new passport requirement will also have implications related to possible increase in individuals seeking to fraudulently obtain birth records.

For more information, check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov.



New OAG Service

The Office of the Attorney General Paternity Opportunity Program announces a new toll-free number for all parent questions about AOPs, entity codes & paternity. Please refer your customers to this number:

1-866-255-2006

Check our new website:

www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs

The Texas Vital Statistics website has been revamped and integrated into the Texas Department of State Health Services website. The new website has two sections: Request Processing and Vital Registration.

The Request Processing section of the website contains information about how to order records and verifications, how to amend records, the Central Adoption Registry, establishment of paternity and fees. Applications are also on the site, and can be downloaded by customers and sent to our office via mail or fax.

The Vital Registration section of the website includes information about the Remote Birth Access site, Delayed Certificate of Birth registration, location of local registrars, marriage and divorce records, electronic death registration (TER-Death), lists of Remote Birth Access site participants statewide and a new Field Services site.

The Field Services site at www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field highlights the latest information on training opportunities like the regional and annual conferences, funeral director continuing education, AOP certification seminars, online medical certifier training and the Master Registrar Certification Course for local registrars. Be sure to check this site often to find out about future training, especially training related to the implementation of TER-Death, the online death registration system.

Be sure to bookmark our new site!

Proposed Fee Increases

Texas Vital Statistics will be presenting proposed rule changes related to fees in August, 2005. To view the proposed fee increases, see www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field/feechanges.doc.

If the proposed changes are approved, the new fee schedule will take effect on December 1, 2005. More information will be coming in this publication and on the website.

Hot Topics! Regional Conferences

It's summertime, and that means time for Texas Vital Statistics, in conjunction with our co-sponsor, the Texas Public Health Association, to take our show on the road. This summer we will be hosting four one-day conferences in cities throughout the state.

The Regional Conference is a full day of training in birth, death and local registration. Training includes multiple sessions about the electronic birth and death registration systems, Acknowledgment of Paternity certification, and plenty of opportunity to ask questions of Texas Vital Statistics staff. To see the complete agenda, check out www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field/regconf2005.shtm on the new Field Services website (see article on the front page).

Plan today to attend in Fort Worth, Odessa, McAllen or Galveston! On the next page, you will find the registration form.

Staying at the hotel? Be sure to mention the conference to get the conference rates quoted.

Fort Worth, August 4th:

The Green Oaks Hotel, 6901 West Freeway, Fort Worth, TX
(817)783-7311
\$79 single/double/triple/quad
Cut-off date: July 21, 2005

Odessa, August 8th:

MCM Elegante Hotel, 5200 East University, Odessa, TX
(432) 368-5885
\$69 single/double
Cut-off date: July 25, 2005

McAllen, August 10th:

Four Points Sheraton, 2721 S. 10th St., McAllen, TX
(956)984-7900
\$80 single/double
Cut-off date: July 24, 2005

Galveston, August 12th

The Tremont House, 2300 Mechanic St, Galveston, TX
(409)763-0300
\$80 single; \$120 double
Cut-off date: July 22 at 12:00 a.m.
Parking: \$6.00 per day

HOT TOF



Vital Statistics Regional Conferences

Summer 2005

Fort Worth
Green Oaks Hotel
August 4

Odessa
MCM Elegante
August 8

McAllen
Four Point Sheraton
August 10

Galveston
The Tremont
August 12

Regional Conference Registration Form

please print or type:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Office: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

I will be attending the Regional Conference in:

____ Fort Worth ____ Odessa ____ McAllen ____ Galveston

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

Pre-registration fee is \$60. Late and on-site registration is \$70. Registration fee is non-refundable. Pre-registration deadline is July 29, 2005. Purchase orders will be accepted. Please submit proper documentation with registration form if using a purchase order. TPHA Tax ID # is 74-6058233. Returned check fee is \$20, payable by money order. To register online and pay with a credit card, go to www.texaspha.org, and fax your completed registration form to 512/336-0533.

Enclose 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***

Questions about registration? Contact the Texas Public Health Association at 512/336-2520 or at txpha@aol.com.

Coming Attractions!

There are lots of new initiatives and opportunities on the horizon! In the coming months, watch for:

NEW FORMS:

- Delayed Birth Certificate
- Acknowledgment of Paternity
- Certificate of Death (1/1/06)

NEW PROCESSES:

- TER-Death online death registration system to be implemented Jan. 1, 2006
- Online options for ordering records from State Office starting on December 1, 2005
- Online viewing of *Texas Vital Statistics News* (available now on our website!)
- Increased fees (see page 2 or check our proposed fee increases on website)

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:

- AOP/TER seminars statewide, June - September (see website for schedule)
- Master Registrar Certification Course for local registrars, October 3 - 7, in Austin (see website for application)
- TER-Death workshops, Fall 2005, multiple locations to be posted on website and in future issues of newsletter
- 51st Annual Vital Statistics Conference, December 4-6, Austin (watch website for more)

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Texas Department of State Health Services
1100 West 49th Street
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Address Service Requested

Timeliness & TER-Birth

(continued from page 1)

With the passage of HB 1604 (see page 1 for description of this new statute), effective immediately, birth clerks may allow for up to 15 days to report the name of the newborn if the parents request the delay for religious reasons. This extension is only available when a specific religious belief of conflicts with the 5-day requirement. No special procedure or notification of the State or the local registrar is required when accomodating parents in this situation.

Tired of Paper? Prefer to get your vital statistics news 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, e-mail your name, place of business, address and e-mail address(es) to Brenda.Briseno@dshs.state.tx.us.

You will be removed from the mailing list, and then 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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