



TEXAS VITAL STATISTICS NEWS

Texas Vital Statistics, Texas Department of State Health Services

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Electronic Death Registration Update

Electronic death registration is becoming a reality in Texas! After much planning, testing, training and piloting, Texas Electronic Registrar (TER)-Death is now available to all funeral homes, medical certifiers and local registrars.

Many have signed up to use TER to register deaths. As of mid-July, 311 funeral homes, 103 medical certifiers and 176 local registrars have signed up to be users of the online system. The numbers of users grow daily as the word gets out about the ease and benefits of the electronic death registration system.

As users are coming on board, the majority of the death records completed using TER have been "drop to paper," because not all involved are enrolled in TER. However, that scenario is changing quickly.

On June 15, thanks the participation of Funeral Director Charles Dickens of Broussard's Mortuary and Dr. Eric A. Marks, both of Beaumont, and local registrar Marcia Gauthier of the Beaumont

Public Health Department, the first entirely electronic death record in Texas was registered. As TER requires the order of a minimum of one certified copy from Texas Vital Statistics when a record is fully electronic, Mr. Dickens placed his order for 20 certified copies on that date. The requested certified copies were issued and mailed from the State Office on the following day.

Fully electronic death records have also been filed in the city of San Antonio.

If you have not yet signed up to participate in this innovative online system, now is the time to sign up to be a user and to be trained to be a user. While Texas Vital Statistics encourages all potential users to attend training provided by VS staff, it is not required. Extensive training materials are available to all users on the website: www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field/edeath/default.shtm. Training opportunities are also cited on the website, as well as on page 2 of the newsletter. To schedule training for TER users in your community, contact albert.rivera@dshs.state.tx.us.

Physician Recruitment: Priority & Plan

The electronic death registration system functions most efficiently and serves Texans best when all users are participating. A commonly-asked question is "how will you get physicians to use TER-Death?"

There are multiple strategies to inform and recruit physician participation. In July, a letter from DSHS Commissioner of Health,

Dr. Eduardo Sanchez, was sent to 2400 Texas oncologists, gerontologists and cardiovascular specialists. This letter explains the benefits of TER and calls on them to enroll.

There is also an available brochure about physician use of TER. To order this brochure to distribute to physicians in your community, see www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/orderform.shtm.

Meet New Managers

The Request Processing Branch of Texas Vital Statistics is proud to present to our partners the newly-hired managers of the different areas that handle customer requests. They bring a wealth of experience to their positions and are expert resources in serving customers.

Sherry Crawford is a long-time VS employee, with 29 years experience in every area of Request Processing. She has a broad knowledge and understanding of Texas statutes and Vital Statistics policies and procedures, and has earned the Master Registrar certification. Sherry is the Group Manager over Support Operations, Special Handling and Telecommunications. She can be contacted at sherry.crawford@dshs.state.tx.us or at extension 6195.

Debbie Domel has been with Vital Statistics for 19 years, all with Request Processing. She is a subject matter expert in supplemental registration. Debbie is the Group Manager over Supplemental Programs, which includes (see page 4)

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Master Registrar Certification Course

If you are a local registrar or a deputy who would like to take your understanding of vital registration to a deeper level, the Master Registrar Certification (MRC) Course offered by Texas Vital Statistics is something you want to sign up for. The next MRC Course will be held in Austin October 16 - 20.

The free course is designed to bring local registration officials together with VS staff in a small group over a five day period. The focus of the course is on the statutory framework for vital registration, the processes at the State Office and in the local offices, how to work together collaboratively and best practices. Much time is spent on problem-solving and sharing challenges and successes.

This interactive course covers a lot of topics and interfaces with related agencies such as the Office of the Attorney General and the Texas Funeral Services Commission, as well as with Texas Vital Statistics staff. There are also planned site visits to area local registration districts to see how other offices operate.

What do MRC graduates say about the experience?

The MRC allows attendees to learn in-depth information of vital

registration processes from subject experts assigned to Texas Vital Statistics . . . My attendance at the class gave me information not covered at the annual or regional conferences. (Sam Torres, Local Registrar, San Antonio Metropolitan Health District)

Questions come over the County Clerk listserv every day about things that are covered, in detail, in this course. All County Clerks have a pretty good idea of the basics, but they get flustered over the odd or unusual stuff that comes up. This course renews their confidence in themselves. (Elizabeth McGill, Tom Green County Clerk)

Every registrar or county clerk that deals with birth and deaths should be REQUIRED to take this course. The knowledge would give everyone the security of being on the same page . . . Learning what other offices were doing in similar situations that occurred here helped in handling things more appropriately. (Marcia Gauthier, local registrar, Beaumont Public Health District)

To apply for the October MRC, download the application from www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field/masteregistrar.shtm and fax it in. Questions about the course? Contact victor.farinelli@dshs.state.tx.us.

TER-Death Training Calendar

In the past months, TER-Death trainings have been conducted across the state in many communities (Fort Worth, Houston, New Braunfels, El Paso, Galveston, Richmond, Bay City, Corpus Christi). To schedule a training in your community, contact albert.rivera@dshs.state.tx.us. Please watch the website calendar for more training at www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field/edeath/training.shtm.

July 27 Texas Funeral Services Commission Symposium, 333 Guadalupe St., Austin, TX. Training for funeral directors. For more information, contact Mitzi at 512/936-6551.

August 21 Texas Department of State Health Services, 1100 W. 49th St., Austin, TX, Room M-652. Training for all users. To sign up, contact albert.rivera@dshs.state.tx.us.

September 19 Fairway Oaks Country Club, Abilene, TX. Sponsored by West Texas Funeral Directors Association. Training for funeral home staff. For more information, contact Brian at (432)524-5809.

ImmTrac Tips

Increasing participation in ImmTrac, the Texas Immunization registry, is an important initiative in the statewide strategy to raise vaccine coverage levels. Birth registrars play a critical role as they provide parents of newborns their first opportunity to grant consent for their child to participate in the Registry.

ImmTrac staff suggest the following tips for ensuring delivery of the ImmTrac Consent form.

Ensure forms are properly completed.

- * Registration number is printed and legible on top right of ImmTrac Consent form.
- * "I Grant" or "I Deny" oval is filled in.
- * Signature is on signature line.
- * Date appears on date line.
- * All pertinent demographic information is included.
- * No other stray marks on form.
- * Date stamp each form with date faxed.

Fax efficiently and regularly.

- * Insert pages correctly in fax machine so form is right-side up.
- * Be sure your fax machine automatically prints sender's name and fax number.
- * Fax forms daily.
- * Save fax confirmation page.
- * Periodically verify that quantity of forms faxed equals number of births in same time period.

The following are tips gathered from hospitals and birthing centers that are performing very well in the ImmTrac consent process.

- * Release births in a timely manner.
- * Include ImmTrac brochure in hospital pre-admission packet.
- * Give parents ImmTrac brochure along with birth worksheet.
- * Have TER access in close proximity to Labor and Delivery.
- * Enlist nurses to mention ImmTrac when administering Hep B.
- * Proofread the completed ImmTrac form before leaving patient's room.

Blueprint for the Future

Texas Plans for Vital Registration Best Practices

52nd Annual Texas Vital Statistics Conference

December 3 – 5, 2006

Renaissance Austin Hotel, Austin, TX

Make plans today to attend the Annual Conference co-sponsored by Texas Vital Statistics and the Texas Public Health Association. The conference will focus on national trends and issues that will impact vital registration and issuance in Texas. Join us for the latest information on best practices!

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: \$110. Pre-registration deadline: November 17, 2006.
Registration after pre-registration deadline: \$125.

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 the Texas Public Health Association (TPHA) and mail to TPHA/Vital Statistics Conference, P.O. Box 201540, Austin, TX 78720-1540. Registration fee is non-refundable. Pre-registration is \$110, and the deadline is 11/17/06. Late and on-site registration is \$125. 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, payable by money order.

Questions about conference registration? Contact Terri Pali by phone at (512)336-2520, by fax at (512)336-0533 or by e-mail at txpha@aol.com.

Questions about conference curriculum? Check out www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field.

Fort Bend County Sets New Standard

Effective May 15, Fort Bend County began using a new security feature called Fasprotek, which is applied to all birth certificates to prevent fraud. This highly sophisticated security product is used by more than 80 countries to protect data in passports, visas and ID cards. Fort Bend County is the first Texas jurisdiction to approve this security feature in compliance with the Intelligence Reform Act of 2004.

According to County Clerk/Local Registrar, Dianne Wilson, Ph.D., "The Intelligence Reform Act of 2004 requires all birth certificates to have special protection for the data to prevent alteration, tampering and counterfeiting. Fort Bend County, in cooperation with American Banknote Co., has been working very hard to develop a security product that is easy to use and provides significant protection from misuse by criminals. The unique proprietary substance, unavailable on the global market, provides the document security now required by Federal law."

Fastprotek is a transparent, ultra-thin security transfer film that is applied over the data on birth certificates. When viewed at an angle, the word TEXAS and the Seal of the State of Texas are visible, providing the first level of protection. When illuminated with a black light, a full color picture of the Capitol

building in Austin appears in the center of the security film. The transparent film is less than the thickness of a human hair and cannot be removed from the certificate without serious and visible damage to the birth certificate.

Congratulations to Fort Bend County for adoption of this innovative fraud prevention measure.

Meet New Managers

(continued from p.1) adoptions, paternities and amendments groups. She can be contacted at debbie.dome1@dshs.state.tx.us or at extension 7482.

James Abshier comes to VS with an MBA and an extensive background as an engineer and manager. James is the Group Manager over the Records Issuance teams, which includes the Lobby, Texas Online and Mailed Requests. He can be contacted at extension 7392 or at james.abshier@dshs.state.tx.us.

Editor Farewell

For the past 4 years, I have served as newsletter editor, Area Rep and Conference Coordinator. As of 7/24/06, I will move on to a new adventure in serving Texans as the Statewide Coordinator of the Child Fatality Review Teams. It has been a pleasure working with you, and I hope our paths continue to cross.

Susan Rodriguez

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