

# Electronic Death Registration (EDR)

## Medical Data Provider Training Package

# Module One

## I

## U.S. Standard Certificate of Death

# U.S. Standard Certificate of Death

## Legal Record

- Permanent legal record of fact and cause of death
- Identifies deceased individual
- Includes demographic information of the deceased, such as:
  - Date of birth
  - Residence address
  - Parents' names
- Specifies final disposition of the body
- Provides the cause of death of the deceased
- Provides information about the funeral director and medical certifier completing the record

# U.S. Standard Certificate of Death

## Responsible Parties

- Funeral Director
  - Responsible for filing a complete and accurate death certificate for registration with Vital Records Office
- Medical Certifier
  - Responsible for providing and certifying cause of death
- Imperative that information on death certificate is:
  - Timely, Complete, Accurate
- Jurisdictional law specifies:
  - Required time for completing and filing certificate
  - Penalties for knowingly making false statement on certificate

# U.S. Standard Certificate of Death

## Usages

- Information on death certificate considered *prima facie* evidence
  - Can be introduced in court as evidence
- Source of mortality statistics at national and jurisdictional level
- Data used to:
  - Allocate research and development funding
  - Establish goals related to public health
  - Measure health status

# U.S. Standard Certificate of Death

## Nationwide Model

- Leadership and coordination
  - Centers for Disease Control (CDC)  
National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)
  - National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS)
  - Jurisdictional representatives
- Certificate revision history
  - Periodically revised to ensure death data collected relates to current and anticipated needs
  - Revised every 10-15 years
  - Most states use 1989 version
  - Revised version approved by HHS in 2003
  - Detailed specifications developed for collecting and reporting data items

# U.S. Standard Certificate of Death

## Revised Version

- Modified Items

- Decedent's race, captures multiple race identification
- Decedent's education, captures highest degree attained
- Decedent's marital status distinguishes 'Married' from 'Married, but separated'
- Place of death includes hospice facility

- New Items

- If female, pregnancy status at time of death that will help identify maternal and pregnancy-related deaths
- If transportation injury, decedent's role with respect to vehicles
- Did tobacco use contribute to death
- Separate instructions for funeral director and medical data provider



# Module Two

## II

## EDR System Features



# EDR System Features

## What is an EDR System?

- Purpose is to improve timeliness and quality of death registration
- Enables participants of death registration to register death certificates with local and state registrars electronically
- Provides for online access so decedent fact of death, cause of death, and demographic information can be entered by multiple death registration participants working on same case

# EDR System Features

## Why the Need for an EDR System?

- Final act of care done by a physician for an individual is to ensure that their death certificate is accurate, complete, and filed in a timely manner so the family can bring closure to the business matters of the deceased

# EDR System Features

## Why the Need for an EDR System?

- Multiple participants involved
  - Funeral directors
  - Physicians
  - Coroners, Medical Examiners
  - Institutions, such as hospitals, nursing homes
  - State, and possibly local registrars
- Current manual process is time consuming
  - Handwritten signatures required
  - Death certificate passed between participants via mail or is hand carried
  - Registration can be delayed due to incorrect information or missing information on the certificate

# EDR System Features

## Technological Advances

- EDR systems can use advances in technology which offer opportunities for greater timeliness and efficiency in collecting and processing death certificates
  - Flexibility inherent in use of the Internet
  - Security offered by encryption and assurance of identity of participants by digital authentication systems
  - Real-time editing capabilities of computer applications to capture better quality death data

# EDR System Features

## Potential Benefits

- Facilitates online collaboration among multiple death registration system users
- Improves the timeliness of registering death certificates
- Improves quality of death data by automatically checking the accuracy and completeness of death data entered
- Provides for paperless registration of the death certificate
- Supports completion and registration of a death certificate that is partially electronic and partially paper

# EDR System

## Potential Benefits (ME/Coroner)

- Medical examiners and coroners will be able to electronically approve cremations
- Medical examiners and coroners can automatically receive referrals for possible medical examiner/coroner cases
- Medical examiners and coroners can electronically submit supplemental cause of death information when autopsy findings or further investigation reveal a revised cause of death



# Module Three

## III

### Online Verification of Social Security Number

# Online Verification of SSN Process

- SSN can be verified during the entry of death data prior to registration
- Online verification integrated into EDR system
- SSN electronically verified after key decedent data items entered:
  - Name
  - DOB
  - Gender
  - Social Security Number
- Receive notification through the EDR system about the accuracy of the SSN

# Online Verification of SSN

## Benefits

- Reduces decedent's SSN errors on death certificates prior to registration
- Improves accuracy of SSN reported to SSA
- Speeds notification of fact of death to SSA

# Online Verification of SSN

## Source of SSN

- SSN should be taken from Social Security card of the deceased whenever possible
- If SSN provided is from SSA correspondence or Medicare card of deceased, this SSN should only be used when A, T, TA, M, or M1 follows number
- Other documents that may show the SSN:
  - Marriage certificate
  - Driver's license
  - Income tax statements
  - Bank statement

# Online Verification of SSN Functionality

- EDR system allows up to five attempts to receive a successful SSN verification
- After fifth attempt to verify SSN for the same death record a message will be displayed indicating that the number of attempts to verify SSN has been exceeded
- SSN field locked from further data entry after a successful SSN verification
- If decedent name, DOB, or gender is modified after successful SSN verification, the SSN will need to be re-verified

# Online Verification of SSN

## Return Messages

- PASSED – The SSN for this decedent has been successfully verified with SSA.
- FAILSSN – The SSN for this decedent did not pass verification with SSA. The SSN provided is not an established number and has never been issued by SSA.
- FAILGENDER – The decedent's SSN did not pass verification with SSA because the gender provided did not match the Social Security records.
- FAILDOB – The decedent's SSN did not pass verification with SSA because the date of birth provided did not match the Social Security records.
- FAILDOBGENDER – The decedent's SSN did not pass verification with SSA because the gender and date of birth provided did not match Social Security records.



# Online Verification of SSN

## Return Messages (continued)

- **FAILNAME** – The decedent's SSN did not pass verification with SSA because the name provided does not match the Social Security records. This SSN may also belong to another individual. It is recommended that you re-check the decedent's name and SSN before re-submitting your request.
- **AUTHUNAVAIL** – The SSA Online Verification System was unable to perform the SSN verification request because the system may be unavailable at this time. Please try your request later.
- **INVALID** – The decedent's SSN could not be verified with the SSA because the SSN Online Verification System encountered an error with the format of the request. Please contact your representative at the Vital Statistics office for assistance.

# Online Verification of SSN

## Return Messages (continued)

- **TRANIDERROR** – The decedent's SSN could not be verified with SSA because the SSN Online Verification System encountered an error. Please contact your representative at the Vital Statistics office for assistance.
- **BU01LINKFAIL** – The decedent's SSN could not be verified with SSA because the SSN Online Verification System encountered an error. Please contact your representative at the Vital Statistics office for assistance.

# Online Verification of SSN

## SSA Hours of Operation

- The SSA Online Verification System is operational during the following hours:

Monday – Friday:	5am – 1am Eastern Time
Saturday:	5am – 11pm Eastern Time
Sunday:	8am – 10pm Eastern Time
Federal Holidays:	5am – 11pm Eastern Time

# Module Four

## IV

## EDR System Access

# EDR System Access

## Obtaining User ID and Password

- Contact your jurisdiction's Department of Health (DOH)
- Sign an agreement with the DOH that stipulates security and privacy rules for EDR system access
- Administrator will assign a User ID and initial password
- User profile will be established for each facility or institution the data provider is associated with
  - Includes identifying information about data provider
  - Specifies EDR system privileges data provider has at each facility
- Medical data providers who will be electronically certifying the death certificate may need an additional level of user authentication

# EDR System Access

## Signatures on Death Certificate

- U.S. Standard Death Certificate requires signatures from funeral director, medical certifier, and if applicable, pronouncer
- Handwritten signatures on the death certificate attest to the accuracy and the authenticity of the information
- Signatures provide the death certificate with credibility, as both a public health data collection form and a legal document



# EDR System Access

## Electronic Authentication

- EDR System will replace handwritten signatures on the death certificate with electronic authentication
- Electronic authentication
  - Ensures the identity of the individual
  - Attests to the integrity of the death certificate
  - Guarantees that the information in the portion of the death certificate digitally signed has not changed
  - Required for the legal standing of the death certificate
  - Critical for fraud prevention
  - May be implemented via one or more methods, such as digital certificates, voice recognition, biometrics, etc.

# Module Five

V

## EDR System Case Management

# EDR System Case Management

## Case Actions

- Beginning a case
- Completing an existing case
- Certifying the cause of death on a case
- Cremation approvals
- Medical examiner/coroner referrals
- Generating reports
- If there is no funeral home involved in the case:
  - Signing the personal information on a case
  - Relinquishing a case
  - Printing a disposition permit

# EDR System Case Management

## Beginning a Case

- Medical data provider can start a new case when a death has occurred, using the EDR system
  - Medical data entry clerks at hospitals, institutions, etc.
  - Medical certifiers (physicians)
  - Medical examiners and coroners
- Medical data provider starts case by entering key decedent identifying data
- EDR system will determine if the case has already been started, either by:
  - Person attempting to start the case again
  - Another person at that facility
  - Another facility
  - A funeral home

# EDR System Case Management

## Beginning a Case (continued)

- If the case has not already been started
  - Medical data provider enters decedent's cause, date, and time of death
  - Medical data entry clerk may enter the cause, date, and time of death, but the physician/coroner must certify this information
  - EDR system will validate the cause, date, and time of death
  - Case can be saved as incomplete if medical data provider does not have all medical information readily available
  - Case ready to be 'electronically' certified by the medical certifier once all medical information has been entered and validated

# EDR System Case Management

## Beginning a Case (continued)

- If case has already been started by the same person or another user working at the same facility, the user can:
  - Continue to work on the existing case
  - Start a new case if he/she thinks the existing case is not a duplicate of the case being started
  - Cancel the process
- If the case has already been started by another medical facility, the user can:
  - Start a new case if he/she thinks the existing case is not a duplicate of the case being started
  - Cancel the process



# EDR System Case Management

## Beginning a Case (continued)

- If the case has already been started by a funeral home, the user can:
  - Continue to work on the existing case
  - Start a new case if he/she thinks the existing case is not a duplicate of the case being started
  - Cancel the process

# EDR System Case Management

## Completing an Existing Case

- Medical data provider can complete entry of cause, date, and time of death for existing case, using the EDR system
- Medical data provider enters decedent's medical information
- EDR system will validate the cause, date, and time of death for accuracy and completeness
- Case ready to be 'electronically' certified by the medical certifier once all medical information has been entered and validated
- If there is no funeral home associated with the case, the medical data provider can take 'ownership' of the case and enter decedent personal information

# EDR System Case Management

## Certifying the Cause of Death

- Medical certifier can electronically certify the medical information for a case, using the EDR system
- Medical information must be complete and validated prior to signature
- EDR system will electronically authenticate the medical certifier prior to signature
- Once medical certifier signs the case, if decedent personal information has been signed, then case is automatically submitted for registration

# EDR System Case Management

## Cremation Approvals

- Medical examiner/coroner can electronically authorize cremation requests using the EDR system
- If a funeral home indicates method of disposition is ‘cremation’ and approval is needed before cremation can be performed:
  - Medical examiner/coroner reviews case
  - Medical examiner/coroner electronically approves/disapproves the cremation request
- EDR system sends notification to the funeral home of the status of the cremation approval request

# EDR System Case Management

## ME/Coroner Referrals

- EDR participants can electronically ‘refer’ a case to a medical examiner/coroner, using the EDR system
- Medical examiner/coroner either accepts or declines the case referral
- If referral is accepted, medical examiner/coroner is responsible for completing and certifying the cause of death
- Medical examiners/coroners can review cases not referred to them for further investigation
  - If he/she decides the case requires his/her attention, the EDR system will prevent another medical data provider from completing and certifying the cause of death

# EDR System Case Management

## Generating Reports

- Medical data provider will be able to generate reports related to cases for which they are responsible

# EDR System Case Management

## Signing the Personal Information

- Medical data provider can electronically enter and sign the personal information for a case when there is no funeral home involved, using the EDR system
- Personal information must be complete and validated prior to signature
- EDR system will electronically authenticate the medical data provider prior to signature
- Once medical data provider signs the case, if cause, date, and time of death have been certified, then case is automatically submitted for registration



# EDR System Case Management

## Relinquishing a Case

- When a case is started, the participant responsible for decedent personal information ‘owns’ the case
- In some instances the medical data provider starts a case and enters decedent personal information because there is no funeral home associated with the case
- If the family later claims the body and contacts a funeral home, medical data provider should relinquish ‘ownership’ of the case
  - Personal information and medical information retained
- Funeral home can assume ‘ownership’ of the case after the medical data provider has relinquished ‘ownership’

# EDR System Case Management

## Printing a Disposition Permit

- In some instances the medical data provider starts a case and enters decedent personal information because there is no funeral home associated with the case
- Death certificate must be registered with the vital records office
- Medical data provider can print the disposition permit at their location after the death certificate is registered with the vital records office

# Module Six

VI

Completing  
Cause of Death

# Completing Cause of Death

## Instructions and Examples

- Instructions on how to fill out an accurate cause of death
- Examples of properly completed cause of death
- Common problems when completing cause of death

# Module Seven

**VII**

Amending a  
Death Certificate

# Amending a Death Certificate

## Submitting a Correction

- Medical data provider must file amendment with the vital records office to change cause of death information on a death certificate after the certificate has been registered
- Certain corrections will require supporting documentation depending upon which item(s) on the death certificate are being changed
- For certain corrections, the amendment can be submitted electronically, using the EDR system
- Medical examiners/coroners can electronically submit supplemental cause of death information for pending investigations, or after autopsy results reveal a change in the original cause of death



# Module Eight

VIII

Importing/Exporting  
Death Data



# Importing/Exporting Death Data

## Importing Death Data

- EDR system can upload (import) decedent death information from a Medical Examiner/Coroner Case Management Application
- Reduces the need for the medical data provider to perform duplicate data entry for the same case
- Uploaded death information will be validated by the EDR system as if the data had been keyed directly into the EDR system
- Format for importing the death information will be pre-defined

# Importing/Exporting Death Data

## Exporting Death Data

- EDR system can download (export) decedent death information from the EDR system into a Medical Examiner/Coroner Case Management Application
- Reduces the need for the medical data provider to perform duplicate data entry for the same case
- Format for exporting the death information will be pre-defined

# Module Nine

IX

Resources

# Resources

## NCHS/NAME Resources

- NCHS has prepared the following handbooks which contain instructions for completing death certificates and registering deaths:
  - *Physicians' Handbook on Medical Certification of Death*
  - *Medical Examiners' and Coroners' Handbook on Death Registration and Fetal Death Reporting*
  - *Funeral Directors' Handbook on Death Registration and Fetal Death*
- National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) web site contains a tutorial on writing cause of death statements:
  - [http://www.thename.org/CauseDeath/COD\\_main\\_page.htm](http://www.thename.org/CauseDeath/COD_main_page.htm)

# Module Ten

X

Contact  
Information

# Contact Information

## NAPHSIS

National Association for Public Health  
Statistics and Information Systems

801 Roeder Road, Suite 650

Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

(301) 563-6001

[www.naphsis.org](http://www.naphsis.org)

# Contact Information

## Jurisdiction Vital Records Office

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Jurisdiction's Department of Health

Street Address

City, State Zip Code

Phone Number

Website URL