



Kathleen K. Ryan, Esquire
Executive Director

James Eirkson
Assistant Executive Director
and Chief Operating Officer

Dear Members,

Vital Records sent out an email today with important information regarding Death Certificates. Below is the email in its entirety

As you are likely aware, the Bureau of Health Statistics and Registries has been challenged for the last few months in meeting targeted processing times to data enter deaths into EDRS where the medical portion of the Report of Death is completed on paper.

While this delay in data entry of the medical information does impact the issuance of death certificates, this delay should not impact disposition permitting. See "Obtaining the Disposition Permit" in [SRN 2020-16](#) on the various ways you may obtain a disposition permit.

If the disposition involves transport to another country (which requires the issuance of a death certificate), please call the Vital Events Stakeholder Hotline at 800-323-9613 for assistance. We will do our best to expedite the data entry of the medical information so that you may obtain both the disposition permit and a death certificate issued under the state registrar's signature.

Here are a few things you can do to assist us in improving our processing times:

- Please review the medical certification information for completeness and signature of the medical certifier before submitting the information to BHSR. Remedy any deficiencies before submittal.
- Upload the medical certification information instead of faxing it to us. See the "New Medical Certification Upload Process" (under "Optional Workflow for Hybrid Cases") of [SRN 2020-16](#).
- Only submit your request to us once. Sending the medical certification information to us twice requires additional work since we need to assess why we got the medical certification information twice. During this review, we are required to see if the second submittal had changes since the first report was received.
- Promote EDRS adoption with the medical certifiers you work with by sharing our fact sheet on ["PA's Transition to Electronic Death Reporting"](#). Please note that fully electronic cases are typically registered in 1-2 business days unless there are issues with the registration of the case.

Please note that BHSR continues to have staff work overtime and weekends to process death reporting through EDRS. In addition, BHSR has cross-trained additional staff who are working to support this effort as well. The current delay has been impacted by a number of factors including increased death counts, staff shortages due to illness, increased work associated with duplicate submittal of medical information by funeral homes, slow responsiveness of the DAVE system, and a change by Social Security to the OVS verification process.

Your Profession Our Passion

While the change to the SSA's OVS process has been remedied, we are requesting that you email the Vital Events Stakeholder Hotline at ra-DHEDRS@pa.gov if you see the case listed as "SSN Verification Status PENDING". In addition, we request that you review cases you may have submitted for OVS verification between Friday, January 13 and Tuesday, January 18 to verify that the case's SSN Verification Status is listed as "Passed". If the case shows "Pending", then validate the case again. If the case still shows "SSN Verification Status PENDING", then send an email to ra-DHEDRS@pa.gov so that we can further investigate the case. When emailing us, be sure to include the case ID and list "OVS Verification Issue" in the subject line of your email.

If you are experiencing a slow response in the DAVE system, please let us know by emailing us at ra-DHEDRS@pa.gov. The Commonwealth is actively monitoring the performance of the DAVE servers during this peak reporting period so that server resources are optimized to support the responsive performance of the system. Please include "DAVE is Slow" in the subject line of your email.

If you are unsure if we received the medical information for your case, do the following:

- If you've uploaded the medication information, verify that you have set the case status correctly. See the "New Medical Certification Upload Process" section (under "Optional Workflow for Hybrid Cases") of [SRN 2020-16](#).
- If you have faxed in the medication information and if the medical information has not been entered by the current published processing time, then call the Vital Events Stakeholder Hotline at 800-323-9613 so we can research your request. Please have the following information available when calling the hotline: Case ID, date and time of your fax/email submittal of the medical certification information, and the fax or email address you used to send the medical certification information.

If you do have a change to the medical information after you submit the medical certification information and the case has not yet been registered, then place a comment on the case that the medical information has been modified. Include the date/time of the new information. See [QRS 2052, "Adding Comments"](#) for steps on how to add comments to a case in EDRS.

Thank you for your continued dedication in reporting deaths to the Department of Health. We apologize for the inconvenience that the delayed processing times have caused and will continue to strive to bring processing times down to standard processing times.

Sincerely,

Audrey Marrocco | Director & State Registrar
Department of Health | Bureau of Health Statistics and Registries
555 Walnut Street, 6th Floor | Harrisburg, PA 17101
www.health.pa.gov