



Bureau of Public Health Statistics

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All Arizona Physicians:

Doctor:

In October 2007 the Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Vital Records initiated a new electronic death registration system (EDRS). We have been implementing the EDRS in stages and began involving funeral homes in April 2009. Additionally, on January 1, 2010, we adopted the 2003 National Standard Death Certificate which differs significantly from the one that we have used for the last 15-20 years. You will notice that there are some new questions that you need to answer regarding tobacco use and pregnancy history. There is also a Line D in Part 1 of the cause of death statement and two questions concerning autopsies.

A critical part of the EDRS is a new way for funeral directors to obtain the cause of death certification from physicians. This is now accomplished by fax with a document titled "Certification of Cause of Death". I know that this is a very significant change for you and you may have some concerns if you have been contacted to sign a faxed certification document for the first time. Let me assure you that this is both legal and legitimate. You may also experience other funeral homes presenting death documents in the customary fashion. Please understand that it will take many months before most or all funeral homes are using the new method.

The form that will be faxed to you is also different from the one that a funeral home may hand-deliver to you. If you are brought a four-page document titled "Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Vital Records, Death Registration Worksheet", you may complete and sign page 4 of that document just as you would a faxed "Certification of Cause of Death".

If you receive and complete a faxed document, fax the completed document back to the number provided at the top of that form without a cover sheet. The confidentiality statement on the bottom of the form is in compliance with HIPAA.

If you have any questions, please call the funeral home sending you the fax, your county vital records office, or call me at 602-364-1229.

Sincerely,

Douglas Leach
Death Registry Manager