



Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
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September 21, 2009

Dear Stakeholder:

As you may know, the State of Maine is in the process of implementing an electronic death registration system (EDRS). This secure, web-based system will enable the multiple parties involved in producing death certificates (funeral directors, health care providers, and medical examiners) to electronically access records and enter critical information. For deaths that occur after deployment of the system, municipalities with internet access will be able to use the system to print copies of death certificates for their customers.

A team from the state's Office of Data, Research and Vital Statistics (ODRVS) and Office of Information Technology (OIT) has been working with the competitively selected vendor, *VitalChek*, to ensure that the new system will improve the timeliness and quality of data on deaths. Additional benefits will be faster turnaround times for obtaining certified copies for family members and improved communication and less travel time for rural providers.

Key milestones in the project that have been achieved to date include:

- Contract negotiations completed with successful bidder
- System demonstrations conducted for state staff and focus groups of funeral directors and physicians
- Functional Requirements sessions with state staff, funeral directors and physicians, to itemize detailed aspects of how the system will function
- Presentations at regional municipal clerk meetings to provide preliminary information and gather questions
- Preliminary design of a publicly accessible website for project communications
- Completion of hardware and software specifications and purchase process
- Revision of the Maine *Certificate of Death* and *Permit for Disposition of Human Remains*, so that copies can be printed directly from the system by authorized users.

Key next steps include:

- Installation and System Testing by Internal Users
- Implementation of website with information and forms targeted to user needs
- Development and scheduling of training for external system users
- Identification of Pilot sites
- Finalization of plans for prioritization of sites for phased-in roll out of software statewide

We expect to have the system available for pilot testing by mid-January of 2010, with the roll out to users occurring throughout 2010.

What this means to you:

If you are a funeral establishment – you and your staff will be able to electronically enter demographic information and the system will generate a request to the medical certifier for completion of the cause of death. Once the medical certifiers are trained as users, you will no longer have to travel long distances to obtain death certificate signatures.

If you are a medical certifier and sign paper death certificates today – You will be able to log in to the system and medically certify any outstanding death certificates in a single session.

If you are a municipal clerk – The amount and number of paper copies that you need to retain and pay to store will decrease.

As always, we welcome your comments and participation in the process. Feel free to share this information with other interested parties, and to contact us with any questions, comments or concerns. You can email us at edrs.dhhs@maine.gov

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donald R. Lemieux". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Donald R. Lemieux, Director
Office of Data, Research and Vital Statistics
Division of Public Health Systems