



---

DATE: November 20, 2020

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Jon Pennell, DVM, Chair, Board of Health  
Lisa Sherych, Secretary, Board of Health

THROUGH: Margot Chappel, Deputy Administrator  
Karen Beckley, M.P.A., M.S., Chief

FROM: Stephanie Herrera, Program Officer III - SH  
Office of Vital Records

SUBJECT: Office of Vital Records - Delays in death certificates for Board of Health meeting

---

The Office of Vital Records (OVR) has actively sought to improve death certificate services to Nevada families, funeral homes and improve the quality and timeliness of data submitted to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), a part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Currently 60% of death records are registered within 10 days and 98% within 30 days. One of the biggest complaints from users is the Vital Records System (VRS) can be difficult to use. Our efforts to improve difficulties mentioned include:

- The OVR is currently in the process of completing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an upgraded or new system. It is anticipated to go out by the end of January 2021.
- Conducting one on one or group virtual training for all users and one on one virtual training for new users
  - Once a new user is issued their credentials, our trainer contacts them to schedule a training. New user training usually takes place within three days of issuing their login and password.
  - Since September 1<sup>st</sup> we have trained 93 users to include physicians, coroners, funeral homes and hospital clerks.
- New users requesting access to the Vital Records System to sign off death certificates are processed in two business days.
- Reviewing business processes and determining ways to make our current system easier for users
- Stakeholder Outreach
  - Monthly Meetings with the Funeral Board began on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020
  - We will be contacting the Medical Board to meet regularly
  - Building relationships with stakeholders
- To increase the awareness of the recent changes to NRS through Senate Bill 291 (2017), which amended NRS 440.470 to authorize the attending physician or advanced practice registered nurse to initiate the record of death and provide the required information at the time of death, OVR will continue to train physicians and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) and reach out to them when the record has not been completed in a timely manner. Regulation revisions will be forthcoming to clarify who is responsible to sign the death certificate when multiple physicians and/or APRNs have provided care to a patient who later dies.

If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Herrera at (775)684-4162 or [s.herrera@health.nv.gov](mailto:s.herrera@health.nv.gov).

STATE OF NEVADA  
LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU

LEGISLATIVE BUILDING  
401 S. CARSON STREET  
CARSON CITY, NEVADA 89701-4747  
Fax No.: (775) 684-6600



LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION (775) 684-6800

NICOLE J. CANNIZZARO, *Senator, Chair*  
Brenda J. Erdoes, *Director, Secretary*

INTERIM FINANCE COMMITTEE (775) 684-6821

MAGGIE CARLTON, *Assemblywoman, Chair*  
Sarah Coffman, *Fiscal Analyst*  
Mark Krmpotic, *Fiscal Analyst*

BRENDA J. ERDOES, *Director*  
(775) 684-6800

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL (775) 684-6830  
DANIEL L. CROSSMAN, *Legislative Auditor* (775) 684-6815  
MICHAEL J. STEWART, *Research Director* (775) 684-6825

October 22, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Ronald Hedger, D.O., President  
State Board of Osteopathic Medicine  
2275 Corporate Circle, Suite 210  
Henderson, NV 89704-7720

Jon Pennell, D.V.M., Chair  
State Board of Health  
4150 Technology Way, Suite 300  
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2029

Rachakonda D. Prabhu, M.D., President  
Board of Medical Examiners  
9600 Gateway Drive  
Reno, Nevada 89521-8953

Randy Sharp, D.V.M., Chair  
Nevada Funeral and Cemetery  
Services Board  
3740 Lakeside Drive, Suite 201  
Reno, Nevada 89509-4952

Lisa Sherych  
State Registrar of Vital Statistics  
Administrator, Division of Public and  
Behavioral Health  
Department of Health and  
Human Services  
4150 Technology Way, Suite 300  
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2029

Paul Shubert, Chief  
Bureau of Health Care Quality and  
Compliance  
Division of Public and Behavioral Health  
Department of Health and  
Human Services  
4220 South Maryland Parkway,  
Suite D-810  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119-7529

Jacob Watts, C.N.A. Vice President  
State Board of Nursing  
5011 Meadowood Mall Way, Suite 300  
Reno, Nevada 89502-6576

Dear Dr. Hedger, Dr. Pennell, Dr. Prabhu, Dr. Sharp, Ms. Sherych, Mr. Shubert, and Mr. Watts:

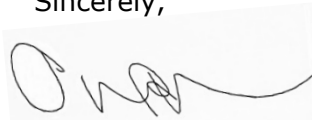
As the chair of the Sunset Subcommittee of the Legislative Commission (*Nevada Revised Statutes* [NRS] [232B.210](#)) during the 2019–2020 Interim, I am writing to advise you of action taken by the Subcommittee at its final meeting and work session on [August 31, 2020](#).

The Subcommittee learned of some delays in the death reporting process at its meeting on [June 30, 2020](#). On August 31, 2020, one of the actions supported by the Subcommittee to address these delays was to send a letter to the seven different parties receiving this letter to encourage their continued discussion to improve the timeliness of death reporting. As part of this effort, the Subcommittee recommends continued efforts to increase awareness of recent changes to NRS through [Senate Bill 291](#) (2017), which amended [NRS 440.470](#) to

authorize the attending physician or advanced practice registered nurse to initiate the record of death and provide the required information at the time of death. Since 1978, Nevada regulation has required all deaths to be certified within 48 hours (*Nevada Administrative Code* [NAC] [440.160](#)), and since 2013, regulation has required the cause of death to be reported electronically statewide (NAC [440.165](#)).

I welcome your efforts to work together to remove existing barriers and expedite the records process for grieving families. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Jennifer Ruedy ([jruedy@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:jruedy@lcb.state.nv.us)), Chief Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), or me.

Sincerely,



Patricia (Pat) Spearman, D.B.A.  
Nevada State Senator

PS/jc:W205080

cc: Eileen O'Grady, Chief Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division, LCB  
Jennifer Ruedy, Chief Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division, LCB  
Richard Whitley, M.S., Director, Department of Health and Human Services ([rwhitley@dhhs.nv.gov](mailto:rwhitley@dhhs.nv.gov))  
Edward O. Cousineau, J.D., Executive Director, Board of Medical Examiners (BME) ([eocnsbme@medboard.nv.gov](mailto:eocnsbme@medboard.nv.gov))  
Sarah A. Bradley, J.D., M.B.A., Deputy Executive Director, BME ([bradleys@medboard.nv.gov](mailto:bradleys@medboard.nv.gov))  
Cathy Dinauer, M.S.N., R.N., Executive Director, State Board of Nursing ([cdinauer@nsbn.state.nv.us](mailto:cdinauer@nsbn.state.nv.us))  
Sandy Reed, Executive Director, State Board of Osteopathic Medicine ([sreed@bom.nv.gov](mailto:sreed@bom.nv.gov))  
Jennifer Kandt, Executive Director, Nevada Funeral and Cemetery Services Board ([nvfuneralboard@fb.nv.gov](mailto:nvfuneralboard@fb.nv.gov))

STATE OF NEVADA  
LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU

LEGISLATIVE BUILDING  
401 S. CARSON STREET  
CARSON CITY, NEVADA 89701-4747  
Fax No.: (775) 684-6600



LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION (775) 684-6800

NICOLE J. CANNIZZARO, *Senator, Chair*  
Brenda J. Erdoes, *Director, Secretary*

INTERIM FINANCE COMMITTEE (775) 684-6821

MAGGIE CARLTON, *Assemblywoman, Chair*  
Sarah Coffman, *Fiscal Analyst*  
Mark Krmpotic, *Fiscal Analyst*

BRENDA J. ERDOES, *Director*  
(775) 684-6800

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL (775) 684-6830  
DANIEL L. CROSSMAN, *Legislative Auditor* (775) 684-6815  
MICHAEL J. STEWART, *Research Director* (775) 684-6825

October 22, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Jon Pennell, D.V.M., Chair  
State Board of Health  
4150 Technology Way, Suite 300  
Carson City, NV 89706-2029

Lisa Sherych, Administrator  
Division of Public and Behavioral Health, Department of Health and Human Services  
Executive Officer, Secretary, State Board of Health  
4150 Technology Way, Suite 300  
Carson City, NV 89706-2029

Dear Dr. Pennell and Ms. Sherych:

As the chair of the Sunset Subcommittee of the Legislative Commission (*Nevada Revised Statutes* [NRS] [232B.210](#)) during the 2019–2020 Interim, I am writing to advise you of action taken by the Subcommittee at its final meeting and work session on [August 31, 2020](#).

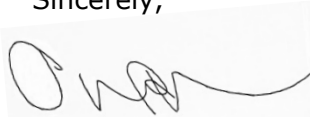
The Subcommittee learned of some delays in the death reporting process at its meeting on [June 30, 2020](#). On August 31, 2020, the Subcommittee requested that the State Board of Health ([NRS 439.030](#)) address these delays by clarifying in regulation who is responsible to sign the death certificate when multiple physicians and/or advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) have provided care to a patient who later dies.

Since 1978, Nevada regulation has required all deaths to be certified within 48 hours (*Nevada Administrative Code* [NAC] [440.160](#)), and since 2013, the cause of death must be reported electronically statewide (NAC [440.165](#)). Death certificate signatories include medical practitioners such as: physicians; APRNs; associate physicians of attending physicians; chief medical officers of the hospital or institution in which the death occurred; or pathologists who perform autopsies upon the deceased (NRS [440.380](#)).

Page 2  
October 22, 2020

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Jennifer Ruedy ([jruedy@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:jruedy@lcb.state.nv.us)), Chief Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), or me.

Sincerely,



Patricia (Pat) Spearman, D.B.A.  
Nevada State Senator

PS/jc:W205082

cc: Eileen O'Grady, Chief Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division, LCB  
Jennifer Ruedy, Chief Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division, LCB  
Richard Whitley, M.S., Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) ([rwhitley@dhhs.nv.gov](mailto:rwhitley@dhhs.nv.gov))  
Edward O. Cousineau, J.D., Executive Director, Board of Medical Examiners (BME) ([eocnsbme@medboard.nv.gov](mailto:eocnsbme@medboard.nv.gov))  
Sarah A. Bradley, J.D., M.B.A., Deputy Executive Director, BME ([bradleys@medboard.nv.gov](mailto:bradleys@medboard.nv.gov))  
Cathy Dinauer, M.S.N., R.N., Executive Director, State Board of Nursing ([cdinauer@nsbn.state.nv.us](mailto:cdinauer@nsbn.state.nv.us))