Transforming the Massachusetts Death Certificate Process

Vitals Information Partnership (V.I.P.)

EDRS System Introduction and Overview for Long Term Care Facilities July, 2014
What is the V.I.P. EDRS?

V.I.P. is the Commonwealth’s “Vitals Information Partnership” system -- an electronic registration and issuance system for births, deaths, and other vital events.

V.I.P. is still a system in development. The birth module was launched successfully in 2011 and has over 900 users.

Commonly referred to as an “electronic death registration system” or “EDRS,” the death module will be the next to “go-live.” When fully implemented, the death module is expected to grow to thousands of users.
Why change?

V.I.P. will make Massachusetts death certificates much more timely and accurate, which is critically important for families and public health surveillance.

V.I.P.:
- Prevents errors and fraud
- Makes pandemic and emergency response possible
- Centralized data available in days, not months
- Offers convenient preparation and issuance, saving funeral directors, certifiers, towns, and families time, mileage and money.

Medical Research
MA Cancer Registry
Pandemic and disease surveillance
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Injury Surveillance and Prevention
Estate Settlement
Childhood Fatality Surveillance
Genealogy & Family Medical Histories
Certified Copies
Social Security Administration
Occupational Fatality Surveillance
National Death Index
Law Enforcement and Homeland Security

July 2014
Registry of Vital Records and Statistics, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Who uses V.I.P. EDRS?

Funeral Directors
Certifying Physicians and Nurse Practitioners
Medical Staff
City and Town Clerks
Boards of Health
What is New for LTC facilities?

New Options
- Certify deaths quickly online or by using a two-step paper based process
  - NPs may certify deaths instead of using Pronouncement form
  - Frequent certifiers, staff NPs or medical directors involved in decedent’s care should consider an EDRS online account
- Pronouncement “Form” can be completed online (or on paper)
  - Deaths at a decedent’s private residence should continue to use the current, paper Pronouncement Form

New Forms
- No “death certificate” form.
  - Depending on facility process, transportation of decedent can occur with a Certifier Worksheet, an Attestation form, or the paper Pronouncement form

Access to Information
- Online staff can view death records for your facility and print forms
  - View/print updates to records after medical examiner certification
When does V.I.P. EDRS happen?

Development

Development work 100% complete for this release.
In limited pilot since July 2012.

Roll-Out

Account creation ongoing.
Overview/enrollment webinars ongoing.
Practice environment available since 4/1/2014

Go-Live

September 1, 2014
Schedule is still dependent on performance testing.

All Funeral Directors, Burial Agents (or Board of Health designees), and City and Town Clerks will need a V.I.P. account to use the new forms and processes.

Medical Certifiers (physicians, certifying nurse practitioners) may opt to participate online or by fax attestation. Some hospitals, nursing homes and other facilities may also choose to enroll medical data entry staff.
Where will a death record start?

Registered Nurses and Physicians Assistants will complete the pronouncement form:

- By filling out the paper pronouncement form
- Or, online via V.I.P.

(Note that Nurse Practitioners can certify online or fill out the certifier worksheet if the death was within the scope of their practice, and may not need to do a pronouncement form.)

The funeral director receives either the paper form or a printed VIP form. Families who do not designate a funeral home may also use this form to transport the decedent.
Who Should Certify the Record?

- A Physician or Nurse Practitioner in charge of the decedent’s care
  - Facility staff
  - External private practices

- A Physician or Nurse Practitioner on the decedent’s care team during the last illness
  - Facility staff
  - External private practices

- Medical Director of the facility, if on the care team as above

- A Medical Examiner under prescribed circumstances
Certifying the death record?

Medical certifiers and staff will complete the medical information necessary for a death certificate *either*:

- Online via V.I.P. or
- By filling out a Certifier Worksheet and providing the information for data entry

The funeral director receives either the paper worksheet or an online notification. The city or town clerk may also start records for families who do not designate a funeral home.
Online Certification

Physicians and certifying Nurse Practitioners that complete the medical portion of the death certificate, and certify online, are done!

Authorized medical data entry staff may also enter medical information, but the online Certifier will still certify the information in V.I.P.

The EDRS will print a copy of the certified medical portion of the death certificate for your records and for transportation of the decedent, if necessary.

The funeral director will finish the remaining parts of the death record.
Certifiers not yet online must verify ("attest") medical information entered into V.I.P. for them.

- The funeral director (or medical data entry staff) will enter the worksheet information and fax an attestation form to the certifier via V.I.P. (or print)

- The medical certifier will review and sign the form, and fax it back to the V.I.P. system.
Preparation for EDRS

• Preparing for EDRS
  – Each facility/practice will need to determine their specific process and policies
    • RVRS is willing to help discuss this
  – Online users need Virtual Gateway accounts and must submit application paperwork
    • Multiple forms, but usually a one-time process
    • Certifiers will have a single EHS portal account with access to multiple applications
    • Data entry staff may be associated with the facility, a private practice physician or both

• Training
  – RVRS training will be available primarily through eLearning Modules, webinars and Quick Start Guides
    • All death certificate partners will receive training to understand the new forms and online/offline processes
    • Online users will also receive EDRS system training
    • Certifiers will also receive cause-of-death quality improvement training
  – Each facility/practice will also need to internally train staff to their specific new processes and policies
What workflows are supported?

• The following graphics depict a few of the typical workflows that the electronic death registration system will be able to accommodate for medical certification of death certificates.

• Facilities may use one or a combination of these options, or talk to the Registry about other options that might be available to them.
Workflow A:
Certifier Enters Medical Information and Certifies Online

Certifying physician or nurse practitioner enters cause-of-death and other medical information in VIP and certifies online.

Online certifiers and online facility staff may print an attestation copy for records and/or funeral home.
Workflow B: Medical Staff Prepare Record for Online Certification

1. Staff enter information for the certifier.
2. Certifying physician or nurse practitioner retrieves ready record, reviews, and certifies online.
3. Online certifiers and online facility staff may print an attestation copy for records and/or funeral home.
Workflow C: Medical Staff Prepare Record for Fax Attestation

Certifying physician or nurse practitioner receives attestation form by fax or manually, reviews, and signs. The signed attestation form is faxed back into VIP by the certifier or a medical staff member.

The original attestation form is filed in medical records. A copy may be provided to the funeral home for transport.
Paper Pronouncement, Offline Certifier

- RN, PA (or NP) Completes Pronouncement Form
- Notify the ME or the Certifier
- Provide form to the Funeral Home or other designee for transportation of the decedent

LTC Facility Staff

Funeral Home

- Obtain Pronouncement Form
- Create a New Death Record, and Assign Certifier
- Enter all information on Pronouncement Tab 5A
- Print Fax Coversheet for record and fax form into VIP
- Call or Fax Certifier Worksheet to Certifier

Certifier

- Complete Certifier Worksheet
- Fax, email or call funeral home to communicate info on worksheet or Funeral home picks up worksheet

Funeral Home

- Enter information into EDRS
- Fax Attestation form to Certifier for signature

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VIP Overview

Online Pronouncement and Certifier

- Start the record
- Enter Pronouncement Information in EDRS
- Assign Certifier in EDRS, if known
- Contact ME or Certifier
- Print Certifier Worksheet for Funeral Home or other designee

Certifier

- Complete tabs 6-9
- Review record
- Certify

Funeral Director

- Complete Decedent Record
- Release to Burial Agent

Burial Agent

- Verify record
- Enter Burial Permit info
- Release for registration
- Print Permit

Pronouncer

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Consider Some Hospital Strategies

• All certifiers online, supported by data entry staff
  – Attending and certifying physicians will complete a certifier worksheet or other tailored facts of death sheet and provide that information to staff who will perform data entry
  – Medical Data Entry Staff can create the record and assign to the certifier when ready for signature. Certifier reviews for accuracy, enters date signed and certifies with minimal steps
  – Physician can also create the record and certify without medical data entry assistance

• Frequent certifiers online, others offline, all supported by data entry staff
  – Attending and certifying physicians will complete a certifier worksheet or other tailored facts of death sheet and provide that information to staff who will perform data entry
  – Frequent certifiers will certify online as described above
  – Infrequent certifiers or those who do not use computers will follow the fax attestation process
    • Medical Data Entry Staff will enter the record information, print the attestation form for offline certifiers; obtain a certifier signature; and fax into the EDRS.
Consider Some Hospital Strategies, 2

• Core group of certifiers, supported by data entry staff
  – The hospital selects a core group of certifiers who will certify records online. In some cases these are Quality Assurance physicians or physician unit heads
  – Attending and certifying physicians will complete online or complete a certifier worksheet or other custom facts of death sheet and provide that information to staff who will perform data entry
  – When staff data entry is complete, the record is assigned to the one of the core group of certifiers who reviews the record and makes any necessary changes and certifies the record

• All fax attestation
  – Attending and certifying physicians will complete a certifier worksheet or other tailored facts of death sheet and provide that information to staff who will perform data entry
  – Medical Data Entry Staff can create the record print the attestation for offline certifiers; obtain the certifier signature; and fax into the EDRS
  – In the absence of data entry staff, the certifier can provide the certifier worksheet to the funeral home for data entry
More information?

If your facility would like to set up a brief telephone conversation with RVRS staff about strategies for using the EDRS, contact Ramona Irving at 617-740-2616 or email to Ramona.Irving@state.ma.us.

More information about account creation and other training material is available on the Registry’s VIP web page: www.mass.gov/dph/vip

Updated information and training resources will be added as they become available.

Please feel free to email the V.I.P. Project Team with any questions or comments: vip@state.ma.us
Enter Pronouncement Info

Practice URL: http://173.166.20.212:8080/vips/ email a request for the password with your telephone number to vip@state.ma.us or attend a webinar for the password
To start a record, select Death > New Death > Create a Case

The Work Queues (Pending PI, Pending MI) are records for your facility that have not been assigned to a funeral home or certified yet, respectively.
Create a Case

- Enter all five fields
- Date can be entered in mmddyyyy format
- Select SEARCH
- The system will check for existing records
- If none found, CREATE CASE
VIP Overview

Tab 1: Decedent Info

- The information entered for the search will be displayed on Tab 1 of the electronic record
- Enter the middle name if known
- Select Pronouncement Performed = Yes
- Then go to the next tab and a Pronouncement Tab will be created
Tab 5A: Pronouncement Info

- Enter all information on the pronouncement
Tab 12: Select Certifier, if known

- Select the certifier, if known
- You will not be able to assign a case to the ME, they will take cases over upon review
Select Print Preliminary Certifier Worksheet
(You can also print from the menu by selecting Death > Print > Preliminary Certifier Worksheet)

Sign the Worksheet
Provide to the funeral home for transportation of the decedent
Certify Death Records
Main Page with Work Queues

Work Queues will list records awaiting an action by you: Such as records ready and awaiting certification.
Medical Users: Enter Tabs 6-9 Only!

➡️ Medical professionals only need to fill out tabs 6-9

The rest of the tabs are enabled, but they are the responsibility of the funeral director.
### Medical Info: Place/Date/Autopsy Tab

#### Case Information
- Decedent first name: CASTELIA
- Decedent middle name: MARIA
- Decedent last name: ROSARIO
- Generational ID: FEMALE
- Decedent sex: FEMALE
- Decedent date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy): 08/25/2000

#### Medical Record Info (if known)
- Medical record number: MRN002233
- Medical examiner case year: 
- Medical examiner case number: 

#### Place of Death
- Place of death: HOSPITAL - DGA

#### Autopsy Info
- Was medical examiner contacted?: No
- Was an autopsy performed?: No
- Were autopsy findings available?: Select

#### Actual Date of Death
- Date of death (mm/dd/yyyy): 08/25/2013

#### Place of Death Address
- Hospitals: Select
- Hospices: Select
- Nursing homes: Select
- Assisted living/ret homes: Select
- Check if location is not in list: 
- Address same as residence (Decedent Legal Info page): 

#### Facility name
- MAINE GENERAL HOSPITAL

#### Address number
- 55

#### Street prefix
- Select

#### Street name
- FRUIT

#### Street designator
- STREET

#### Street suffix
- Select

#### Apt/unit number
- 

#### Country
- UNITED STATES

#### State
- MASSACHUSETTS

#### Zip code list
- Select

#### Cities/towns for zip code
- Select

#### Cities/towns for state
- Select

#### City/town
- BOSTON

#### Counties
- Select

#### County
- SUFFOLK
The system will prompt you when cause of death info entered may be problematic such as an abbreviation or a rare cause.
Medical Info: Manner/Detail Injury

Two new questions for certifiers to answer
Time can also be entered in military time and will be converted for printing.
Medical Info: Record Actions Page

Save after Tabs 6-9 Complete, Check ready to certify, then click on Certify