**Massachusetts Deaths Caveats – Changes Between 2013 and 2014 Data Years**

The Vitals Information Partnership (VIP) system is designed to streamline and integrate vital event registration, securely, across the Commonwealth. In September 2014, the death application was launched in VIP. At this time, new variables were added and changes were made to variable coding for some historical variables. Please see below a summary of the changes that took place between the 2013 and 2014 death files. Comparisons between data collected before 2014 and data collected 2014 and onward should be interpreted with caution.

**Place of Death**

Nursing home and assisted living facility or rest home were not available for all observations prior to 2015. In earlier years, these would have been coded as Other.

On VIP, response options for place of death include:

* Hospital-Inpatient
* Hospital-ER/Outpatient
* Hospital-Dead on Arrival (DOA)
* Decedent’s Residence
* Hospice
* Nursing Home
* Assisted Living Facility or Rest Home
* Other
* Unknown

On pre-VIP death files, response options for place of death included:

* Hospital-Inpatient
* Hospital-ER/Outpatient
* Hospital-Dead on Arrival (DOA)
* Hospital-Hospital Status Unknown
* Decedent’s Residence
* Nursing Home
* Other
* Not Classifiable

For PHIT, the pre-VIP response options were matched to the VIP response options as follow:

**Place of Death**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **VIP** | **Pre-VIP** |
| Hospital, Inpatient | Hospital, Inpatient |
| Hospital, ER/Outpatient | Hospital, ER/Outpatient |
| Hospital, DOA | Hospital, DOA |
| Decedent’s Residence | Decedent’s Residence |
| Hospice | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Nursing Home | Nursing Home |
| Assisted Living Facility or Rest Home | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Other | Other |
| Unknown | Hospital-Hospital Status Unknown, Not Classifiable |

**Manner of Death**

Therapeutic complication was not available for all observations prior to 2015. In earlier years, these would have been coded as a natural cause of death if no injury information was also provided and an accidental cause of death if injury information was provided.

On VIP, response options for manner of death include:

* Natural
* Accident
* Suicide
* Homicide
* Pending Investigation
* Could Not be Determined
* Therapeutic Complication
* Other

On pre-VIP death files, response options for manner of death included:

* Natural
* Accident
* Suicide
* Homicide
* Pending Investigation
* Could Not be Determined
* Not Classifiable

For PHIT, the pre-VIP response options were matched to the VIP response options as follow:

**Manner of Death**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **VIP** | **Pre-VIP** |
| Natural | Natural |
| Accident | Accident |
| Suicide | Suicide |
| Homicide | Homicide |
| Pending investigation | Pending investigation |
| Could not be determined | Could not be determined |
| Therapeutic complication | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Other | Not classifiable |

**Decedent’s Education**

Certificate, Refused/Not Obtainable, and Special Education were not available for all observations prior to 2015.

On VIP, response options for decedent’s education include:

* 8th grade or less
* 9-12 grade, no diploma
* High school graduate or GED completed
* Some college credit, but no degree
* Certificate
* Associate degree
* Bachelor’s degree
* Master’s degree
* Doctorate or professional degree
* Unknown
* Refused/not obtainable
* Special education

On pre-VIP death files, response options for decedent’s education included:

* Elementary/Secondary: 00-12
* College: 13-17
  + 13=1 year
  + 14=2 years
  + 15=3 years
  + 16=4 years
  + 17=5+ years
* Not Classifiable: 99

For PHIT, the pre-VIP response options were matched to the VIP response options as follow:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **VIP** | **Pre-VIP** |
| 8th grade or less | 00-08 |
| 9-12 grade, no diploma | 09-11 |
| High school graduate or GED completed | 12 |
| Some college credit, but no degree | 13, 15 |
| Certificate | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Associate degree | 14 |
| Bachelor’s degree | 16 |
| Master’s degree | 17 |
| Doctorate or professional degree | 17 with occupation like lawyer, attorney, doctor, or physician |
| Unknown | 99 |
| Refused/not obtainable | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Special education | **No match, not a possible response** |

**Decedent’s Race**

* Prior to the implementation of VIP, families of decedents began to report race separately from ethnicity and can now choose more than one race from standard checkbox lists. Previously, families wrote free-form responses in a single field that were often difficult to categorize and may have resulted in some misclassifications. While the new method improves accuracy, an algorithm must still be used to analyze multiple race responses for the categorical race variable provided in PHIT to choose the most appropriate standard race category from among these options: White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race, Unknown. Because Hispanic ethnicity was captured as a race in the pre-2014 data, these decedents have been classified as Unknown race in the categorical race variable for PHIT.
* RACE12 (Guamanian or Chamorro) and RACE13 (Samoan) were not available for all observations prior to 2015.
* All non-classifiable races (RACE=99) were categorized as RACE\_NOT\_OBT, so RACE\_REFUSED and RACE\_UNK will not be a possible response in the pre-2014 data.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **VIP** | **Pre-VIP** |
| American Indian/Alaska Native/Native American | Race is Indian [American, Alaska, Canadian, and Mexican Indian, Eskimo and Aleut] |
| Asian | Race is Chinese, Japanese, Laotian, Vietnamese, Thai, Cambodian |
| Black | Race is Black |
| Hispanic/Latino/Black | Race is Black **and** Hispanic ethnicity is Puerto Rican, Dominican, Cuban, Other Central American, South American, Mexican, Other and Unknown Hispanic |
| Hispanic/Latino/Other | Race is Hispanic or Hispanic ethnicity is Other and Unknown Hispanic |
| Hispanic/Latino/White | Race is White and Hispanic ethnicity is Puerto Rican, Dominican, Cuban, Other Central American, South American, Mexican, Other and Unknown Hispanic |
| Native Hawaiian | Race is Hawaiian |
| Samoan | **No match, not a possible response** |
| White | Race is White [Includes Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Caucasian] |
| Other Pacific Islander | Race is Other Asian or Pacific Islander |
| Specify Other Hispanic/Latino | Race is Hispanic or Hispanic ethnicity is Other and Unknown Hispanic |
| Other | Race is Other Non-white |
| Race Not Obtainable | Race is Not Classifiable |
| Race Unknown | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Race Refused | **No match, not a possible response** |

**Decedent’s Ethnicity**

* Many of the VIP ethnicity variables were not available for all observations prior to 2015 (see below for full list).
  + DETHNIC\_COLUMBIAN, DETHNIC\_GUATEMALAN, DETHNIC\_HONDORAN, DETHNIC\_SALVADOR were not available for all observations prior to 2015 (these go into the creation of the Hispanic variable in VIP files).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **VIP** | **Pre-VIP** |
| Colombian | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Cuban | Hispanic ethnicity is Cuban |
| Dominican | Hispanic ethnicity is Dominican |
| Guatemalan | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Honduran | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano | Hispanic ethnicity is Mexican |
| Other Central American | Hispanic ethnicity is Other Central American |
| Other South American | Hispanic ethnicity is Other and Unknown Hispanic |
| Puerto Rican | Hispanic ethnicity is Puerto Rican |
| Salvadoran | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Native American, ethnicity | Race is Indian [American, Alaska, Canadian, and Mexican Indian, Eskimo and Aleut] |
| Chinese | Race is Chinese |
| Japanese | Race is Japanese |
| Vietnamese | Race is Vietnamese |
| Cambodian, Ethnicity | Race is Cambodian |
| Cape Verdean | Race is Cape Verdean |
| Laotian | Race is Laotian |
| Unknown | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Not Obtainable | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Refused | **No match, not a possible response** |
| African | **No match, not a possible response** |
| African (specify) | **No match, not a possible response** |
| African American | **No match, not a possible response** |
| American | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Brazilian | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Caribbean Islander | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Caribbean Islander (specify) | **No match, not a possible response** |
| European | **No match, not a possible response** |
| European (specify) | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Guatemalan | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Haitian | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Middle Eastern | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Middle Eastern (specify) | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Portuguese | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Russian | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Other Pacific Islander | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Other Portuguese | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Other Portuguese (specify0 | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Other | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Other (specify) | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Other Central American (specify) | Hispanic ethnicity is Other and Unknown Hispanic) and specified as “Other Central American” |
| South American (specify) | Hispanic ethnicity is Other and Unknown Hispanic) and specified as “South American” |
| Asian Indian | **No match, not a possible response** |
| Korean | **No match, not a possible response** |