



THE VITAL RECORD

A monthly electronic bulletin from the Registry of Vital Records and Statistics (RVRS).

The Vital Record highlights updates from the Massachusetts Registry of Vital Records and Statistics (RVRS) on modernization efforts and other timely information of interest to our registration and data partners.

January 2023

RVRS Happenings

Preview: Records System Messaging Functionality

As we are looking ahead to replacing the Vital Records and Statistics System, we would like to highlight a feature that will make your work easier. The new system, the Massachusetts Vital Records Information Collaborative (MAVRIC), will enable data partners to exchange messages with other participants/groups, as well as receive notifications about cases. You will be able to search for other participants and organizations, send them a message through MAVRIC, and get message notifications via the application or email. Additionally, you can also be notified if you are assigned a new record or if there is a change in the status of an existing record.

While we will roll MAVRIC out in a phased approach, the death certificate module will be one of the first, targeted for release in January 2024. This will be followed by the marriage, fetal death, and birth modules by January 2025. You will continue using Vitals Information Partnership (VIP) until each transition is successfully completed. If you are interested in being a part of a testing group, email RVRSCommunications@mass.gov.

Documenting Long COVID in US Deaths

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Vitals Statistics System recently released the first nationwide [analysis](#) of how long COVID or related terms appear in official U.S. death records. From January 2020 through June 2022, 3,500 deaths have been attributed to long COVID. While that is less than 1% of all deaths linked to COVID-19, the results add to the growing recognition of how serious long COVID medical problems can be. Researchers state that the numbers of long COVID deaths are underreported, as it has taken time for the condition to be recognized and identified by medical providers. In addition, the study was not able to include the [new diagnostic code](#) for long COVID — ICD-10, U09.9 (introduced by CDC on October 1, 2021) — because it was not yet being used in the reporting of deaths. Medical certifiers in Massachusetts should be aware of this change so they can complete death certificates with the sufficient details in order to correctly code long COVID-related deaths as a cause of death or as a contributing condition. For every death certificate, a complete sequence of events from immediate cause to underlying cause should always be provided, as well as all contributing conditions.

Policy and Procedures

Correcting Sex on a Birth Certificate Following Medical Intervention

A person who wishes to correct their sex on their birth certificate, following medical intervention (per Chapter 46 §13(e), M.G.L.), must submit two forms to the City/Town Clerk of the community in which the birth occurred, or to RVRs, along with a certified copy of the applicant's legal change of name if they are also requesting to amend their name on their birth certificate. Payment must be submitted with the required forms. The amendment process will be delayed if all the forms and payment are not submitted correctly.

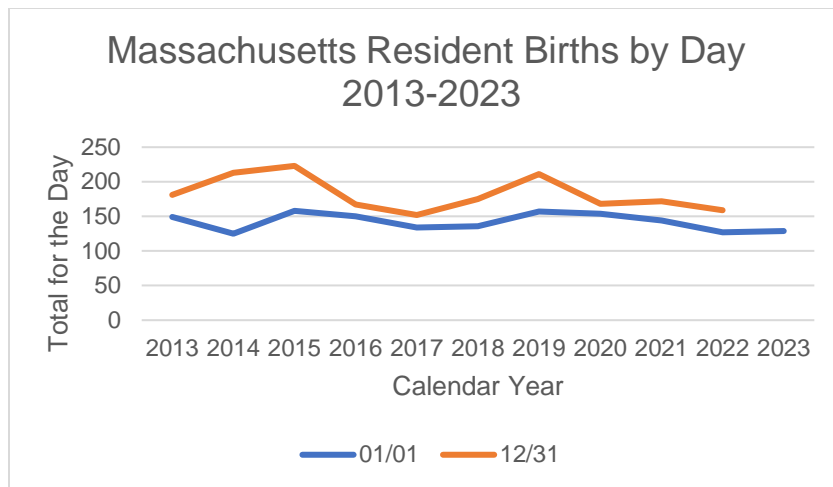
1. [Applicant Affidavit in Support of Amendment of a Birth Certificate Following Medical Intervention for the Purpose of Sex Reassignment](#) must be submitted correctly and completely. Applicants under the age of 18 must have parents' signatures of each parent listed on the applicant's birth certificate. Guardians have the authority to sign the applicant affidavit if a certified copy of the court order is submitted, he and the guardian should also have the guardianship paperwork, that states that they have the legal right to make medical decisions.
2. [Physician's Statement in Support of Amendment of a Birth Certificate Following Medical Intervention for the Purpose of Sex Reassignment](#): The applicant, physician, and notary public must all sign this form. The most common mistake made by notaries public is accepting an incorrect form of identification. They must accept one of the following forms of identification:
 - A current document issued by a federal or state government agency that includes a picture and applicant signature.
 - The oath or affirmation of a credible witness unaffected by the document or transaction who is personally known to the notary public and who personally knows the individual.
 - Identification of an individual based on the notary public's personal knowledge of the identity of the principal; provided.
 - A person who is not a United States citizen, "satisfactory evidence of identity" shall mean identification of an individual based on a valid passport or other government-issued document evidencing the individual's nationality or residence and includes a picture and signature and a photographic image of the individual's face and signature.
3. If the applicant wants to change their name, they must also submit a court-certified copy of their legal name change decree.

RVRs Data

Welcome Newest Bay Staters

Every day, parents throughout the Commonwealth welcome new members into their families. Preliminary numbers show that a total of 69,461 births occurred in 2022 and the New Year kicked off with 129 babies born on January 1, 2023, according to RVRs Commonwealth data.

Although there is little difference from year to year, it is interesting that the last day of each year is busier than the first day.



Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Registry of Vital Records and Statistics. 2023. Birth Files, 2013-2023.

Note: 2021-2023 data are preliminary and subject to change. Data as of January 13, 2023.

Key Contacts

Topic	Contact
Amendments	vip-amend@mass.gov
Bond paper request	vital.forms@mass.gov
Data and publications	vital.datarequest@mass.gov
Delayed records	vital.regulation@mass.gov
General inquiries	RVRSCommunications@mass.gov
RVRS customer service	vital.recordsrequest@mass.gov
Vital forms	vital.forms@mass.gov
Vitals Information Partnership (VIP) accounts	vip-accounts@mass.gov
Vitals Information Partnership (VIP) registration	vip@mass.gov

Key Resources

- [RVRS](#) administers and issues copies of vital records that occurred in Massachusetts from 1931 to the present. RVRS also provides statistics on births, deaths, fetal deaths, divorces, and marriages.
- The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) is the nation's leading science-based, data-driven, service organization that protects the public's health.
- [The Federal Emergency Management Administration \(FEMA\) COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Program](#) may be able to offer financial assistance to your constituents who have already paid for funeral expenditures linked to COVID-19.

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