Transforming the Massachusetts
Death Certificate Process

Vitals Information Partnership (V.I.P.)
EDRS System Introduction and Overview

Updated: 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?

Paper is slow, prone to error, easy to lose and invites fraud and identity theft.
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?

Certifying Physicians and Nurse Practitioners

Funeral Directors

Medical Staff

City and Town Clerks

Boards of Health
When does V.I.P. EDRS happen?

**Development**
- Development work is complete. Testing and small fixes still in progress.
- In limited pilot since July 2012.

**Roll-Out**
- Account creation begins now.
- Overview/enrollment webinars now.
- “How-to” training begins in July 2014 – although a practice sandbox is available now.

**Go-Live**
- September 1, 2014.
- Schedule is still dependent on results of upcoming 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.
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

The funeral director receives either the paper worksheet or an online notification.

*This overview presents information for typical cases where a funeral home is involved. Families handling dispositions privately will follow similar steps, but will not access VIP directly.
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 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.

- The medical certifier will review and sign the form, and fax it back to the V.I.P. system.
A family member or other informant will provide the funeral director with personal information about the decedent, such as address, social security number (SSN), spouse, and parents. The funeral director will generally use a standard worksheet for this purpose.

Once entered into V.I.P., the system will generate a verification form so that families can check that the information is correct. V.I.P. verifies SSNs automatically.
Once complete, the funeral director releases the death record to the Board of Health agent for review and issuance of a permit.

The Board of Health agent then reviews the death certificate and issues a permit number. Disposition permits may be printed at the office of the Board of Health and at the office of the funeral director.

Some communities may choose to “opt-in” to e-permitting, allowing for permit prior to physical review.
Once a permit is issued, the record is ready for registration by the City or Town Clerk.

The Clerk may now review, register and amend. Once registered, the record may be printed for archival and certified copies.

After registration by the occurrence community, the Clerk in the decedent’s residence community may also access and register the record.
The Registry has immediate access to records at all stages of the registration process and can provide support to users at any point.

Depending on needs, RVRS is now able to respond immediately to urgent requests for health data or assist with fraud prevention. Timely access benefits all partner agencies, health programs, medical researchers and the public.
More information?

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:

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