**What’s New?**

- Learn [About the NYS EDRS](#)
- Updated role-based EDRS Quick Reference Guides
- CDC releases revised *Funeral Director’s Handbook: Death Registration and Fetal Death Reporting*
- CDC releases HTML version of the *Guide to Completing the Facility Worksheets for the Certificate of Live Birth and Report of Fetal Death*

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**Mastering the Cause of Death in the 21st Century - Earn CEU credit**

We are pleased to offer *Mastering the Cause of Death in the 21st Century*, an online course which presents the latest trends in cause of death certification. Dr. Katherine Maloney, Erie County Assistant Medical Examiner, guides you through the course. She is a board-certified Forensic Pathologist, practicing in Buffalo. While holding teaching appointments at the University at Buffalo Medical School and through the National Criminal Justice Training Center, Dr. Maloney has testified in both criminal and civil proceedings. She has performed over 1,700 autopsies and is board-certified by the American Board of Pathology in Forensic Pathology, Anatomic Pathology and Clinical Pathology.

In addition to tips and advice for reporting the cause of death, Dr. Maloney has designed a special set of instructional materials and assessments which highlight how to report fatalities related to both natural and synthetic opioid substances. You will gain insights into the current schools of thought related to the correct and accurate expression of the events that lead to a terminal event.

This free course is recommended for medical examiners, coroners and medical certifiers. It has approval for 1 Hour of AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. For more information about the course, including an email invitation, contact Zina Adams at zina.adams@health.ny.gov or 518-474-4317.

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**EDRS Field Changes**

The following changes were made to fields within EDRS:

**Place of Death Facility Name: Other Specify**

If selecting “Other, specify” for the Type of Place of Death and the location was a facility, the facility name should be entered in the Other, Specify text field, NOT in the Facility Name field. To better support this data entry, the Other, Specify field label changed to Other, Specify (Name or Describe).

**Was Medical Examiner/Coroner Consulted?**

The field label, Was case referred to Coroner or Medical Examiner? on the Other Factors page, changed to Was Medical Examiner/Coroner consulted? to more accurately reflect NCHS standards and NYS practices. Answer ‘Yes’ when there was simply a conversation with the ME/Coroner, even if the certifier did not personally participate in that conversation.

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**Key Dates**

**Ongoing—Fall 2019**

- EDRS Death Amendment Pilot continues
- Fetal Death Pilot continues
- *Mastering the Cause of Death in the 21st Century* self-paced training available for CEU
- Live webinar training for EDRS onboarding; see EDRS website for training schedule: [https://www.health.ny.gov/vital_records/edrs](https://www.health.ny.gov/vital_records/edrs)
Rollout and Phase Statuses

Spontaneous Fetal Death Pilot

Reporting of spontaneous fetal death continues in pilot mode with the four medical facilities electronically submitting fetal death records along with funeral firms when a disposition is required. Over 850 fetal deaths have been reported electronically.

Watch for announcements to users prior to the roll-out via the EDRS website and in future editions of this EDRS Newsletter. Contact Jen Payeur, NYS Fetal Death program lead. Email: edfr@health.ny.gov / Phone: 844-866-3377.

On a side note, the CDC has created an HTML version of the Guide to Completing the Facility Worksheets for the Certificate of Live Birth and Report of Fetal Death. The online, searchable database includes definitions and instructions and is compatible with computers, tablets, and smartphones.

Amendments and Corrections Pilot

Pilot activities continue with the County Registrar and Medical Examiners in Monroe County for the amendment and correction implementation that started in June, 2019. As the pilot moves in to Phase 2, a select group of Funeral Directors and other Medical Certifiers were added, and functional scope expanded began in mid-October.

The following is a description of the scope of the pilot project in Monroe County:

The goal is to implement the process fully across NYS in 2020. Electronic Amendments will greatly improve the timeliness and quality of data collected by NYSBVR and then disseminated to stakeholders that may be used in shaping public health policies like those relating to opioid use and abuse.

Thank You for Your Feedback!

The EDRS Team would like to thank those across the State who completed the EDRS Documentation and Support Appraisal survey. We are in the process of analyzing the feedback to create, enhance, or even retire documentation to improve the library of resources available to you. Individuals who provided contact information along with questions or requests for materials will be hearing from us, if you haven't already.

Would you like to give input to the EDRS Team on the application, your business processes or more? We are looking for participants to join a NYS External Users Group.

Contact Linda Smithgall at linda.smithgall@health.ny.gov
Tech Talk: EDRS Tools to Streamline Your Work

EDRS provides a number of tools to assist with completing the death certification and registration process to avoid errors not adhering to NCHS rules. In the paper world, many of these errors went unnoticed until reaching the federal agency, creating rejection of records and rework for the state and local jurisdictions and data providers (medical certifiers and funeral firms) in addition to causing undo hardship on the families of the decedents by prolonging the timeframe to receive a complete and accurate death certificate.

Use the following tools to streamline your work to complete the death certificates correctly the first time:

**Places Look-up**

As of September 4, 2019 all users should use the **Places Look-up** tool for the following addresses in EDRS: Resident Address, Decedent’s Birth Place, Place of Death when not auto-populated by a facility address, and Injury Location to avoid edit rules. **Users should no longer type the City, Town, Township or Borough** when completing a case.

The **Places Look-up** tool, the house icon to the left of an address, provides filtered drilldown capabilities, eliminates the need to guess at addresses and reduces errors from physical versus mailing address and typographical errors.

In the **Places** window, as you make selections in the dropdown list of values, each subsequent list is filtered by the above selections. Selecting “New York” for the **State** results in the **County** list filtered to only New York State Counties. New York State “County” selection filters the **City** list of values, and so forth. For the Decedent’s Birth Place, where no County is not selected, the County is listed after the city, town or village name (Aurora Town, Erie or Aurora Village, Cayuga)

If you experience any issues using the **Places Look-up** tool or questions on the appropriate jurisdiction by the decedent’s physical resident address, please contact the NYS EDRS team for assistance. email [edrs@health.ny.gov](mailto:edrs@health.ny.gov).

**Show Tooltips**

The EDRS has a handy feature on the **Help** menu to turn on pop-up tooltips, by clicking on the **Show Tooltips** checkbox. Tooltips are pop-up boxes that display when your mouse hovers over a field, providing additional instruction.

The EDRS Team continues to enhance the tips for fields that may be confusing. It is highly recommended to turn on Tooltips until you are more comfortable navigating EDRS.

**Wildcard for Partial Word or Name Searches**

Not sure how that name is spelled? Is the hospital Saint Mary’s, St Mary’s or St. Mary’s? Try searching on a partial word by using the text tool wildcard, the percent symbol (%), **before** (%Sai), **after** (St%) or **before and after** (%Mar%) a few characters when searching using the **Look-up tool** (the magnifying glass icon ). This will give a broader set of results to locate the correct name. You can also search on a combination of words using wildcards **before, after, and between** full and partial words (%st%mary%).

**Current Date? Click F12**

Entering a case on the date or death? No need to type the full date or use the calendar feature. Just click **F12** on your keyboard and EDRS will automatically insert the current date.
Call to Action

Medical Certifiers: 72-Hour Window to Register Deaths in NYS

New York State Public Health Law requires deaths in the State to be registered within 72 hours of the death event. In order for all parties to complete their portion; the Medical Certifier, Funeral Director, and Local Registrar must all complete and affirm within that window.

Recommendation: Medical Certifiers should complete and Affirm (Certify) the case in EDRS within 48 hours.

If you are not certifying the case, but instead referring a case through Refer to ME or Request Non-Affiliated Medical Certification, please share pertinent information with the new certifier, allowing them and the Funeral Director and Local Registrar time to still complete and register the case within the 72-hour window.

Funeral Directors: CDC publishes new Funeral Director’s Handbook

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently posted the 2019 Revised Funeral Director’s Handbook: Death Registration and Fetal Death Reporting.

The revised publication states, as noted in the “Acknowledgements” of the handbook, “Information on electronic death registration has been added to this version, along with instructions for obtaining death certification information in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner.” (See “Part II: Completing Certificate of Death”)

In addition to minor formatting, statements of emphasis (italic text in the 2003 version) for certificate item numbers now appear at the beginning of each numbered section. The appendices have been modified slightly as well.

Local Registrars: Review Case Pages Before Affirming

With the implementation phase of registering non-medical facility deaths, Medical Certifiers or Funeral Directors manually type the Place of Death address rather than selecting a facility address from the EDRS database. There is a possibility of errors due to county lines or town vs. city jurisdictions, for example. In these scenarios, it is possible to receive a case in your queue that you should not be filing.

It is very important Local Registrars review the case pages before affirming a record, including the Place of Death. After accessing a case received for registration, make a habit of clicking the Validate Page button to easily identify exceptions and specifically confirm the Place of Death address is within your filing office jurisdiction.

If you note an error in the Place of Death, contact the Funeral Director before affirming to have him/her Unsign the case and correct the Place of Death so it goes to the correct filing office.