



NYS EDRS Newsletter

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Last Call for Free AMA Credit *Mastering the Cause of Death in the 21st Century*

Medical Certifiers, Medical Examiners, and Coroners who have not already taken the *Mastering the Cause of Death in the 21st Century* online course will have a last opportunity to earn AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ before the course is closed at the end of August.

This course provides you with tips to get the best cause of death determination, including opioid related deaths. Dr. Katherine Maloney, Erie County Assistant Medical Examiner, guides you through the course highlighting how to report fatalities related to both natural and synthetic opioid substances.

When [registering for the online course](#), select **Create New Learner Account** on the Learning Management System website. Your Organization in the Learning Management is EDRS. For more information about the course contact Zina Adams at zina.adams@health.ny.gov or the EDRS Unit at edrs@health.ny.gov.

Electronic Amendments Going Statewide in 2020!

Beginning Fall 2020, all Funeral Directors and funeral firm staff across New York State will join the Medical Examiners and Medically Licensed Coroners and pilot county funeral firms in the ability to submit amendments for electronically filed cases through the Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS).

Using the EDRS eliminates, or greatly reduces, the need for manual interlineation on hard copies, generates automated notifications, and expedites amendment processing. Documentary evidence is still required, based on the type of amendment.

An initial broadcast message was sent to all Funeral Firms on July 2 announcing training sessions with registration information. Group participation through one registration is acceptable. **Local Registrars statewide will be instructed not to accept corrections for any cases that were filed electronically**, so register for training to prepare!

For questions, please contact Laurie Kropkowski, Sr. Implementation and Training Specialist, 518-474-7430 or laurie.kropkowski@health.ny.gov.

EDRS Team *Revised* Support Hours

As New York State reopens while monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic, the EDRS team has not skipped a beat. The team has been working weekends and holidays and is still primarily working remotely, therefore email inquiry is the most efficient way to request help. We are now reducing our weekend support hours to just Saturday mornings, because we have found that the need for our help during other times on the weekend has waned. Our revised [email](#) and phone support hours, during this crisis are:

- ⇒ M-F: 7 am - 6 pm
- ⇒ **Sat: 8 am - 12 noon** (*Email support only*)

Remember, there are a lot of resources on the [EDRS public website](#) and role-specific subpages. Bookmark/Add to Favorites in your web browser for quick reference.

Funeral Directors and Local Registrars: Verify Place of Death and Filing Office

As many have become accustomed to, Medical Facilities are mapped automatically to a local registration district, streamlining the registration process with automatic notifications to the Local Registrar. This is not the case for non-medical facility deaths, such as private residences or other locations. The State is seeing an increase in amendments primarily due to the Place of Death address and wrong filing office given the increase in non-medical facility deaths.

In order for EDRS to automatically 'send' a case to the local filing office and notify the local registrar via email and internal notifications, the *Place of Death* address must be correct AND the **Filing Registrar Office** must be completed on the *Disposition* page. Accurate data prior to signing a case will also reduce the need for amendments and improve issuance preparation.

Some important points for non-facility deaths are **for the Funeral Director** to:

- ⇒ Review and revise, as necessary, the **Place of Death** address. Funeral Directors *can* edit the address *after* medical certification ensuring the **City, Town, or Village** represent the physical/geographic location of the place of death, which may not reflect its mailing address. Do not select a Hamlet address.
- ⇒ Ensure the *Resident Address* and *Place of Death* addresses match if the death was in the private residence.
- ⇒ Enter the **Filing Registrar Office** on the *Disposition* page. Begin typing the office name and select from the predictive text appearing in a dropdown below the field. Be cognizant of addresses that may split between towns or villages to select the correct locality. (It is highly recommended this field is verified for all deaths as common practice.)
- ⇒ Leave the **Filing Registrar** blank. EDRS will complete this field with the name of the Registrar Office user who accesses the case. If a name is entered prior to this auto-fill, only that named person will receive a notification and be able to affirm and register the case; this will hinder timely registration.

Local Registrars, upon receipt of a case for registration, should always do the following before affirming *any* record:

- ⇒ Review the *Place of Death* address and verify it is within your locality. If it is NOT, stop and contact the Funeral Director to unsign the case and edit the information for the case to go to the correct filing office; do NOT complete the affirmation.
- ⇒ Review the *Disposition* page. Confirm the **Filing Registrar** auto-populated with your name. If that section is showing a different user within the office, select your name from the dropdown list because you are affirming.
- ⇒ Review all of the case data for completeness and acceptability, page by page or by viewing the **Working Copy** from the *Print Forms* page. If something is questionable, stop and contact the Funeral Director.
- ⇒ Enter the **Register Number** on the *Identifiers* page. **Do NOT complete any other fields.**
- ⇒ Affirm the case, then go back to the *Identifiers* page and edit the **Local File Date** if different from the current date.

Following the above protocols in the order provided will reduce amendments, mitigate the need for State intervention and improve issuance time. And as always, communication is key!

Local Registrars: Share Office Hours and Contact Information

Local Filing Offices should always communicate proper registration procedures within their jurisdiction to ensure compliance with Public Health Law. This includes sharing with the Funeral Firms and the EDRS team: **hours of operation, after-hours and holiday contact methods**, and **authorized subregistrar contacts** outside of business hours.

This practice should be standard operating procedure and especially communicated during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you!

Medical Certifiers: Emergency Room and Hospital DOA Deaths

A person dies on the way to the hospital or in the emergency room. Who is responsible to certify the medical portion of the death record? The answer is “it depends.” In most cases, an emergency room doctor has no knowledge of the decedent’s medical history and may be reluctant to sign a death certificate. Lack of historical knowledge does not preclude the fact that this doctor was present at the time of death or is the first authorized medical professional to assess and pronounce the death.

Public Health Law (PHL) dictates:

- ⇒ *If the decedent dies at the hospital/in the ER then the hospital administrator is responsible to ensure the case is certified.*
Hospital policy and procedure would come into play in this scenario as to if the ER doctor, or another certifier, is the responsible party. The EDRS has an option for the certifying medical professional to certify ‘on behalf of’ the attending physician to allow some flexibility for this certification.
- ⇒ *If the person was DOA to the hospital, then the certifier can be the ER doctor, the Medical Examiner/Medically-Licensed Coroner, or the primary care physician.*
It is imperative that all medical professionals (and the funeral firm) involved with that decedent share information, including health history, actual and pronounced date and time of death, and more, with the certifier for complete and accurate data on the death record. This may mean phone calls or other forms of communication outside of the EDRS.

Affiliated Residents, Physicians Assistants and Nurse Practitioners are also authorized to certify deaths. In any case, please make every effort *to work together* to medically certify a record within 24 hours of a death event. Full death registration must be within 72 hours of the event, including medical certification, legal/personal signature, and local registrar affirmation.

Contact your HCS Coordinator if you need to be set up with an EDRS role to certify death records.

If you have questions, contact the EDRS team at edrs@health.ny.gov.

Medical Examiners and Medical Certifiers

You’ve Received a Non-Affiliated Request. Now what?

Non-Affiliated Certification requests enable unlicensed Coroners and medical facilities (such as nursing homes and hospital emergency departments) to obtain medical certification on a *Death Certificate* from a physician or other Medical Certifier who is not directly affiliated with the office/facility that owns the case, but who has more direct knowledge of the decedent’s medical history. Download the [EDRS Quick Reference for Medical Certifiers and Staff](#) (PDF) for instructions. Some key points are:

- ⇒ You must *Accept* or *Reject* the case through the **Review Non-Affiliated Certification Request** option under *Other Links* before you can edit the case.
- ⇒ If the request was issued by a non-medically licensed Coroner, when you **Accept** you become the **Coroner’s Physician** named in the *lower* portion of the *Certifier* page. The Coroner who owns the case will be the Certifier named at the *top* of the *Certifier* page. Do NOT change the **Certifier Type** at the top of the page in this scenario.

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