EDRS Phase 2 — 28 Counties Are Using EDRS for Home Deaths and Deaths from Unnatural Causes

EDRS Phase 2 includes electronic processing of unattended deaths and death from unnatural causes. Phase 2 roll-out is being conducted on a regional basis. The roll-out is well-underway, with 28 counties now processing these death certificates electronically in EDRS:

- Region 1, Finger Lakes: 12 counties
- Region 2 Western NY: 4 counties
- Region 3 Long Island NY: 2 counties
- Region 4 Central NY: 10 counties

The remaining three regions include Capital District, Lower Hudson Valley, and Northern NY.

All counties in these remaining regions are being onboarded this winter and spring under an accelerated schedule. See the Phase 2 Roll-out Map on page 2 of this Newsletter for schedule dates.

Why a 2-Phased Approach

Phase 1 of EDRS implementation was completed at the end of 2017. Phase 1 included natural deaths occurring in a medical facility—about 70% of all NYS-registered death certificates. The remaining 30% of deaths are the scope of Phase 2.

Starting Phase 2 hinged on the addition of new EDRS functionality supporting the work flows of Medical Examiners (MEs), Coroners, and Coroner-designated physicians. The new functionality was added in June 2018, and we went live with new users and types of cases in Region 1 the following weeks. Local Registration Offices that were not included in Phase 1 are also being added to EDRS in Phase 2.

Private Practice Physicians — Call to Action

Some physicians in private practice complete Death Certificates as a benefit to their former patients. If you prepare and Medically Certify Death Certificates, you should contact the NYS EDRS team to start the process of setting up your medical practice in EDRS so that you are ready to prepare them electronically.

Contact EDRS by email: edrs@health.ny.gov, or by phone: EDRS Call Center 844-866-EDRS (3377).

Key Dates

Completed Summer – Fall 2018

- EDRS enhancements for Phase 2 installed
- Regions 1, 2, 3, and 4 Go-Live in EDRS Phase 2
- Fetal Death Module 2nd, 3rd and 4th pilot sites onboarded

Ongoing—Winter and Spring 2018-2019

- Regions 5, 6, and 7 onboarding for EDRS Phase 2
- Live webinar training for EDRS Phase 2; see EDRS website for training schedule: http://www.health.ny.gov/vital_records/edrs

Fast Facts

- 28,000+ EDRS users.
- 70% of all NYS Death Certificates were under the scope of Phase 1 of EDRS, completed at end of 2017.
- 90% of Phase 1 Death Certificates are currently being filed electronically.
- 30% of all NYS Death Certificates are the scope of Phase 2 of EDRS. Phase 2 roll-out began late-June 2018.
- 53% of Phase 2 Death Certificates are currently being filed electronically in Regions 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- 315 Fetal Death Certificates filed electronically in 2018 under the Pilot Program.
Update on the Spontaneous Fetal Death Module

The Pilot Program for New York State’s new Spontaneous Fetal Death Module in EDRS is in full swing. Four medical facilities are participating in the pilot program:

- NYU Winthrop Hospital in Nassau County
- St. Peter’s Hospital in Albany County
- Crouse Hospital in Onondaga County
- Bellevue Woman’s Center in Schenectady County

Funeral firms are using the Fetal Death Module when their disposition services are requested by the mother/parent or by the pilot medical facility.

**Simplified Registration Process for Fetal Death Module**

Local Registrars are not directly involved in the Registration process within the Fetal Death Module.

When disposition by a funeral firm is not requested or required, a Spontaneous Fetal Death case registers automatically upon being **Medically Certified**. The medical provider is then required to print out from EDRS the **Report of Fetal Death**, and deliver it to the Local Registrar.

(Fetal Death Module, continued from previous column)

When a funeral firm is involved in the case, then the case automatically registers when it has been both **Medically Certified and Signed by the Funeral Director**. In these cases the Funeral Director is responsible for printing the **Report of Fetal Death** and delivering it to the Registrar.

**Burial Permit Is On Paper, Not in EDRS**

The Funeral Director must obtain a **Burial Permit on paper directly from the Local Registrar** upon delivering the **Report of Fetal Death** to the Filing Registrar Office.

**Statewide Roll-out Expected in 2019-2020**

Statewide roll-out of the Spontaneous Fetal Death Module is expected to take place in 2019-2020. Further information about the roll-out will be announced on the **EDRS website** and in future editions of the EDRS Newsletter.

For questions about the Fetal Death Module, contact Jen Payeur, NYS Fetal Death program lead. Email: edfr@health.ny.gov / Phone: 844-866-3377.
Medical Practitioners, Medical Examiners/Coroners — Process for Completing Unattended/Home Death Certificates

A death occurring at home is considered an unattended death, unless the decedent was under Hospice care at the time of death. A Medical Examiner or Coroner must pronounce all unattended deaths, although they may not always be the Medical Certifier.

An attended death is when the death occurs while the decedent was under Hospice care or in a medical facility, such as a hospital or nursing home. The medical organization providing the care or treatment pronounces an attended death.

Hospice Deaths—Role of the Hospice Organization

For Hospice care provided at home, the Hospice organization pronounces the death and may prepare and medically certify the Death Certificate. The Hospice organization can create the case in EDRS.

If the decedent’s primary care physician (PCP) released the patient to the full care of the Hospice organization, then the Hospice organization typically takes responsibility for completing the Death Certificate.

If the PCP retained involvement in the patient’s care while Hospice provided some services, then the PCP and Hospice organization may jointly decide that the PCP will medically certify the Death Certificate. In most cases the Hospice organization should still create the case in EDRS and enter the Pronouncement and Place of Death information. Then if the PCP agrees to serve as Medical Certifier, the Hospice organization can share the case electronically using the Request Non-Affiliated Certification feature in EDRS. The PCP will receive a message linking to the case. The PCP will use the Non-Affiliated Certification Request Review feature in EDRS to Accept the request. Although it is acceptable for the PCP to create and own the case entirely in EDRS, it is preferred that the Hospice organization participate in completing the Death Certificate using the process described above.

Unattended Deaths—ME/Coroner Must Be Consulted

For all unattended deaths a Medical Examiner or Coroner must pronounce the death. A PCP intending to complete the death certificate should discuss it with the ME/Coroner to find out if they agree with the PCP certifying and to get the Pronouncement information from them.

(Continued from previous column)

When the ME/Coroner Decides They Do Not Need to Certify the Death Certificate

If death was from natural causes, the ME/Coroner may decide they do not need to Certify the Death Certificate, that the PCP can take full responsibility for completing the Certificate. If the PCP agrees to take responsibility for the Death Certificate, they may create the case in EDRS and enter the Pronouncement and Place of Death information as provided to them by the ME/Coroner. The PCP will then indicate on the Other Factors page that the “Case was referred to Coroner or Medical Examiner.”

Answering this question as “Yes” indicates that the ME/Coroner was consulted on the case. The PCP may leave the ME Case Number field blank if the ME/Coroner decided they do not need to be a Certifier on the Death Certificate.

Which Office Should the PCP Sign Into in EDRS?

When a PCP creates or certifies a Death Certificate for an unattended/home death, the PCP should sign into their private medical practice or Independent Medical Certifier profile ‘office’ in EDRS. The case should not be created while signed in under a medical facility such as a hospital or nursing home when the place of death was not that medical facility.

For help with setting up your medical practice in HCS and EDRS, contact the EDRS team by email. For information about setting up your profile as an Independent Medical Certifier in EDRS, see Creating Your Independent Medical Certifier ‘Office’ in EDRS.

When the ME/Coroner Decides They Do Need to Certify the Death Certificate

If the ME/Coroner determines that they need to Certify the Death Certificate, then they will create and own the case in EDRS. The Medical Examiner or medically licensed Coroner will Medically Certify the case. They may choose to consult with the PCP for information about the decedent’s medical history.

When the Coroner who owns the case does not have a medical license, they will share the case electronically with a physician or other Medical Certifier. If the Medical Certifier is not affiliated with their Coroner office, the Coroner will use the Request Non-Affiliated Certification feature in EDRS to refer the case to the designated Certifier. The Medical Certifier will receive a message in EDRS linking to the case. The Certifier will use the Non-Affiliated Certification Request Review feature in EDRS to Accept the request.
Funeral Directors and Local Registrars — Always Verify the Filing Registrar Office

Now that we are processing non-facility deaths in EDRS, Funeral Directors and Local Registrars must always verify that the case is assigned to the correct Filing Registrar Office based on where the decedent passed.

In Phase 2 of EDRS we are processing non-facility deaths. This means the medical provider, Coroner or Medical Examiner manually enters the address as it is given to them by the informant, decedent’s family, or local law enforcement. The address they have been given may not be specific enough to automatically assign the case to the correct Registrar Office.

Before Signing and Affirming each case, the Funeral Director and the Local Registrar must both review the Place of Death address to determine which Registrar Office the case should be assigned to, and then confirm that the Filing Registrar Office specified on the Disposition page is correct.

Funeral Directors: If the Filing Registrar Office on the Disposition page is blank, you must enter the Office name by beginning to type the name and then select the correct Office in the pop-up list. The District Number will fill in automatically when you select the name of the Registrar Office. If the wrong Registrar Office is specified, first completely delete the incorrect Office name, and then begin typing the name of the correct Office; select the correct Registrar Office in the pop-up list. Validate the page.

Registrars: If you find that the case is not in your jurisdiction after the case is Signed by the Funeral Director and already in your Work Queue, you may edit the Filing Registrar Office on the Disposition page. When you Validate the page, the case will be re-assigned to the Registrar Office you selected. Notify the Funeral Director if you make this change. The newly added Registrar Office will not receive a message; however they can access the case from their Work Queue and by searching for the case.

Does Place of Death City, Town or Village Need to Be Corrected?

The Local Registrar may prefer the locality be corrected only if it is markedly wrong, as long as the case is assigned to the correct Registrar Office. If the locality simply does not indicate if it’s the Town or Village, or if it is the mailing address, then the Local Registrar may prefer to leave as is. If it needs to be changed and the case is not yet Registered, ask the Medical Certifier to Uncertify and make the edit. Alternatively, a Correction can be submitted after the case has been Registered.

Coroners, Medical Examiners, and Medical Certifiers—Relinquish Case Removes You from the Case

Some medical owners of a case have been using Relinquish Case when attempting to make the case available to a Non-Affiliated Medical Certifier or Funeral Director. This is not the correct use of Relinquish Case.

You should not Relinquish Case if you or someone in your office/facility needs to be a Certifier on the Death Certificate. Relinquish Case eliminates your ownership on the case, removes you as a Certifier and locks out all other users in your office/facility. If you have issued a Request for Non-Affiliated Certification, that Certifier can no longer access the case, either.

When Is It Appropriate to Use Relinquish Case?

- A case is owned by the wrong office/facility. Using Relinquish Case makes the case available for the correct office to search for and take ownership of the case. EDRS manages case access at the office level, so this limits case access to only those who work in the appropriate office/facility. NOTE: This is the only scenario under which a medical practitioner or funeral firm should use Relinquish Case.

- A Coroner or Medical Examiner decides they do not need to Certify a case which they currently own. If the Coroner/ME decides that the case can be owned by Primary Care Physician or medical facility where the decedent was receiving care, then the Coroner/ME can Relinquish Case to remove themself and their office from the case, making it available for the desired office/facility to search for and claim ownership of the case. NOTE: This is the only scenario under which a Coroner or ME should use Relinquish Case.

Medical Providers and Funeral Directors — Restrictions Removed for Infant Decedent Name

When an infant death occurs, EDRS originally had a Validation rule that required the infant to be named other than Baby or Infant Girl or Boy, etc. That Validation rule has been removed from EDRS.

If the parents do not wish to name their deceased infant, they do not need to. You may enter the name or a description as the family wishes it to appear on the Death Certificate. However, the name on the Death Certificate should match the name given on the Birth Certificate.
Medical Certifiers — 72 Hours to Register a Death Certificate, Not 72 Hours for You to Certify

Medical Certifiers should not delay in Medically Certifying a Death Certificate in EDRS. New York State Public Health Law requires that all deaths be Registered with the State within 72 hours of the death occurring. For the case to become Registered, it must have all of the following completed within the required 72 hours:

1. Medical information entered and passed validation
2. Medically Certified
3. Personal and disposition information entered and passed validation
4. In some counties Cremation Clearance by the Medical Examiner
5. Signed by the Funeral Director
6. Reviewed by the Local Registrar and any questions addressed
7. Registered and filed by the Local Registrar.

How to Medically Certify the Case

The Certify link in an EDRS case appears on the Death Registration Menu after the case status is Medical Valid or Medical Valid with Exceptions. Only Medical Certifiers can see the Certify link — other medical staff cannot. If the Certify link does not appear, then either some data is missing, or the medical pages contain a Validation error message that has not been addressed.

If you are having difficulty getting the Certify link to become available, or if you are unsure of what steps to take to Certify a Death Certificate, please contact the EDRS Call Center for help: 1-844-866-EDRS (3377).

Non-Medically Licensed Coroners and Coroner-Designated Physicians — Certifier Type Field

EDRS cases owned by a non-medically licensed Coroner require two Certifiers; the Coroner, who Coroner Certifies the case, and the Medical Certifier. The Certifier page in the case has a field at the top for specifying the type of Certifier. This field only pertains to the Coroner, who is identified immediately below the Certifier Type field. It does not pertain to the Medical Certifier who is identified lower on the page as Coroner's Physician. The Certifier Type from the top of the page prints in item 25A on the Death Certificate.

When the case is owned by a non-medically licensed Coroner, the Certifier Type should always be Coroner. The Medical Certifier’s information lower on the page, does not have a corresponding Certifier Type field.

HCS Coordinators at Medical Facilities — Please Keep Current with EDRS User Account Needs and Changes

The HCS Coordinators at Hospitals and Nursing Homes should monitor staffing changes at your facility and adjust EDRS role assignments accordingly. This is necessary to be sure that any new Medical Certifiers and staff have appropriate access to EDRS when they need it, and that an EDRS role is removed when a former staff member leaves their position.

When you have removed former employee’s EDRS role assignment in HCS, please also notify the NYS EDRS team so we can be sure they are also removed from your facility in EDRS: email edrs@health.ny.gov.

To be sure new Medical Certifiers and staff at your facility have the necessary account set-up and access to EDRS training, NYS asks that medical facility administrators, supervisors, and HCS Coordinators make EDRS an ongoing part of your facility’s onboarding and exit/programs for staff and physicians.

Additional Tip: When assigning an EDRS role to a Medical Certifier, be sure to assign them only the one role of EDRS Medical Certifier. If you assign them two roles (Medical Facility User and Medical Certifier), they will not be able to Medically Certify a Death Certificate.

All EDRS Users—Set Printer to “Fit to Page” When Printing Death Certificates

Whenever you print a Death Certificate, please remember to use the setting Fit to Page or Shrink Oversized Pages. This includes Working Copy, Drop to Paper, and Vault Copy, so that the entire form prints out on your printer paper.