



# Matters of Record

News from the Center for Health Statistics Concerning the Oregon Birth Certificate

Fall 2010

## Birth Statistics – How are they collected and what are they used for?

See CHS Annual reports and YTD web tables at: <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/chs/>

Birth certificates are used to establish identity, but they also play a very important role in protecting public health because they are a primary source of health information.

The Center for Health Statistics collects and studies birth information for all births occurring in Oregon. We use this information for developing public health policies at both the State and National level. At the national level, we share Oregon birth data with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), the Nation’s principal health statistics agency. In partnership with NCHS, we collect and analyze data derived from birth statistics. Lawmakers use these statistics to guide their decisions in developing policies and actions meant to improve the health of people in Oregon and throughout the country.

We use health statistics to:

- Document the health status of the population;
- Identify health problems by race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, region, and other population characteristics;
- Find disparities in access to health care;
- Monitor trends in health status and health care delivery;
- Provide information for making changes in public policies and programs; and
- Evaluate the impact of health policies and programs.

We take great care to remove all personally identifiable information

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**Read More - archived articles:**

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/chs/registration/regnewsletters.shtml#offtherecord>



before we compile birth data for statistical analysis. Birth records registered with the Center for Health Statistics are confidential by law and are released only to those people who have demonstrated a legal right to the information. Oregon law guards birth certificate data so strongly that it is not released even if a court issues a subpoena. §



## Registering as a midwife

When the certifier is a midwife, registration may be required with the Center for Health Statistics (CHS).

### **Midwives who need to register would have the following credentials:**

- Direct Entry Midwives (DEM) midwives without a licensure
- Certified Professional Midwives (CPM) midwives with national credentials from an accredited program
- Certified Midwives/Accredited Certified Nurse Midwives (CM/ACNM) midwives who train in a accredited program

### **Midwives who do not need to register are:**

- Licensed Direct Entry Midwives (LDM) from the Oregon Board of Direct Entry Midwifery
- Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM) licensed by the by the Oregon Board of Nursing
- Naturopathic Doctor (ND)
- Chiropractic Doctor (CP)
- Osteopathic Doctor (DO)

The advantage of registering with CHS is your ability to file birth records without any additional documentation. This advantage simplifies the process of registering births. If you do not register with CHS, parents would be required to complete a home birth packet and provide additional documentation. This may slow down the process of acquiring a birth certificate.

There are several other important issues regarding registration of birth certificates by a midwife :

- Midwives must be the attendant at the birth in order to sign the birth certificate.
- Birth certificates must be filed within five days after the birth by the midwife in attendance at the birth referred to on the birth certificate as certifier.
- A title after the name of the certifier is required.

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To register with us, you may call our office and speak with Lynda Jackson, our midwife Office Specialist. Her telephone number is 971-673-1164. Lynda will then follow up with you by sending you a letter that outlines the process in applying to become a registered midwife with CHS. Included with this letter, is the CHS “Midwife Practicing in Oregon” form. You will need to complete the form and send it back to Lynda at the following address.

Department of Human Services  
Center for Health Statistics  
Attn Lynda Jackson  
PO Box 14050  
Portland, Oregon 97293-0050

If your application meets the necessary criteria, you will be sent a Midwife Certificate and a packet. This packet contains instructions, worksheets, and blank forms needed to complete birth certificates.

You must renew your certificate on December 31 of the initial registration year, and annually on December 31 thereafter. One month before your certificate expires, you will receive a letter and a renewal application.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please reference our website or contact Lynda Jackson. <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/chs/registration/whyregister.shtml> §



## Initialing corrections to dates on Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity forms



Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP) forms get rejected if one of the dates by a parent or a witness is changed. A changed date makes the witnessing of the signatures open to legal challenge. However, legal counsel has advised us that if the parent or a witness puts their initials next to the date they have corrected, then the change should be accepted. Based on this legal opinion we are recommending that parents and witnesses make sure all overwritten or crossed out

dates are initialed at the time of signature.

It is not acceptable for a witness to put their initials next to a parent’s correction or for a parent to initial a correction for a witness. At no time should either a parent or a witness enter a date that is not the date they are signing or witnessing a signature. Other minor corrections to the information entered on the AOP form may also be initialed. However, since parents often disagree about a change to the surname (*Continued on page 4*)

of the child, no cross outs or changes to the request for a surname change will be accepted.

By initialing corrections to dates, parents will be able to complete the form without

having to start over. CHS will be able to reject fewer forms and avoid requesting so many replacements. We hope this change will make filing AOP forms easier for witnesses and parents. §

## Accurately reporting 'unknown' values

Don't use dash/hyphen to indicate unknown for missing information.

There will be situations where information requested on the birth record is unknown. Common examples include maiden name of the mother, street designator of the residence address, and date of last normal menses. Before EBRS, a dash or hyphen was commonly used to indicate when information was unknown and not merely missed on the form. EBRS, as part of a larger system, has rules that apply to all fields and can cause problems in our system or systems of other agencies (such as Social Security) if hyphens are used.



Information entered that break these rules can cause problems for the parents and the other agencies. We have had many instances of a Social Security card not being issued for a child because of incorrect punctuation in their name or address. State agencies that access birth certificate data to assist parents with benefits also experience problems accessing records or loading files with unexpected values. In addition, these values often require follow up from our office to confirm that the correct unknown value is appropriate before correction.

To correctly report unknown values, please remember:

- Mailing addresses do not require street number, prefix, or designator. Residence addresses do not require street prefix or designator. It is appropriate to leave these fields blank if there is no applicable information. Please confirm that mail, such as Social Security cards, can be received at the address as shown. Again, don't use hyphens or dashes.

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- Literal fields that require text entries if unknown, should state ‘Unknown’ rather than a dash or being left blank. Examples of this type of field include the birthplace of parents, maiden name of the mother, and relationship of informant.
- Numeric fields generally have unknown values of 99, 999, or 9999, depending on how many characters are expected in the system. Examples of this type of field include mother’s pre-pregnancy weight, baby’s birth weight, and number of cigarettes for tobacco use during pregnancy.

Please remember that if the field allows an unknown value to be entered, but the information is important, our office might still follow up with your facility to try to find the information. In addition, if the number of unknowns reported by your facility is higher than acceptable, follow up will occur.

More details on the appropriate unknown value for each field are available in the instructions, located online at <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/chs/registration/index.shtml> or by contacting our Registration unit. A current contact sheet is included with this newsletter. Names and telephone numbers of staff by section can be found there. §

## Paternity establishments met

**Our thanks to all our partners on helping us meet the state’s goal for paternity establishments on births to unmarried mothers.**

As we frequently mention, paternity establishment is important for the child, the parents, the community, and the state. Our federal funds to help families in need (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF), are tied in part to these goals.

Details will follow in our next newsletter.

We couldn’t do it without you!



## New Spanish Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity form

We would like to make the completion and filing of Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP) forms easier for Spanish speaking parents. To do this we have created a Spanish AOP form that can be witnessed at the hospital and filed. The English titles will insure that an English-speaking partner or witness signs the form correctly.

We plan to ship out a small supply of the Spanish forms to each hospital. To order an additional supply, please fax in an order form and request form 45-31S (see web page at: <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/chs/registration/docs/45-43.pdf>). This is the same form number used formerly for the AOP Spanish instruction sheet. Only a hospital witnessed form is available in Spanish. We are working on a Spanish version of the affidavit AOP (45-21) and hope to have it ready in January. §

## Adoption expected question on the birth certificate

The birth record has a question about whether the parents expect this child to be adopted. We have been asked to explain how this question affects the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity form and the request for a Social Security number. *This information is provided as background information only and should not change how you request information from the informant.* You are not expected to ask the parents about the status of any pending adoption beyond the question on the birth record.

### **Adoption expected and Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP)**

The adoption expected question itself does not affect acceptance of the AOP form. The AOP form may be completed and filed even when the parents plan to give up the child for adoption if they have **not** yet signed a document to relinquish their rights to the child. The AOP form itself states that the AOP form is not valid when a parent has “signed a consent to the adoption of a child.” This is relinquishing the rights to the child. If parents have questions about signing the AOP when an adoption is expected, you can point them to the statement on the form.

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## Adoption expected and Social Security number requested

Records that indicate that an adoption is expected are not included in the birth file sent to Social Security, so answering “yes” to the adoption expected question will prevent the issuance of a Social Security Number (SSN) for the child at that time. It is generally more appropriate for the adoptive parents to request a Social Security Number after the adoption with the new legal names for the child and parents. If an expected adoption does not occur, the biological mother is still eligible to apply for a SSN for her child at a later time. If the mother asks about the SSN, please tell the mother that, although a number will not be issued as part of the enumeration at birth process, she can contact the local Social Security office for more information as needed. §

### Staff turnover? Let us know

Are new staff members joining your team? Are staff members leaving your team? If so, it is important to notify the OVERS team in a timely fashion. It is especially important to end OVERS accounts for former employees because until you do, the former employee will still have access to your facilities’ confidential birth records and could *potentially sign false records*.



When an employee is leaving your facility, you can notify the OVERS team to close the employee’s OVERS account by calling, emailing or faxing the Center for Health Statistics.

When a birth clerk needs access to OVERS, request an OVERS enrollment form from the OVERS team by faxing, emailing, or calling the Center for Health Statistics. You can also obtain an enrollment form from the Center for Health Statistics website: [http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/overs/status.shtml#Accessing\\_OVERS](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/overs/status.shtml#Accessing_OVERS)

**Contacting the Center for Health Statistics** - To contact the OVERS team, you can fax forms to Lynda Jackson at 971.673.1201, or you can email forms and letters to [chs.forms@state.or.us](mailto:chs.forms@state.or.us). You can also call the OVERS helpdesk if you have questions at 971.673.0279. §

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**Thank you** to the editor, reviewers, and writers who contributed to this newsletter:

Judy Shioishi, Karen Hampton, Kerry Lionadh, Carol Sanders, Cynthia Roeser, Lynda Jackson, Kara Rosenthal, and Jennifer Woodward

## Questions or Comments?

JoAnn Jackson  
Registration Manager  
971-673-1160  
[JoAnn.jackson@state.or.us](mailto:JoAnn.jackson@state.or.us)

Judy Shioishi  
Vital Records Field Liaison  
971-673-1166  
[Judy.shioishi@state.or.us](mailto:Judy.shioishi@state.or.us)

## *Call Us*



**Amending a record and  
need to know who to call?**

**Who are the CHS Managers?**

### *Paternities*

Debbie Gott  
971-673-1155

### *Birth Corrections*

<1 year, Amanda Vega  
971-673-1169  
1+year, Johanna Collins  
971-673-1137

### *Death Corrections*

Patty Thompson  
971-673-1163

### *Delayed Filings*

Becki Buskirk  
971-673-1147

### *Filiations*

Tony Bojanowski  
971-673-1143

### *Adoptions*

Debbie Draghia  
971-673-1152

### *OVERS Helpdesk*

971-673-0279

### **State Registrar**

Jennifer Woodward  
971-673-1185

### **Amendments/Certification**

Carol Sanders  
971-673-1178

### **Statistics Manager**

Joyce Grant-Worley  
971-673-1156

### **Registration Manager**

JoAnn Jackson  
971-673-1160

### **OVERS Manager**

Karen Hampton  
971-673-1191

### **Data Processing Supervisor**

Cynthia Roeser  
971-673-0478

### **Certification Supervisor**

Karen Rangan  
971-673-1182

## *Find Us*



**The Center for Health Statistics Offices  
are located at:**

800 N.E. Oregon St., Suite 225  
Portland, OR 97232-1201

**Mailing Address:**

P.O. Box 14050  
Portland, OR 97293-0050

Find Information regarding birth, death,  
marriage and divorce on our website at:

[http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph//chs/  
index.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph//chs/index.shtml)

- **How to Order Records**
- **Amendment Records**
- **Registration of Records**

Find Information regarding the OVERS system  
(Oregon Vital Events Registration System) at:

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/overs/>