

Frequently asked questions

Why do I receive amendment requests from both Cynthia and Amanda?

Our office receives notice of needed corrections in two different ways. The more frequent way is from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), and less frequently from our own statistical unit. Cynthia sends these corrections that are usually about the public health data on the birth certificate including prenatal care visits, last date of menses, and other items. These items are included in the emailed Excel report of potential errors.

We are also contacted by parents who have found an error after buying a certified copy of the birth certificate. These relate only to the legal portion of the birth certificate such as names and dates of birth. Amanda Vega or Johanna Collins will likely contact you when these issues arise to determine if an error occurred at the facility or if the parent must document the correction directly.

Some of the records are more than one year old. Why wasn't I contacted sooner?

The manual process of both finding records that require corrections and creating reports to send to the hospitals have caused delays in the past. Also, some of our data editing processes occurred only once a year, when the data file is almost complete. This meant contact was made long after the birth certificate was registered, sometimes as much as two years. While this might still occur occasionally, our new process should help us contact facilities sooner.

I cannot get into one of the records on my report. What am I supposed to do now?

Sometimes records are amended in a way that makes the original record ‘sealed’. If you need to review a record you cannot open in OVERS, please contact Cynthia Roeser directly. CHS will review the information with you and, if a correction is needed, arrange for a faxed affidavit to be used to correct the information.

I fixed this error a few days ago and it is still on my report. Why is that?

The reports occur on a cycle. Records that have been registered in the past seven days and records that have been corrected are sent to NCHS every Wednesday. NCHS then processes the records within a few days and sends a report to CHS. The NCHS reports are added to the program that creates the hospital reports every two weeks. As you can see, there is the possibility for overlap in these time periods. If you corrected the record after CHS sent a file to NCHS, the correction will not be processed until the following week.

If you see a record on your report that you think you've already amended, please check that the amendment was certified (not just keyed) and accepted. If the amendment was certified, wait until the following report to see if the record clears. If the record still appears at that time, contact Cynthia Roeser for information on the specific record.

The information is correct so I am adding a comment. What does the comment need to include?

Comments entered in response to a potential error should specifically mention the error noted, and what action was taken to confirm the information. For example, 'Date of last menses – mother reports menses until fourth month of pregnancy; data confirmed' would be a sufficient comment. 'All information okay' is not a sufficient comment. Do not enter a comment that the information is incorrect; simply correct the information in the record.

State registration staff review the comments and, if the comment explains the potential error, will mark the record to be bypassed (not included) in future reports.

Why does each birth clerk receive a separate report?

Each birth clerk receives a separate report for two reasons. First, the birth clerk who originally entered the information is most likely to recognize any data entry errors based on the worksheets or medical records. Second, correcting errors

provides the best opportunity to ask questions and build an understanding of the content and process for the birth certificate. If every birth clerk understands the birth certificate information, we will receive better information in the original records and have fewer records to report back as potential errors.

Facilities can manage the work as they choose by allowing each to correct their own errors (if available) or having a single birth clerk correct all errors. We would prefer to have each birth clerk correct their own errors for the reasons stated above.

What does the facility do if staff are on vacation or work infrequently?

Some facilities have staff that work *on call*. All facilities are likely to have staff out for an extended period due to vacation, medical need, or any other reason the facility approves. In these situations, the facility will need to have staff cover the birth clerk's email and correct the errors in the report, or have staff check their email no less frequently than every two weeks and correct any records on their list.

The system already redirects the report for birth clerks that have been end-dated in the system. This would occur if a birth clerk left the facility or was moved to other job duties.

What is secure email? How do I open the attachment?

Email sends messages across the internet and, like all unsecured transmissions, someone could grab the message during transmission and use the information. Secure email has a special feature that recognizes that the message was delivered to the person intended. We are using secure email as part of a statewide movement to protect highly confidential information, such as birth certificate data.

Facsimile (fax) transmissions are also electronic and have the same risks as non-secure email. CHS does not have an inexpensive method to create secure fax transmissions. Therefore, we will minimize the use of that method by only using fax transmission in situations where no other method is reasonably available.

Information on what a secure email looks like and how to open the attachment is available at ([link](#)).

How does this reporting method save time?

For hospital and freestanding birthing facilities, under the old method birth clerks would be contacted multiple times on the same record: when there were questions from the National Center for Health Statistics, when we had questions on tobacco use, when we had questions on mother's weight gain, when we had questions on number of prenatal visits, when we had questions on baby's birth weight, etc.. We often contacted the hospital separately by each topic. Under the new method, we should contact the facility no more than twice on a record (if appropriate corrections are made).

Also under the old method, we contacted the facility and requested an immediate response. Whether due to different work schedules, telephone tag or misplaced faxes, a lot of time was wasted in ineffective communication. Now the report is reliably delivered and accessible when the birth clerk is ready.

For CHS, time is saved because the production of the report is automated. Under the old method, our staff visually reviewed the NCHS report; opened each record to determine the facility; typed the information from the NCHS report to a template; manually faxed the corrections to the hospital. Then the birth clerk opened each record; determined what needed to be done; hand-entered the required information on the faxed report; sent the fax back to CHS. Then CHS staff again opened the record (third time someone was in the record); keyed the required change; and approved the amendment. With the new method the information is keyed once, preferably by the original birth clerk. The amendment appears in a work queue and is approved.

What resources are available to help understand the report and correct records?

As a new process, we want to support your use of the report. The following resources are available to help in the transition:

- How to read the report (<http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates/RegisterVitalRecords/Documents/Birth/error-report-instructions.pdf>): Download a description of the new report from our web site at the link above. The description will explain how to interpret the report findings in instances where:
 - several reported items refer to the same potential error on a birth certificate, or;
 - Several errors are listed for one birth certificate as separate items on the report.
- Opening a secure email & the attached report plus Basic Excel training (<http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates/RegisterVitalRecords/Documents/Birth/secure-email-excel-instructions.pdf>): Download a short user guide from our web site at the link above to learn how to open our secure email and manage the attached report (formatted as an Excel document) for efficient tracking of your work. The user guide covers:
 - How to access secure email. (Secure email looks a little different from a typical email and is retrieved through a browser instead of directly from your email program.)
 - Basic Excel review such as how to change column widths, hide or unhide rows, format for printing, and mark the Excel file (fill cells or strike-through) for easy tracking of activities.
- Staff (<http://public.health.oregon.gov/PHD/Directory/Pages/program.aspx?pid=101>): Staff are always available to help you understand the process, advise you on a particular situation, and guide you through the amendment process. Contact the specific person listed on the web page at the link above, or call the OVERS help desk (971-673-0279) for help in finding the best resource.