



Cherry Blossoms at Arlington National Cemetery, by Narith5, <https://flic.kr/p/dyBGY>

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

Issue: March 2015

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Archived articles online

OVERS use statewide – an update

Our last article on OVERS use for death records was in 2013. Since then several things have happened to improve the use of OVERS. Our Vital Records Modernization bill (House Bill 2093) went into effect January 1, 2014. The new law requires all hospitals with more than ten deaths in a year to require medical certifiers to use OVERS. The Center for Health Statistics received additional funds through a (2013-2015) contract with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics to increase use of OVERS for medical certification and improve the timeliness of death records overall.

Our current milestones are to register 65 percent of death records within five days of the date of death (which is the law) and to have 65 percent of death records entirely entered in OVERS.

So how are we doing?

Use of OVERS - As of December 2014, 30.9 percent of death records are certified in OVERS. While far below our goal of 65 percent, it is a significant improvement since January 2014 (23%). In 2010, only 14.5 percent of the death records were fully electronic.

Many counties with smaller populations have used the system fully. Grant and Harney counties have 100 percent of death records electronic. Lake, Tillamook and Clatsop are each above our current goal of 65 percent. This allows families to receive certified copies more quickly.

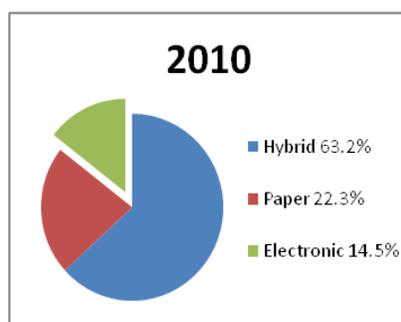
Funeral home use – Funeral homes started 93 percent of death records in OVERS. Fully paper records have declined

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OVERS use statewide - an update (Continued from page 1)

to less than 7 percent. Only seven funeral homes used paper exclusively with most having three or fewer records submitted for December deaths. Only 17 funeral directors did not use OVERS for any records, while the large majority (218 or 81%) used OVERS for every record and another 33 funeral directors split between OVERS and paper.

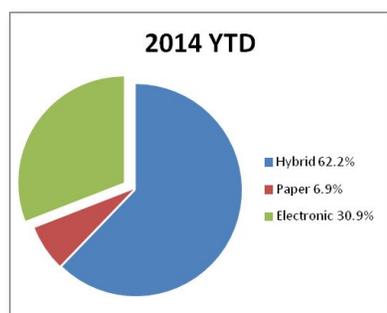


Medical Examiner use – Medical Examiners are our most active users. Twenty-one counties had more than 90 percent of ME records certified in OVERS during 2014. Statewide, 88 percent of December death records certified by a ME were fully electronic.

Medical Certifier use – During 2013, 327 medical certifiers used OVERS to certify non-ME records. During 2014, 943 medical certifiers have used OVERS to certify non-ME records.

Doctors certified 24 percent of their death records electronically.

Nurse practitioners and physician assistants certified 35 percent and 34 percent of their death records electronically.



Hospital use – Some facilities immediately switched to using OVERS (example – OHSU), some broadened their current use from hospitalists to certifiers of all deaths (Sacred Heart –RiverBend), and many have not yet implemented use of OVERS. Please

see the attached table for information on use of OVERS by each facility for deaths occurring between October and December 2014. As we had hoped, use in other care settings (nursing homes, assisted living facilities) has also increased as medical certifiers become more familiar with the system.

Within five days – For deaths occurring in December, only 6 percent were filed within five days of the death. Records available to issue within five days were likely to be electronic:

- 96 percent of Medical Examiner records available within five days of death were electronic.
- 43 percent of the non-Medical Examiner records available within five days of death were electronic.

Next steps

The Center for Health Statistics met with Public Health Division's policy team in early February to determine more effective methods to encourage hospitals to comply with the law.

We plan to develop new marketing tools and a report for each hospital on use of OVERS and timeliness of records.

What can you do to help?

Take a look at the table below to see what percentage of death records are fully electronic for the hospitals in your county. If the death occurred in a hospital that is actively using OVERS, then submit the death certificate to the certifier electronically. Don't drop it to paper. If the hospital is not active in OVERS, let the medical certifier know they need to get on OVERS and let them know that there is a lot of information on OVERS at <http://healthoregon.org/overs> ❖

County and Facility where death occurred; non-ME records only		Electronic		Hybrid/Paper	
		Count	%	Count	%
Baker	St. Alphonsus Medical Center - Baker City, Inc.	10	43.5%	13	56.5%
Benton	Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center	80	40.6%	117	59.4%
Clackamas	Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center	95	26.4%	265	73.6%
	Legacy Meridian Park Hospital	46	42.2%	63	57.8%
	Legacy Meridian Park Medical Center	44	53.7%	38	46.3%
	Providence Milwaukie Hospital	11	19.6%	45	80.4%
	Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center	16	18.2%	72	81.8%
Clatsop	Columbia Memorial Hospital	6	15.0%	34	85.0%
	Providence Seaside Hospital	19	65.5%	10	34.5%
Coos	Bay Area Hospital	1	.5%	182	99.5%
	Coquille Valley Hospital	0	0.0%	40	100.0%
	Southern Coos Hospital & Health Center	12	63.2%	7	36.8%
Crook	Pioneer Memorial Hospital (Prineville)	0	0.0%	17	100.0%
Curry	Curry General Hospital	1	3.4%	28	96.6%
Deschutes	St. Charles Medical Center - Bend	16	5.9%	256	94.1%
	St. Charles Medical Center - Redmond	4	7.8%	47	92.2%
Douglas	Lower Umpqua Hospital District	15	75.0%	5	20.0%
	Mercy Medical Center	43	19.0%	183	81.0%
	VA Roseburg Healthcare System	0	0.0%	42	100.0%
Grant	Blue Mountain Hospital	2	50.0%	2	50.0%
Harney	Harney District Hospital	15	100.0%	0	0.0%
Hood River	Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital	0	0.0%	26	100.0%
Jackson	Asante Ashland Community Hospital	0	0.0%	22	100.0%
	Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center	87	18.9%	375	81.1%
	Providence Medford Medical Center	35	20.0%	140	80.0%
Jefferson	St Charles - Madras	19	73.1%	7	26.9%
Josephine	Asante Three Rivers Medical Center	19	10.4%	164	89.6%
Klamath	Sky Lakes Medical Center	72	38.3%	116	61.7%
Lake	Lake District Hospital	25	100.0%	0	0.0%
Lane	McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center	1	.7%	137	99.3%
	Peace Harbor Medical Center	40	97.6%	1	2.4%
	PeaceHealth - University District	1	100.0%	0	0.0%
	PeaceHealth Cottage Grove Community Hospital	0	0.0%	13	100.0%
	Sacred Heart Medical Center	49	63.6%	28	36.4%
	Sacred Heart Medical Center - RiverBend	629	76.6%	192	23.4%
Lincoln	Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital	9	30.0%	21	70.0%
	Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital	9	20.5%	35	79.5%
Linn	Samaritan Albany General Hospital	30	38.5%	48	61.5%
	Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital	7	21.2%	26	78.8%
Malheur	St. Alphonsus Medical Center - Ontario, Inc.	14	29.8%	33	70.2%

County and Facility where death occurred; non-ME records only		Electronic		Hybrid/Paper	
		Count	%	Count	%
Marion	<i>Oregon State Hospital-Salem - use not required</i>	0	0.0%	4	100.0%
	Salem Hospital - piloting January 2015	13	1.9%	668	98.1%
	Santiam Memorial Hospital	2	8.0%	23	92.0%
	Silverton Hospital	1	3.7%	26	96.3%
Morrow	Pioneer Memorial Hospital (Heppner)	0	0.0%	5	100.0%
Multnomah	Adventist Medical Center	203	54.1%	172	45.9%
	Doernbecher Children's Hospital	24	100.0%	0	0.0%
	Legacy Emanuel Medical Center	150	56.4%	116	43.6%
	Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center	110	67.5%	53	32.5%
	Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center	105	70.5%	44	29.5%
	OHSU Hospitals and Clinics	508	94.4%	30	5.6%
	Portland VA Medical Center	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
	Providence Portland Medical Center	102	20.4%	399	79.6%
	Randall Children's Hospital of Legacy Emanuel	4	25.0%	12	75.0%
	Vibra Specialty Hospital Of Portland	0	0.0%	39	
Polk	<i>West Valley Hospital - use not required</i>	0	0.0%	7	100.0%
Tillamook	Tillamook Regional Medical Center	25	56.8%	19	43.2%
Umatilla	Good Shepherd Medical Center	9	45.0%	11	55.0%
	St. Anthony Hospital	10	38.5%	16	61.5%
Union	Grande Ronde Hospital	4	12.5%	28	87.5%
Wallowa	Wallowa Memorial Hospital	1	3.3%	29	96.7%
Wasco	Mid-Columbia Medical Center	25	47.2%	28	52.8%
Washington	Kaiser Foundation Hospital - Westside	53	43.8%	68	56.2%
	Providence St. Vincent Medical Center	153	22.3%	532	77.7%
	Tuality Community Hospital	84	59.6%	57	40.4%
	<i>Tuality Forest Grove Hospital - use not required</i>	0	0.0%	4	100.0%
Yamhill	Providence Newberg Medical Center	23	47.9%	25	52.1%
	Willamette Valley Medical Center	23	23.7%	74	76.3%

*Salem Hospital piloted OVERS in January and is implementing throughout the facility.

** West Valley Hospital is associated with Salem Hospital and by the facility's choice, will be using OVERS.

Alias names on death certificates

Procedures for including certain names on death certificates in other countries vary from those in Oregon. Some countries require the **birth** name to be the name on the death certificate rather than the **legal** name as in Oregon.



These countries require the birth name on the death certificate to settle estate issues. To accommodate these international differences, it is possible to input the birth

name on the death certificate in OVERS using the *alias name* feature. The registrant's name will still be the legal name on record, but this allows for the birth name to be included on the record as well.

In order to input the birth name in OVERS, on the Decedent page click on the *Add/Edit Alias Names* link, then click on the *New Alias* button. Simply key in the birth name and hit the save button. ❖

Amending name of funeral home

Occasionally, the name of the funeral home appearing on a death record needs to be changed due to clerical error or the family requested a change. There are a few things to remember when amending the funeral home name:

- This amendment changes the legal relationship of the two funeral homes; therefore only the person who has signed the death certificate can sign the amendment of the funeral home name.
- County offices can only amend the funeral home name and address at the initial registration before the first certified copies are issued.
- The amendment requires a paper affidavit to be submitted with the paper death record. The record will need to have a footnote documenting the change.
- The funeral director who signed the record is responsible for the record. The funeral director's name **cannot** be amended.
- A funeral director from the proposed new funeral home cannot request the change because he/she has no legal

authority for the record prior to the amendment.

- The original funeral home does not have the right to transfer its obligations, including accuracy of data, storage of business records, and payment of the \$20 filing fee without the consent of the new funeral home.
- The funeral director should only request this amendment with the consent of both funeral homes.
- Certified copies can only be ordered by the new funeral home. The funeral home removed from the record cannot order records or pay for certified copies because they no longer have any authority for the record.

Requests to amend the funeral home after the record is registered, even when the original is still at the county office, should be referred to Patty Thompson, Amendment Specialist. She can be contacted by email Patricia.A.Thompson@state.or.us or telephone at 971-673-1163. Patty is the best resource for questions on amending personal information on death records. ❖

Veterans' Combat Status Reporting

The Center for Health Statistics (CHS) began collecting Veteran's combat status and combat zone information on death certificates in 2012 as required by law. CHS staff analyzed the data and noticed a high percentage of "unknown" or missing responses on the veteran combat status question over the past three years. After three years of newsletters and bulk notifications; the number of unknowns continues to be so high that we are not able to provide accurate statistics about veteran's deaths related to combat status. At least 19 funeral homes have an average of unanswered questions on combat above 60 percent. You can help improve the responses to the combat status question by taking the following actions:

- Review the death certificate worksheet that you use to gather information from an informant to make sure the two questions on veterans' combat status and combat zones are being asked.
- Train and remind funeral home staff to

ask the veterans' combat status and combat zone questions for all decedents who were veterans.

- Review the veteran documents provided by the family to request for Veteran's Affairs benefits.
- Talk with funeral homes with good reporting percentages to get tips to improve reporting (see table below).

Funeral homes with room for improvement will receive letters with information on their percentage of veterans with unknown or missing answers to the combat status and combat zone questions, as well as additional tips on how to improve future reporting.

Good reporting with a low percentage of veterans with unknown or missing combat status is possible. The following table lists the 18 Oregon funeral homes that have done an outstanding job collecting the veteran-related information. Keep up the great work!



Funeral homes that have done a great job collecting veteran combat status	Veteran deaths (2014)	Percent veterans combat status completed without unknown or missing responses
Donelson Funeral Chapel & Cremation Services	49	100.0%
Grants Pass Funeral Alternatives	31	100.0%
Hillside Chapel	37	100.0%
Illinois Valley Funeral Directors	38	100.0%
Mt. Scott Funeral Home	73	100.0%
North Bend Chapel Cremation & Funeral Service	32	96.9%
Major Family Funeral Home	63	96.8%
Riverview Abbey Funeral Home	62	96.8%
Burns's Riverside Chapel Florence Funeral Home	90	96.7%
McHenry Funeral Home, Inc.	91	96.7%
Taylor's Family Mortuary	113	96.5%
Farnstrom Mortuary	26	96.2%
Holman-Hankins-Bowker & Waud Funeral Service	53	96.2%
Macy & Son Funeral Directors	99	96.0%
Autumn Funerals, Redmond	70	95.7%
Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel	68	95.6%
Hull & Hull Funeral Directors	135	95.6%
Nelson's Bay Area Mortuary	42	95.2%

Spell it out and be aware of typos!

Spell out the full title for the country of death - United States. Do not abbreviate by using USA or US. Be aware of typos, such as spelling **Untied** instead of **United**.

Another issue is country versus county. For example, typing in United States in County

of Death instead of Multnomah. Typos, use of abbreviations and other non-standard names causes delays in the registration of records, as staff has to stop and manually handle those records and make corrections.



Main Order Processing Life Events Queues Accounting Reports Forms Jobs Table Maintenance Help

The State of Oregon - Oregon Health Authority
OVERS TEST

4389643 :John Doe MAR-03-2015
/New Event/New Event/Not Registered/NA/NA/NA

Place Of Death

Type of place of death Other Other Specify Roadway

Facility Name

Address

Street Number	Pre Directional	Street Name or PO Box, Rural Route, etc.	Street Designator	Post Directional	Apt #, Suite #, etc
123	SW	Someplace	Road		
City or Town	County	State	Country	Zip Code	
Portland	Multnomah	Oregon	United States	97239	

Medical Record Number

Validate Page Next Clear Save Return

Please note that the newest version of OVERS contains predictive spelling similar to what you will find on current smart phones.

Final Dispositions made simple

Here are some quick tips to help guide you through some of our frequently asked questions regarding the disposition approval process:

When completing a Hybrid or dropped to paper record

A death certificate that is filled out by the funeral director within OVERS, then dropped to paper for the doctor to complete the medical portion manually, is considered a Hybrid/dropped to paper record.

The funeral director will complete the record of death within OVERS until it reaches a point where its status is “Personal Valid” or “Personal Valid with Exceptions”. The status of a record of death can be seen in OVERS within the status bar itself, which is located just under the decedent’s name and case ID number that display prominently on each page of the record.

Once the record reaches one of these two Statuses, the Funeral Director will need to select the Disposition Approval link from the Other Links section located within the record of death. From the Disposition Approval page, select the check box next to Alternative Authorization for Disposition. Then, either use the lookup to search for a certifier, or type in the name of the Medical Certifier contacted for disposition approval. Lastly, enter the date and time the certifier was contacted and select save. Once this is done, you are ready to print out the disposition form. To print your disposition form, simply select the Print Forms item from the Other Links section in the record of death, then select to print the disposition form.

When completing a fully electronic certificate

A fully electronic certificate is one that is

completed within the OVERS system by both the funeral home and the doctor. For a fully electronic record, you can complete the Alternative Authorization of Final Disposition or a Final Disposition.

1. ***Alternative Authorization Steps for Fully Electronic Records***

If you would like to print an Alternative Authorization for Final Disposition, you will follow the exact same process as you did for the Hybrid certificates listed above.

Make sure you complete the disposition information BEFORE you send the record to the Medical Certifier electronically. If you miss this step, the system will assume you want to complete a Final Disposition for the death record instead, and remove your ability to complete an Alternative Authorization.

If you miss this step then you can either use the blank fillable signs the record disposition form (follow the steps listed above for Fully Paper records), or you can follow the steps below to print a Final Disposition.

2. ***Final Disposition Steps for Fully Electronic Records***

If you would like to print a Final Disposition, you will simply need to wait until the medical certifier signs the record of death within OVERS.

At this point, select the Disposition Approval link from the Other Links section located within the record of death. From the Disposition Approval page, select the checkbox next to the Final Disposition and select Save.

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Final Dispositions made simple (Continued from page 8)

To print your disposition form, simply select the Print Forms item from the Other Links section in the record of death, then select to print the disposition form.

Remember that you are always able to

access a disposition permit from the main menu by selecting Forms>Print Forms >Final Disposition.

For questions in regards to use of disposition forms in OVERS, contact the OVERS Help Desk at 971-673-0279. ❖

The screenshot shows the 'OVERS TEST' interface for 'John Doe' on 'MAR-05-2015'. The 'Disposition Approval' section is active, displaying a 'Save button is disabled until an affirmation is checked and physician contacted and date contacted are populated.' There are checkboxes for 'Authorization For Final Disposition' (unchecked) and 'Alternative Authorization for Final Disposition' (checked). The 'Physician' section includes a 'Lookup' field with 'Medical Doctor Certifier' and a search icon. Below are input fields for 'First' (Medical), 'Middle' (Doctor), and 'Last' (Certifier). There are also fields for 'Date Contacted' (MAR-05-2015), 'Time Contacted' (9:45 AM), and 'Date of disposition'. A dropdown menu for time is open, showing options for AM, PM, and Military. At the bottom right are 'Clear', 'Save', and 'Return' buttons.

Training Coordinator Oregon Vital Events Registration System (OVERS), Kerry Lionadh leaving for new opportunity

The Center for Health Statistics has been fortunate to have Kerry Lionadh provide technical user support and coordinated training for the Oregon Vital Events Registration System (OVERS) and other Vital Record functionality since November of 2007. In her tenure with the Center for Health Statistics, Kerry also helped manage external communications with you, our partners in Vital Records processing.



We have enjoyed working with Kerry and wish her well in her new opportunity. Our staff will continue following and improving as needed, the training and communication processes Kerry helped us build!

Our OVERS Help Desk is available to answer questions, Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, at **971-673-0279**. You can also find more information on OVERS training by visiting our training website at: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates/RegisterVitalRecords/overs/Pages/GetTraining.aspx> ❖

Wanted—Newsletter topics

Have a question or idea for a future newsletter article? Contact Judy Shioishi, at 971-673-1166 or judy.shioishi@state.or.us. Judy collects ideas for articles and then shares them with the writing team.

Thank you to the contributors of this newsletter:

Carolyn Hogg, Joyce Grant-Worley, Karen Hampton, Carlos Herrera, Patty Thompson, Carol Sanders, Kelly Stacey, Jamie Gould, Melissa Alarcon Evans, Juana Anguiano Rivera, Dani Hall, Ember Talent, Vivian Siu, James Burke, Lynda Jackson, and Jennifer Woodward.

We're just a phone call away

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OVERS website: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates/RegisterVitalRecords/overs/Pages/index.aspx>

