

# **Death Registration**



**VSU Regional Conference 2014**  
**By Mike McNutt**

# **Death Registration**

- \* **Delayed Registration**
- \* **Fetal Death Registration**
- \* **Green Burial Registration**
- \* **Electronic Death Registration**

# Delayed Registration



- \* To file a record of a death that occurred in this state but was not registered within one year of the date of death, a person shall submit a record of the death to the county probate court in the county in which the death occurred.

HSC 193.007(b)

# Fetal Death Registration

- \* A certificate of fetal death shall be filed for any fetus weighing 350 grams or more, or if the weight is unknown, a fetus aged 20 weeks or more as calculated from the start date of the last normal menstrual period to the date of delivery.

TAC 181.7(a)

A Certificate of fetal death (stillbirth) shall be filed with the local registrar within 5 days after the date of fetal death (stillbirth).

TAC 181.7(b)(2)

# Which Certificate Do I File?

Did the Baby Have a Pulse, a Breath?

**NO**, then was the fetus 350 grams or more?

**YES**, then file a Birth Certificate & a Death Certificate

**NO**, Fetal Death Certificate not needed but can be filed with 2 signed approvals

**YES**, then file a Fetal Death Certificate only (VS-113).

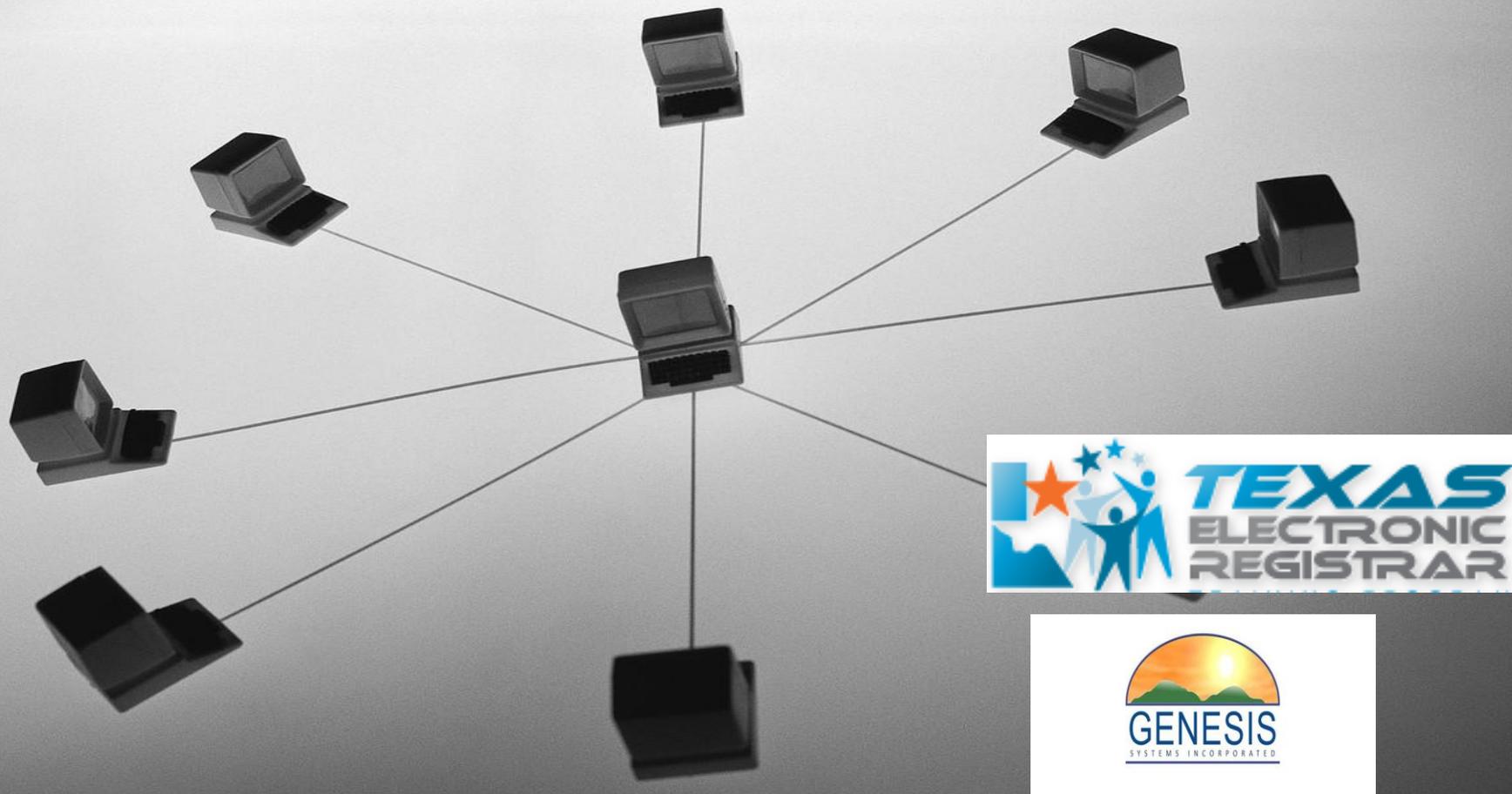
# **COMMONLY SEEN FETAL DEATH** **REGISTRATION MISTAKES**

- \* Not getting parents correct information
- \* Date of Event not correct
- \* Mother's correct maiden name  
which is important in order to find records.

Do not assume parents know accurate information for these matters.

# Green Burial Registration





## Electronic Death Registration

- Promoted improve data quality, timeliness and real-time linkage capabilities
- Recommended by partnership between NCHS, NAPHSIS, and the SSA

# Texas Electronic Registrar (TER)

\* The person in charge of interment or in charge of removal of a body from a registration district for disposition shall:

- 1) Obtain and file the death certificate
- 2) Enter on the certificate the information relating to disposition of the body:
- 3) Sign the certificate; and
- 4) File the certificate electronically as specified by the State Registrar**

# Texas Electronic Registrar (TER)

- \* The person completing the medical certification shall submit the information and attest to its validity using an electronic process approved by the state registrar.

HSC 193.005 (h)

- \* The State Registrar shall prepare and issue detailed instructions necessary for the uniform observance of this title and the maintenance of a perfect system of registration.

HSC 191.004 (b)

# Cooperative Effort



Death registration requires a cooperative effort between:

- The Funeral Director
- Certifier of the cause of death
- Local Registrar

# Who drives the bus?



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# Funeral Director Responsibilities

- \* The Funeral Director, or person acting as such, who assumes custody of a dead body or fetus shall obtain an electronically filed report of death through a Vital Statistics Unit system or complete a report of death before transporting the body.

TAC 181.2 (a)

- \* The person required to file a death certificate shall obtain the required personal information from a competent person with knowledge of the facts.

HSC 193.004 (a)

# More Funeral Director Responsibilities

- \* Assign a Medical Certifier
- \* Demographically certify the record
- \* Designate the record to the Local Registrar based upon the place of death

# Conflicting Information



Two parties may disagree on who the surviving spouse should be. How should this be handled? Document & let the courts figure it out.

# Medical Certifiers

May Include:

## Physicians

- Primary Care Physicians
- ER Doctors
- Hospice Doctors
- VA Doctors
- Other specialties

## Medical Examiners

- 12 ME's offices in TX

## Justices of the Peace



# Medical Certifiers

## Physicians

## Medical Examiners & Justices of the Peace

Can certify natural deaths in persons above six years of age

Must certify any death occurring by any means other than natural causes

# Medical Certifiers Responsibilities

- \* Complete Medical Tabs 1, 2 & 3
- \* Save & Certify the record. Complete by using your unique PIN #
- \* Complete Medical Amendments as needed

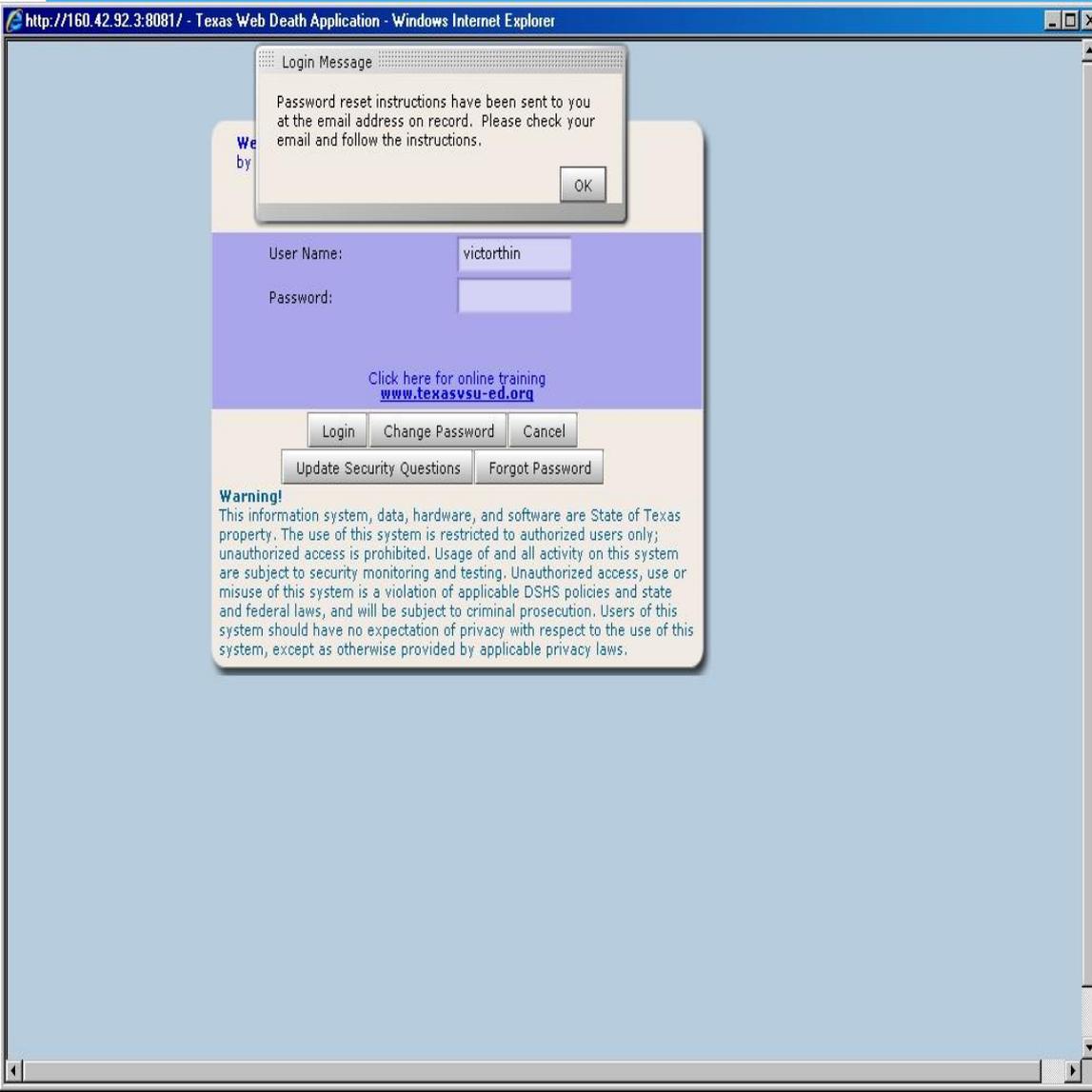
# Time Requirements

\*5 Days – The Medical Certifier must complete the medical certification within 5 days after being designated.

HSC 193.005 (b)

# Forgot Password Feature

- If you do not receive the email instructions, contact your TER Local Administrator to verify that your email address is correct in the TER system.



## Step 1:

Click the **Forgot Password** button on the TER login screen. You will receive an email from [help-ter@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:help-ter@dshs.state.tx.us)

## Step 2:

Answer and choose your two security questions. Click “get password.”

## Step 3:

You will receive another email with your new password.

## Step 4:

Click “change password” on login screen to immediately change your temporary password.



Then you can continue with the log in process.

# Hardest Part is.....

- Select Functions - Medical Data Entry
- Click the Drop Down Box under Select Filter Option –  
Click on All Unresolved
- To the Right of Select Filter Option, you will find an Empty Drop Down Box
- Click the Down arrow & you will find all the Decedent's Names assigned to your location. Select your Decedent's name.

The screenshot displays the Texas Web Death Application interface within a Windows Internet Explorer browser window. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <https://w2.dhs.state.tx.us/tda3/ThinClient/Death/Client/0.cogn/medDataForm.do?formId=1>. The application title is "Texas Web Death Application - Windows Internet Explorer".

The application interface includes a menu bar with "Functions", "Registration", "Utilities", "Window", and "Help". Below the menu bar, there is a "Select Filter Option" dropdown menu currently set to "All Unresolved". To the right of this dropdown is an empty dropdown box. Below these elements are tabs for "Demographic 1", "Demographic 2", "Demographic 3", "Medical 2", and "Medical 3".

The main form area is titled "General Information" and contains several sections:

- General Information:** Fields for Medrec, MECase Number, First Name, Middle Name, Last Name, Suffix, Sex, EDR No., SSN, and Date of Birth (MM-DD-YYYY).
- 2. Actual or Presumed Date of Death - Date of Death Type (MM-DD-YYYY):** A dropdown menu.
- Place of Death:** Fields for Type of Place of Death, Enter first character, Place of Death, Street Address, State/Country, Country, City/Town, and Zip.
- 27. - 29. & 31. - 32. Certifier:** Fields for Certifier Type, Certifier Office, Medical Certifier, Address, State/Country, City/Town, Country, Zip, Zip Ext, and Date Certified.
- 30. Time of Death:** Fields for Time of Death Type, Time of Death, and AM/PM.

The browser's status bar at the bottom shows "Done" and "Internet". The Windows taskbar at the very bottom displays the Start button and several open applications, including Microsoft Word and the Texas Web Death Application.

# TER Help Desk

❖ To assist with questions related to the TER process, the TER Help Desk was created.

❖ Phone:

1-888-963-7111 x3490

❖ Email:

[help-ter@texasvsu.org](mailto:help-ter@texasvsu.org)

# TER Administrator = Powerful Ally



# Local Registrar

- \* In Texas:

  - 254 Counties

  - 445 LR Offices

- \* Local Registrars include:

  - Justice of the Peace

  - County & District Clerk

  - Municipal Clerks

  - City Clerks



# Local Registrar Responsibilities

- \* The local registrar shall carefully examine each birth or death certificate when presented for registration to determine if it is completed as required by this title and by the state registrar's instructions.

HSC 191.027(a)

- \* Assign a local file number and release to State
- \* Issue Burial Transit Permits as needed

# Time Requirements

\* **10 Days** – Not later than the 10<sup>th</sup> day after the date of a death that occurs in this state, a death certificate shall be filed with the local registrar of the registration district in which:

- 1) the death occurs; or
- 2) the body is found, if the place of death is not known.

HSC 193.003(a)

# TX Vital Statistics Unit (VSU)

## General Duties

- \* Oversees vital registration in TX
- \* Provides instructions and forms
- \* Files and processes records
- \* Preserves records
- \* Issue records



## Death Registration Specific Duties

- \* Issues Disinterment Permits
- \* Demographic Amendments



# Amendments

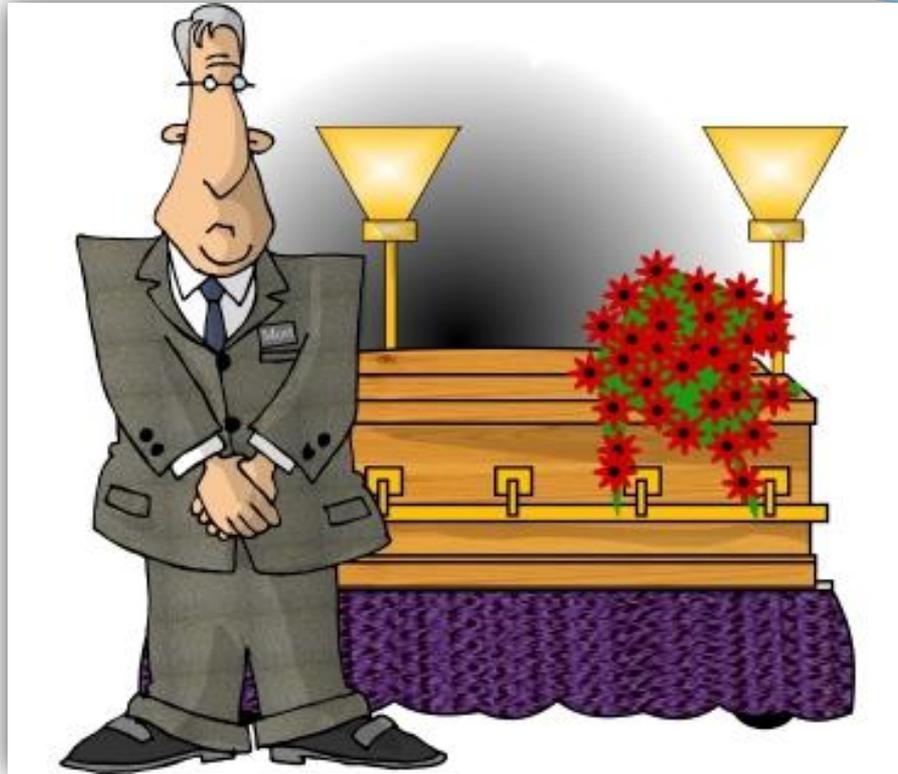
## Demographic

- \* A certificate of death may only be corrected with an application submitted by the informant, FD, next of kin, or CCJ.
- \* Only the original informant may amend the marital status of the deceased.

## Medical

- \* Form VS-174 completed through TEDR System.
- \* One exception: If an inquest was conducted by a JP or ME, the person conducting the inquest may amend the DC a physician signed.

# BEFUDDLE THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR



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# BEFUDDLE THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Challenging

Challenging

Challenging

Challenging

Medium

Medium

Medium

Medium

Not So Difficult

Not So Difficult

# **Not As Difficult Question #1**

How do I check to see if I answered all the required fields in TER?

# **Not as Difficult Question#2**

How long does a Funeral Home have to file a record with the local registrar?

# Medium Question # 3

When designating a Physician or Justice of the Peace to certify an electronic Death Certificate in the TER System, what is the best way to select them? By their last name?

# Medium Question # 4

What state website would I go to look up a Doctors information? Why would I do this?

Hint: This is the website you visit to file a complaint against a Doctor for not certifying a death certificate in a timely manner.

# Medium Question # 5

I am the Funeral Home. What do I do if the Medical Certifier will not certify the record?

# Medium Question # 6

How long does a death certificate remain a confidential record?

# Challenging Question # 7

Does a Funeral Home file a death certificate in TER if the death occurred one year ago or more?

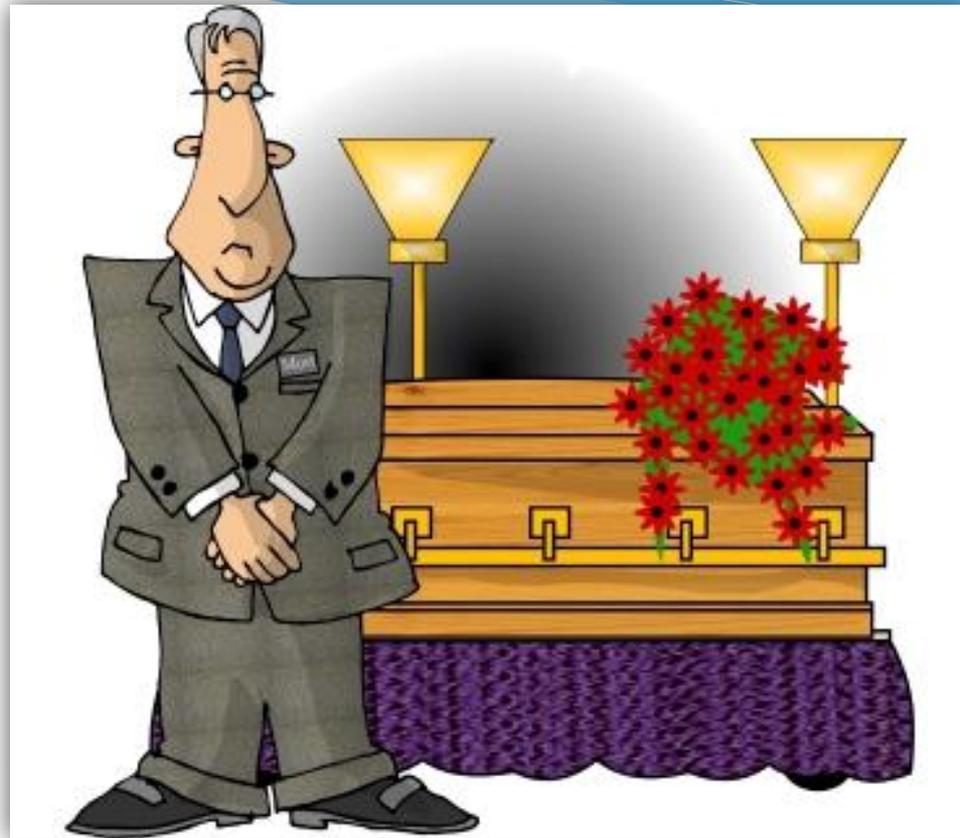
# Challenging Question # 8

I am entering the place of death in TER. What do I do if TER selects the Local Registrar automatically? Do I trust that this is correct?

# Challenging Question # 9

Here is the situation: A child 6 years of age or younger passes away from natural causes. Who certifies the death certificate?

# Thanks for Playing!



# Department of State Health Services Center for Health Statistics (CHS)

The source for  
timely, accurate and useful  
health information in TX.

Reports include:  
Vital Statistics Annual Reports





# National Center for Health Statistics

...Monitoring  
the Nation's  
Health

- \* NCHS is the nation's principal health statistics agency, providing data to identify and address health issues.
- \* NCHS compiles statistical information to help guide public health and health policy decisions.

# Resources

- \* VSU website: [www.texasvsu.org](http://www.texasvsu.org)
- \* VSU Handbook on Death Registration:  
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/handbooks/death/>
- \* DSHS Center for Health Statistics (CHS):  
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/chs/>
- \* National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS):  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/>

# **BRAINSTORMING SESSION**

