



## The 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislative Session

The Texas Legislature recently completed its Eighty-First Regular Session, producing the following bills signed into law and impacting the Vital Statistics Unit (VSU):

**HB 1067**, signed by Governor Perry on May 23, 2009, relates to a memorandum of understanding between certain authorized entities to share suicide data. Although this bill has no direct impact on vital statistics, it could impact local registrars.

**HB 2917** authorizes the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to obtain criminal history record information for certain applicants for employment, including VSU and its contractors. It was signed by Governor Perry on June 19, 2009.

**SB 703** focused on providing free certified copies of birth certificates to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) for certain minors who are under a managing conservatorship where parental rights have been terminated. The bill requires DSHS, not later than the 30<sup>th</sup> business day after the date DSHS receives an amending certificate to complete or correct a birth, death, or fetal death record, to notify the individual of whether the amendment has been accepted for filing. This bill was signed by Governor Perry and became effective on September 1 of this year.

**HB 2161** requires the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and DSHS to enter into a memorandum of understanding stating that VSU will receive birth information regarding inmates housed in TDCJ facilities, verify the information, and forward that information to DPS so that they can issue a personal identification certificate for the inmate. This bill was signed by Governor Perry and became effective on September 1 of this year.

**HB 3666** amends several sections of the Texas Family Code beginning September 1 of this year. Specifically, it expands the list of documents that applicants for marriage licenses can offer as proof of identity and age, and not only revises the necessary evidence required for a parent (or person with legal authority) to consent to marriage for an underage applicant but also mandates the executive commissioner of Health and Human Services to adopt rules constituting acceptable proof of parental consent. In addition, it sets forth the documents that a person applying for a marriage license on behalf of an absent applicant must provide to a county clerk, changes requirements regarding duplicate marriage licenses, provides for the correction of errors discovered on a marriage license, and prescribes the form of the affidavit for amending a marriage license. The bill also authorizes county clerks to prepare a certificate of informal marriage that includes the names of the persons declaring the informal marriage and the date and time the certificate or declaration is issued.

### *Micro Assist Training for TER Death Registration Goes Online*

Since March of this year the Vital Statistics Unit has worked with Micro Assist, Inc. to create an online training course for electronic death registration using the Texas Electronic Registrar (TER) system. That diligent collaboration has paid off: The TER Training Program, an online learning system for funeral directors, medical certifiers and local registrars, went online on July 31, 2009, and covers all aspects of completing a death certificate electronically. You can sign up to take the training, and review testimonials, at <https://texasvsu-ed.org/>.



## 2009 Regional Vital Statistics Conferences A Resounding Success

The Vital Statistics Unit held their annual Regional Vital Statistics Conferences this year in four cities – Lubbock, Tyler, Kerrville and Corpus Christi – with curriculum focusing on both providing information on birth, marriage and death registration and training to improve the accuracy, timeliness, statutory compliance, customer service and efficiency of registering vital events in Texas. Vital Statistics staff conducted topical sessions on such issues as electronic local registration, death registration for funeral directors and medical certifiers, electronic birth registration and a marriage update for county clerks. In addition, the Office of the Attorney General conducted a session on AOP certification and re-certification.

The conference included a luncheon presentation which provided a summary of relevant bills passed during the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislative session pertaining to vital statistics and information on a new online training program for death registration using the Texas Electronic Registrar system.

A combined total of 400 individuals attended the four conferences, among them staff from local registration offices, county and district clerks, justices of the peace, hospital and birthing center staff, midwives, funeral home directors and staff, Medical Examiner staff, and others. Attendees were provided an Overall Conference Evaluation form at each of the four conference sites and asked to evaluate different elements of the conference. Of these, 94% of respondents indicated that the conference met their personal objectives as a learner, 87% indicated that each conference setting was adequate and convenient, and 90% indicated that the information and skills learned will positively impact their work.

The Vital Statistics Staff would like to thank all of the attendees, staff and vendors who made the 2009 conferences such a success, and look forward to seeing everybody at the next regional conferences, scheduled for the summer of 2010!

### 2009 Master Registration Course

The 2009 Master Registrar Course was a huge success. There were eighteen (18) attendees, each bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge to the class. The course consisted of a variety of activities including TER and Statutes presentations, facility tours and hands-on computer training. The group also enjoyed a field trip to the Comal County Local Registrar's office. At the end of the course each participant presented a project topic of their choice to the group. We congratulate each participant on the hard work and demanding performance required to receive their Master Registrar status!

This year the Vital Statistics Unit will be calling upon all Master Registrar participants to be involved in a special project that will be presented at the 2009 Annual Conference!



Here is a sample of the testimonials given by these years' participants:

Cindy Walterscheid (Cooke County) – The Master Certification class exceeded my expectations. Not knowing what to expect when arriving I soon was pleasantly surprised at the abundance of information available.

Greta Zamora (City of McAllen) – after participating in the master Certification Course, I feel that the recognition granted to the participants enables us to do our job with a greater sense of confidence and self-esteem.

Dianne Florez (Reeves County) – I really enjoyed the fact that we were allowed to visit different offices pertaining to vital records; meeting the office staff and also the fact that the instructors were ready at all times to answer your questions.

# Reinventing Vital Statistics for Tomorrow's Challenges

## 55th Annual Texas Vital Statistics Conference

December 9 - 11, 2009

The Renaissance Austin Hotel, Austin, Texas

Technology is the key to our success and literally surrounds us from the time of our birth until our death and throughout our lives. It is the standard for the future – we need to embrace it! (And hopefully manage to catch up with our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders!) So as we advance into the future, it is critical that we take on strong leadership roles to guide ourselves and our constituents to a successful end. Make plans today to attend the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference hosted by the Texas Vital Statistics Unit and co-sponsored by the Texas Public Health Association.

### Vital Statistics Annual Conference Registration Form

Please print or type.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Office: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark the category that best describes your vital statistics role:

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Registrar       | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital/birthing center staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Funeral Director   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Registrar staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Midwife                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Funeral Home staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Clerk          | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice of the Peace           | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Dept. staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Clerk staff    | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice of the Peace staff     | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Examiner      | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Examiner staff         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____       |

This year's conference attendees will be provided with a custom embroidered polo shirt displaying the State of Texas Vital Statistics logo. Please indicate your preferred shirt size and color below. **Registrations received on or before November 20, 2009, will be guaranteed their shirt selection. Select only one for each category.**

**Color:**     RED         NAVY         BLACK         SAND         WHITE         GREY

**Size:**         SMALL         MEDIUM         LARGE         XLARGE         2XLARGE         3XLARGE

Pre-registration for the annual conference: **\$150**. Pre-registration deadline: **November 20, 2009**. Registration after pre-registration deadline: **\$180**.

Additional lunch tickets can be purchased for \$30 each for those who plan to attend the Five-Star Award lunch ceremony only. \_\_\_\_\_ Indicate # of tickets.

Enclosed is payment of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ number of registrations (include a separate form w/each person)

Enclose the registration form along with a check, or money order payable to the Texas Public Health Association (TPHA) and mail to TPHA/Vital Statistics Conference, P.O. Box 201540, Austin, TX 78720-1540. Registration cost prior to November 20th is **\$150**; after November 20th, registration cost is **\$180** for all registrations whether mailed or faxed as well as for on-site registration. Lunch can only be guaranteed for registrations with payments received by November 20th. TPHA Tax ID Number is 74-6058233. Credit card payment option is available online at [www.texaspha.org](http://www.texaspha.org) and click on co-sponsored events.

Payment must accompany this registration form. The registration fee is non-refundable. Returned check fee is \$20, payable by money order. No purchase orders accepted.

Questions about conference registration? Contact Terri Pali by phone at (512) 336-2520, by fax at (512) 336-0533 or by email at [txpha@aol.com](mailto:txpha@aol.com) or visit [www.texasvsu.org](http://www.texasvsu.org) for additional conference information.

## New Remote Site Program Nearly A Go

During the month of August the Vital Statistics Remote Site Unit successfully piloted several new features of the New Remote Site Program, which allows local registrars to print certified copies of birth certificates. These new features, which the Vital Statistics Unit expects to implement later this year, include a new web address and a new login page requiring a stronger password emphasizing numbers and special characters. In addition, the timeframe for password validity will still be sixty days.

Since September 1, 2008, over 215 different local registrar offices have printed certified copies of birth certificates using the Remote Site Program. The Remote Site Program has continued to grow and we look forward to serving all of Texas.

## Texas Vital Statistics Phone Directory

### **ADOPTIONS**

Brenda White (888)963-7111 ext. 7483  
[Brenda.white@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:Brenda.white@dshs.state.tx.us)

### **AMENDMENTS**

Belinda Cochran (888)963-7111 ext. 2668  
[Belinda.cochran@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:Belinda.cochran@dshs.state.tx.us)

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Debbie Chambers (888)963-7111 ext. 7384  
[Debbie.chambers@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:Debbie.chambers@dshs.state.tx.us)

### **DELAYED RECORDS**

Cynthia Brown (888)963-7111 ext. 5600  
[Cynthia.brown@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:Cynthia.brown@dshs.state.tx.us)

### **ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION**

[help-ter@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:help-ter@dshs.state.tx.us)  
<https://help-ter.texasvsu.org>

### **TRAINING**

<https://texasvsu-ed.org>

### **MAILED REQUESTS**

Charlotte Brown (888)963-7111 ext. 2547  
[charlotte.brown@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:charlotte.brown@dshs.state.tx.us)

### **RECORDS RECEIVING**

Alice Whitley (888)963-7111 ext. 2515  
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